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## **Protocol on an Italian-German Plan of Action for strategic bilateral and EU cooperation**

### **We, the Heads of Government of the Italian Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany:**

Reaffirm the intensity of the friendship between Italy and Germany, founded on deep historical and cultural roots and on the shared values of freedom and democracy;

Underline our commitment as NATO Allies to our strategic priority to maintain credible deterrence and defence against all threats to Euro-Atlantic security while strengthening the European pillar in the Alliance and while remaining united in our support for Ukraine in its defence against Russia's aggression;

Reconfirm the fundamental importance of a strong transatlantic bond between Europe and the United States of America, based on joint values and shared interests;

Commit to upholding international law including principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty;

Share the responsibility, as founding states of the European Union, to work towards furthering European integration, enabling the European Union to act effectively to protect European values and interests;

Consider the two European continent's leading manufacturing economies and their profound interconnection as a foundation for the competitiveness and resilience of the European Union's industrial base;

Jointly support the European Union's strategies and policies for growth and competitiveness, innovation, economic and energy security;



Recognize that we are called upon to addressing the European challenge of irregular migration in a coordinated and effective manner;

Envisage to strengthen our global partnerships with a particular focus on the African continent;

Concur to contribute to the furthering of the friendship between our peoples by increasing cultural contacts, people-to-people interaction and exchanges on our shared civil heritage;

Agree on the following Plan of Action in order to deepen our partnership by raising our bilateral cooperation to an unprecedented level, with the goal of fostering peace, security, social cohesion and prosperity of our citizens.

### **I. Guiding Principles and Fields of enhanced cooperation**

Italy and Germany are NATO Allies and strategic European partners. In view of the deteriorated security environment caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the present challenges to European values, security and interests, posed by an increasing number of actors, we aim to enhance our regular dialogue on all levels. We aim to coordinate more closely on key policies, already in the early stages, and to implement concrete projects in specific fields. It is our overarching objective to protect the peace and stability in Europe and to maintain the Euro-Atlantic security architecture.

Our partnership is not an exclusive one but rather aims to include other Allies and like-minded partners wherever possible and of strategic relevance.

Both sides consider the Plan of Action as a living document.



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## **1. Advancing the European Agenda**

As founding members of the European Union, we stand and work together for the shared goal of an ever-closer Union among the Peoples of Europe, of a strong, democratic, solidary and sovereign Europe as a stronghold of the international order based on international law. We are committed to upholding international law including human rights and contributing to the security of its citizens, and upholding a just international economic order.

Sharing the view that Europe must assume more responsibility for its own security within NATO, we commit to urgently and jointly achieve European defence readiness by closing capability gaps and strengthening the European pillar in NATO. With this in mind, we are firmly committed to intensifying cooperation between NATO and the EU as well as among European and like-minded partners, particularly in the areas of military mobility and sustaining the defence industrial production capacity, with the aim of ensuring a coherent approach in the interests of collective security and common interests.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the multiple global challenges Europe is facing have made it clear that the EU needs to increase its capacity to act as a strong geopolitical actor and to absorb new members, while maintaining its ability to function effectively and develop through parallel but not linked processes of enlargement and internal EU reforms. As led out by its reform roadmap, the European Union must not only future-proof its own structures, policies and decision-making processes, but also strengthen its capacity to act. This should also entail discussing EU governance reforms and improving decision making.



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Against this background, we intend to coordinate more closely, already in early stages, with a view to advancing common positions and joint contributions on the relevant issues on the EU Agenda, including the subjects of this Plan of Action. To this end we commit to convene regular meetings and consultations both at capital level and in Brussels between our respective Permanent Representations.

Moreover, we will continue to promote a shared understanding of the EU dynamics, with the involvement of academics, students and civil society.

Annual European Seminars, headed by Director-Generals for EU Politics of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, will be held in order to identify joint strategic interests in the further development of the European Union, with the aim to improve Europe's ability to act.

## **2. Competitiveness, innovation, energy**

### *2.1 EU Competitiveness, industrial policy and single market*

Strengthening EU competitiveness is and remains a top priority for us to avoid unnecessary administrative burdens and assure an innovative level playing field we call for structural reforms, a consequent simplification agenda, legislative self-restraint, unbureaucratic, business- and SME-friendly implementation of EU-initiatives as well as improvement of framework conditions without compromising policy goals and relevant standards.

A close joint cooperation on the implementation of the Single Market strategy will help reducing remaining barriers especially to the free movement of goods and services. As proposed in the Letta Report and the Draghi Report, we underline the need to scale up innovation through an ambitious and flexible 28th regime in company law, open to all European companies, to overcome fragmentation, cross-border costs, and uncertainty



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for those operating in multiple EU countries, fostering investment, talent mobility and growth in the single market. National labour and social standards must not be undermined.

We share the need to further invest in highly developed, innovative, and internationally integrated industries, which form the core of our deeply interconnected economies. We support a competitive transition to a decarbonized economy, respecting the principle of technological neutrality with regard to national choices and on the basis of sustainability and socio-economic benefits.

We will cooperate closely in strengthening the industries of the future, enable companies and jobs to become future-proof and pay particular attention to automotive, traditional and energy intensive industries. We share the commitment towards the promotion and protection of mutual foreign direct investments (FDI - Italian investments in Germany and German investments in Italy) under domestic and union law in the spirit of a genuine and reciprocal openness. In this context, we will also promote the establishment of innovation hubs, start-up business accelerators and incubators.

Building on its inaugural edition in 2024 and the second edition in 2025, we will continue to convene an Annual Ministerial Forum between the Italian Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy and the German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, underpinned by a structured and permanent dialogue, aimed at fostering a coordinated approach on major files and policies of European competitiveness and industrial strategy files and policies.

Moreover, we will build on the Critical Raw Materials Act and exchange on how to secure sustainable supply chains, on common investments in the EU and third countries, on the recycling and upcycling of exhausted electronic wastes, on mines and



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landfills, and on the advanced materials that are less dependent on imports thereof. We support the Clean industrial deal and the adoption of a Circular economy act to establish a single market for secondary raw materials and waste.

We will build on the existing cooperation between Confindustria and Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI) and on the established consultation mechanisms such as the Confindustria-BDI-Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF) trilogue, as well as other cooperation formats among our private sector organizations.

In order to strengthen the collaboration of our innovative small and medium-sized companies, we are actively evaluating opportunities for joint calls of the Smart&Start Italia Programme and the German Central Innovation Programme.

We will intensify our cooperation on e-commerce with the shared objective of ensuring fair competition and consumer protection. Strengthening legal enforcement, particularly with regard to providers from third countries, is essential. In light of the cross-border nature of e-commerce, both countries will advocate for effective measures at EU level.

## *2.2 Simplification and better regulation*

We agree that the EU must limit itself to necessary new regulation in full compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and while maintaining policy goals and relevant standards. All co-legislators should adopt a new mindset of legislative and regulatory self-restraint to avoid unnecessary administrative burden. New legislative proposals that are expected to introduce excessive additional administrative burden, should be withdrawn or not be tabled in the first place.



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We intend to actively contribute to the ongoing process to simplify and streamline existing EU legislation and to urgently reform, simplify, and fast-track administrative procedures to authorize investment projects in the EU without compromising policy goals and relevant standards. The aim must be to create a simple, predictable regulatory environment, avoiding bureaucratic overregulation at all levels, as stated in the European Council conclusions of 23 October 2025. To this end, we will share our positions on the Omnibus proposals and strive to jointly push for a meaningful simplification and tangible burden reduction with regards to the acquis, in particular for start-ups, SMEs, as well as the industry at large. We will particularly focus on SMEs and on the newly established category of small mid-caps (SMCs), devoting specific attention to Micro enterprises.

We envisage the establishment of an exchange of best practices on regulatory simplification.

### *2.3 National and European macroeconomic policies*

We will establish a bilateral Macroeconomic Forum to discuss financial and economic matters, including means to promote sustainable growth and resilience, by strengthening productivity growth, competitiveness, convergence, investments and fiscal sustainability. Within this Forum, we will exchange views on strengthening and deepening the Economic and Monetary Union.

We will cooperate in the fight against tax evasion and elusion, also by enhancing coordination and focusing existing frameworks to address excessive intra-EU tax competition, in line with the objective of decluttering at the EU level.



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We envisage the establishment of an exchange of best practices on public expenditure efficiency and spending reviews.

#### *2.4 EU trade policy and economic security*

Given the multiple challenges faced by the international trading system, we reaffirm the importance of a strong and reformed World Trade Organisation (WTO) as the foundation and guarantee for global rules-based trade. We shall work towards a successful 14th Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé in March 2026 as well as strong bilateral and regional trade deals, to support diversification and resilience of our economies, taking into full account the potential and need of all economic sectors, with a view to safeguarding our product standards and respecting the level playing field with our partners including in agriculture. This includes the swift entry into force of the agreements with MERCOSUR and Mexico as well as the finalization of agreements with important partners in the Indo-Pacific. We oppose the unilateral use of trade measures as well as the impact of non-market policies disrupting global trade.

We will exchange and cooperate on the implementation of the EU Strategy on Economic Security as well as on the improvement of governance on economic security in the Council.

We will also enhance our dialogue at Trade Policy Committee Full Members level aimed at defining a coordinated approach on the respective positions on EU trade policy with the goal of strengthening an open and rules-based EU trade agenda.





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### *2.5 Space policies and space economy*

We stand united in our vision for a strong, autonomous and strategically coherent European space policy. Any EU initiative must comply with the Treaties and with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and we will cooperate in this respect.

We will strengthen our coordination on space activities and space policies, including the security and defence dimensions, space economy, research and development issues, also in the framework of EU and ESA programmes. We will facilitate exchange between our space industries, relevant start-ups and SMEs on a regular basis. At the same time, we will jointly follow and share information and evaluations on the development of the “Bromo” industrial actor pursued by Airbus, Thales Alenia Space and Leonardo.

On the security and defence side, we shall exploit the Combined Space Operations (CSpO) Initiative to advance unified positions. We will also enhance civil–military interoperability of space assets and develop satellite-based alternative connectivity to increase resilience against risks to submarine cables. We will jointly monitor the timely and effective deployment of IRIS2, including a secure and resilient connectivity segment and options for siting operations nodes both in Italy and Germany and advance assured European access to space. We are determined to continue our successful cooperation operating the Galileo control centres in Fucino and Oberpfaffenhofen.

### *2.6 Digital Innovation and Artificial Intelligence*

We will intensify the ongoing dialogue and collaboration on digital innovation, including federated data ecosystems (incl. International Manufacturing-X), cloud



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infrastructures and digital identity, quantum technologies including quantum communication and quantum computing. We welcome the EU adoption by the Commission of the Quantum Europe in a Changing World strategy, published on 2 July 2025.

Building on the Commission communication on AI Continent, we will intensify our bilateral cooperation in the field of Artificial Intelligence, leveraging on the AI Factory IT4ALIA in Bologna, German HPC, and the planned IPCEI-AI.

Furthermore, we shall exchange on the topic of the digitalisation of SMEs. Italian and German consortia submitted applications to participate in the Network of "European Digital Innovation Hubs" (EDIH). We shall support initiatives strengthening digital sovereignty and digital innovation in Europe.

We will also consult on a regular basis on our priorities vis-à-vis the digital transition in the framework of the EU Digital Decade Programme 2030, also defining a cooperation mechanism focused on financial support for start-ups.

### *2.7 Science and Research Cooperation*

We share a unique, diverse and historically grown network of scientific institutions, universities and research centres, including the German Archaeological Institute, the German Historical Institute, the Max-Planck-Institutes, the European University Institute at Florence and the Italienzentren. Additionally, we intend to jointly invest in new concrete initiatives to secure our prosperity and Europe's technological sovereignty.

We will support the further development of large European and international research infrastructures of common interest, such as the Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research in Europe (FAIR), the Laboratori Nazionali del Gran Sasso (LNGS), the Cherenkov



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Telescope Array Observatory (CTAO), the German National research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) and the corresponding European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), the European XFEL, and Virgo. We will continue the close collaboration on green hydrogen as well as on cultural heritage and climate resilience in the framework of the future European Partnership “Resilient Cultural Heritage”.

We will also strengthen our bilateral partnership in the field of semiconductors, leveraging on existing and future capabilities such as STMicroelectronics in Italy (and France) and the future production facility of ESMC in Germany.

We reaffirm the role of the German-Italian Centre for European Dialogue (Villa Vigoni e. V.) as an important hub of cultural exchange and deepening of the Italian-German scientific relations in a European perspective. Furthermore, the Villa Vigoni e. V. carries out special scientific projects in collaboration with Italian and German academic institutions and scientists

### *2.8 Public Administration reform and innovation*

We aim to strengthen cooperation in the field of Public Administration reform, digitalization and innovation. That includes bilateral mobility of civil servants, such as the exchange of diplomats, as well as the exchange and sharing of best practices on the topics of administrative organisation and administrative digitalisation.

### *2.9 Employment, vocational education and training and social welfare*

We will strengthen the social dimension of the European Union and implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan, promoting social cohesion,



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combatting inequalities and fostering social inclusion, employment, fair mobility and working conditions.

We will cooperate to implement the G7 Action Plan for a human-centred adoption of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the World of Work.

We will exchange on active labour policies and public employment services, further cooperating on dual initial and higher vocational education and training (VET) to develop and pilot dual VET approaches and offer attractive employment opportunities for young people and meet the needs of the labour market, actively supporting concrete initiatives also through networks between VET stakeholders and the extension of our joint Declaration of Intent. We will also work on possible joint activities to be held at the ILO International Training Centre and with the European Training Foundation in Turin. In the field of occupational and learning mobility, we will cooperate at different levels within the framework of the EU initiative *“Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve”* (ALMA) for the purpose of employment and social integration of NEETs.

#### *2.10 Energy, climate and environment*

We will work together to take forward the indications of the European Council for a competitive green transition, to harness the full potential of the industrial renewal and transformation of European economies, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the *“Outcome of the First Global Stocktake”* adopted at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference and paying particular attention to cornerstone and energy-intensive industries. The achievement of the EU climate goals will require adopting all



the necessary measures and will be accompanied by the necessary enabling conditions and flexibility, in light of the latest scientific evidence and technological advances.

We will cooperate on European energy markets, electricity, gas, and hydrogen, including the promotion of the harmonization of cross-border tariffs in the gas sector and the reduction of energy prices. In light of the current geopolitical situation and the need to prevent and respond to potential gas supply disruptions we will cooperate on gas and hydrogen pipelines between Italy and Germany (via Austria and/or Switzerland), and in particular the “SouthH2 Corridor [The South hydrogen corridor]” interlinking southern parts of Italy and Germany with Northern Africa and the MENA region, fostering there the production of renewable energy, gas and hydrogen.

We will coordinate, with the involvement of the private sector, on areas relevant to the green transition, including in the framework of the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD COPs. We will also continue to advocate for an effective and streamlined sustainable finance agenda, including interoperable, clear and simple sustainability reporting standards from the International Sustainability Standards Board and the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group, to simplify private sector investments in the green transition and sustainable business models.

Following the final communiqué of the Borgo Egnazia Leaders’ Summit, we will cooperate to help all countries reap the benefits of the energy transition. We will also continue to actively support the commitments enshrined in the Communiqué adopted by the G7 Environment, Climate and Energy Ministers in Venaria (Turin) in April 2024, accelerating the G7 Net-Zero Agenda, fostering global energy security and focusing on sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, tackling pollution, protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, sustainable management of land and water resources.



We will enhance regular dialogue on sustainability issues of common interest and coordinate more closely on key policies already in the early stages. We will improve our common efforts in mobilising international climate finance.

In the field of Climate Diplomacy, we will work together with our global partners to strengthen international engagement on climate and advance international efforts and initiatives. We will contribute to rapidly accelerating the global energy transition in a just and inclusive manner in alignment with the UN's Agenda 2030. In pursuit of human security and economic stability and prosperity, we will contribute to de-risking public and private investments against climate-related impacts including through investments for adaptation (e.g. leveraging cooperation platforms such as the Adaptation Accelerator Hub), the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action and the Global Shield against Climate Risks, including through a collaboration with LDCs, SIDS and the Vulnerable 20 Group.

### *2.11 Mobility and infrastructures*

Recognizing the crucial role of mobility connections in Europe, we shall establish regular technical consultations to enhance coordination of national efforts in order to improve connectivity, sustainable mobility and infrastructures, also keeping in mind our strategic interests on relevant EU policies. We should as well promote the further development of Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), in particular the European Transport Corridors "Scandinavian-Mediterranean" and "North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean". We welcome that the railway undertakings both in passenger and freight transport are committed to offering attractive connections between our countries. At the same time, we strive to fostering combined transport in order to



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support the consistent commercial flows between Italy and Germany. We welcome the EU's initiatives on military mobility and support an ends-oriented negotiation process on the military mobility package presented by the European Commission on 19 November 2025. European dialogues mechanisms should not be duplicated.

We will reinforce EU–NATO coordination on military mobility along strategic routes and support the South-Central Corridor's interoperability with defence needs. We also support emerging connectivity initiatives like the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), where Trieste could serve as a key gateway.

We will cooperate closely in developing automated and connected vehicles, an increasingly central issue in transport policy. It plays a decisive role in improving safety, efficiency, and sustainability on the roads. To build public trust in automated and connected mobility systems, it is essential to establish clear standards for data protection and cybersecurity on the basis of international rules (e.g. UN Regulation No. 155). At the same time, Europe-wide regulation is needed to safeguard competitiveness, address potential security risks and prevent technological fragmentation. Supporting research and development in the field of automated and connected vehicle will not only strengthen the automotive industry but also enhance Europe's digital sovereignty. Automated and connected vehicles are a key element in advancing the mobility transition and achieving climate goals. We also support the integration of vehicle connectivity (e.g. C-ITS) into the testbeds for autonomous vehicles initiatives at European level and collaborate in this regard.



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## *2.12 Agriculture*

We recognize the strategic role of agriculture as a pillar of food security, competitiveness and technological transition of the European economy. Both countries are committed to strengthening their bilateral cooperation and joint action at the European level to promote a practical EU-legislation with minimal bureaucracy to foster a competitive, innovative, resilient and sustainable agri-business, within the prospective of the European food sovereignty outlined by the European Commission.

The cooperation will focus on the following areas: exchange on competitiveness and export strategies; generational renewal including in the frame of the alpine convention; sustainability and resilience (for example by cultivation of fungus varieties resistant to the main adversities, both phytopathological and climatic and water management) as business models; rural areas and regional identity; innovation and digitalization; renewable energy in agriculture; climate resilience and food security; training and exchange of expertise; collaboration in food quality control and in the area of animal welfare; geographical indications; sustainable aquaculture development considering its role as a healthy food source; development of the algae sector.

Due to sometimes dynamically developing situations of animal diseases in the EU, bilateral cooperation within the framework of EU research projects and/or agreements can support, for example, the exchange of data, taking into account the One Health approach. Relevant animal welfare issues are also being addressed jointly in EU research projects under Horizon Europe.





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### **3. Peace, Security and Defence**

#### *3.1 Strategic Dialogue on international and security issues*

We will structure our dialogue on international and security issues of common interest, with geographic and thematic focuses through regular consultations at the level of State Secretary/Secretary General of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as other levels, including the departments responsible for development cooperation in the respective ministries, with a view to foster common action both within the EU, and in other international organisations and fora we belong to, such as the UN, NATO, OSCE, G7 and G20.

In our dialogue, we will closely coordinate our present efforts on the response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including on sanctions, support to Ukraine's resilience and reconstruction and to initiatives aimed at achieving a just peace, as well as on the support to the implementation of the US Plan to end the conflict in Gaza, with the aim of alleviating the suffering of the civilian population and paving the way for a two-State solution. Our structured dialogue will also focus on the Middle East, including the Gulf region and the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, especially Libya, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Western Balkans, China and the Indo-Pacific, and the Arctic, as well as the EU external relations with our main partners.

#### *3.2 Security and Defence Cooperation*

We, as founding members of the European Union and as NATO Allies, share a common responsibility for freedom, peace, and security in Europe. In light of growing global challenges and threats endangering the stability and lasting peace on the European



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continent, we recognize the need for strengthened European security, defence and resilience cooperation aiming to close capability gaps in Europe and to achieve Defence Readiness, based on a 360-degree approach.

In our Agreement on Enhanced Cooperation in the field of Security, Defence and Resilience, we outline further our respective common goals and interests in an ambitious agenda and renew our commitment to a strengthened defence industry cooperation.

Furthermore, we firmly believe that strengthening the European pillar within NATO and enhancing our deterrence and defence is necessary, not least because of the direct threat that Russia poses to Euro-Atlantic security. Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine is a clear violation of international law. It threatens the European Union as such. Russian aggression against peaceful neighbouring peoples must be deterred in the long term. Until a just peace is achieved, we thus call for and will continue to provide resolute support for Ukraine.

### *3.3 Cybersecurity and countering hybrid threats*

We will prioritise exchange on cybersecurity, cybercrime, and the protection of critical infrastructure, with the aim of strengthening the EU cybersecurity strategy and cyber-diplomacy toolbox and identifying common cyber capacity building projects, with a regional focus on Africa, the Mediterranean, Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans. On Cyber Defence, we will prioritise disruptive and dual-use technologies and promote testbeds for multi-domain command-and-control experimentation. We will exchange on hybrid threats, information resilience and strategic communications, also strengthening the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, and



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the effective strengthening of the EU Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity and in particular the Hybrid Fusion Cell of EU INTCEN.

### *3.4 Further multilateral security cooperation*

We are committed to an effective multilateralism and consider the United Nations to be the key body for legitimate global action. We want to use our leverage in multilateral bodies to advance our joint agenda in upholding human rights, open inclusive societies, the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts and the protection of persons in vulnerable situations.

50 years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, we remain committed to working together to preserve the functionality and financial sustainability of OSCE as a forum for risk reduction and dialogue on European security.

### *3.5 Classified information-sharing*

We will explore secure, classified information-sharing networks and in this context, continue advancing the negotiations on a new Agreement on the Exchange and Mutual Protection of Classified Information between Italy and Germany. We will also explore data fusion architectures to underpin multinational operations and crisis response. In this context, we also intend to work towards improving cooperation and strengthening practices to ensure the secure exchange of classified information between NATO and the EU.



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### *3.6 Protection of citizens*

We shall reinforce existing law enforcement cooperation on the fight against terrorism and organized crime through intensified consultations on specific projects and specific crime fields and continuation of the Italian German Taskforce (DIA/SCIP/SCO and BKA). We will develop instruments aimed at improving cooperation between our law enforcement authorities with reference to the relevant EU-legislation and national law by the means of implementing arrangements. We will expand our cooperation by establishing a strategic partnership in the field of combating organised and financial crime, including countering terrorist financing, also with a view of coordinating in the implementation of sanctions. We will put the focus on mutual trainings and the exchange of expertise.

We shall promote judicial cooperation by structuring a collaboration between the Italian Direzione Nazionale Antimafia e Antiterrorismo and the Public Prosecutor General (Generalbundesanwalt beim Bundesgerichtshof) in Germany.

We will also exchange on risk assessments in crisis areas, strengthening the internal and external security of the EU through an improvement of the civilian mission of CSDP following the application of Civilian Compact, as well as through a structured dialogue between COSI and COPS.

### *3.7 Human rights and media freedom*

We will cooperate on human rights issues and the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination based on religion and belief, including antisemitism. In the international arena, we will promote respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, and persons discriminated for their sexual orientation.



We will promote the rights of all women and girls through the exchange of national best practices on how to achieve gender equality. We shall exchange on policies and actions aimed at combating all forms of violence against women and girls.

Under the framework of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, we will exchange on policies and best practices relating to persons with disabilities. We will cooperate within the Council of Europe and support the Organisation in delivering on its core mandate including through financial and organisation reforms aimed at enhancing its effectiveness and added value.

We will cooperate to strengthen media freedom worldwide as a cornerstone of democracy.

## **4. Partnerships, development and migration**

### *4.1 African countries as strategic partners*

As the continent with the highest level of population growth, Africa is not only particularly impacted by global challenges, but these challenges such as climate crisis, digital transformation, global health or reforming the global governance structure can only be overcome together with African countries. It is therefore in our strategic interest to tackle these challenges together and to lend our support to African partners where this is required.

Stability and prosperity on the African continent are integral to European and Mediterranean security and a top priority for our foreign policies. Building on the “Mattei Plan” for Africa launched by Italy in January 2024 and Germany’s renewed Africa Policy Guidelines of January 2025 as parts of a broader European drive to strengthen relations with African countries in synergy with the EU Global Gateway Strategy, we will



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work together to develop joint initiatives with our African partners. We will focus on crucial sectors such as digital, energy, transport, health, culture, education and research as well as defence cooperation and follow a Team Europa approach. We will build upon the conclusions of the 7th AU-EU Summit of 2025 to further engage into concrete actions with African partners. We will dedicate particular attention to the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and to corridors development.

#### *4.2 Development cooperation and humanitarian assistance*

We will build on the results of the Italian G7 Presidency to continue advancing shared development policy objectives and promoting the implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as the outcomes COP30.

We commit to putting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the integrated implementation of related international goals such as under the UAE-Framework for Global Climate Resilience, CBD, UNCCD, Sendai and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the recent “Compromiso de Sevilla” at the centre of our agendas accelerating our efforts to achieve these goals by 2030 by mobilising all sectors and levels of society. We will continue to promote a more inclusive and efficient multilateral system and to better engage private sector for the achievement of development goals.

We jointly advocate for an ambitious post-2030 regime, which continues to consider all dimensions of sustainability (social, ecological, and economic) in a balanced manner, and follows a human rights-based approach.

We will support the implementation of the Amman-Berlin Declaration as outcome of the Global Disability Summit this year.



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We will work in close coordination to strengthen the Team Europe Initiatives and Joint Programming, the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), and the Global Shield against Climate Risks, supported i.a. by G7 countries and countries of the Vulnerable Twenty Group. We will work together in the Global Alliance Against Inequality to promote international dialogue on inequality reduction.

To this end, we will establish a regular strategic dialogue between our development cooperation systems and those of the EU and major donors, including emerging ones, as appropriate, to exchange views on upcoming challenges and set common priorities for the post 2030 Agenda. We will jointly support efforts to strengthen FAC/Development and to use this key EU forum for strategic discussions and decisions around international partnerships and development cooperation.

We will establish a dialogue on possible coordinated actions to promote the respect of the International Humanitarian Law, as well as enhancing our capacity of anticipatory action.

#### *4.3 Migration Dialogue*

We agree to further develop a comprehensive and innovative approach to migration, combining increased external action and internal aspects, mutually beneficial comprehensive partnerships with countries of origin and transit, more effective protection of EU external borders, and stepping up returns, in compliance with international and EU law. To this end, we will continue our dialogue and coordination on migration, building on the existing six-monthly consultation mechanism, focusing on the implementation of the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, on possible joint projects and the EU cooperation with third countries, including on innovative solutions.



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We will also collaborate on travel documents' assessment, crisis response, repatriation and returns as needed.

#### *4.4 The Rome Process*

We are committed to strengthening our engagement within the framework of the Rome Process, with a view to supporting concrete and coordinated actions to address the root causes of irregular migration, promote legal pathways, and combat human trafficking and smuggling.

We reaffirm our shared interest in contributing to the implementation of projects identified within the different working groups, with a view to enhancing synergies and long-term impact in priority regions such as the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel.

### **5. Deepening People to people contacts and our cultural partnership**

Building on our unique relationship at civil society level, on the large Italian expat community in Germany and on our deep centuries-old cultural ties, we will promote people-to-people contacts and opportunities at all levels in our societies, with a particular focus on the younger generation.

We will include sport as a further instrument to foster youth participation, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion across our societies.





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### *5.1 Youth and dialogue on the common European future*

We will continue nurturing the positive experience of the Italian-German Young Leaders' Dialogue with the aim of establishing a lasting exchange platform and a growing Italian-German network of young professionals.

We will also continue to build upon and strengthen the Italian-German youth exchange office VIAVAI, and will aim at strengthening the binational character of the initiative.

We will work to achieve mutual recognition of competencies acquired through European volunteering and exchange programmes, including the promotion of the YouthPass strategy.

### *5.2 Communal and regional partnerships*

We will further build on the success of the Presidents' Award for Municipal Cooperation between Italy and Germany and on the already existing 400 city partnerships to enhance cooperation among local authorities and reinforce people-to-people collaboration.

We will encourage regional cooperation by building upon already existing regional partnerships between Lazio–Saxony, Hessen–Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont–North Rhine-Westphalia.



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### *5.3 Cultural and Creative Cooperation between Italy and Germany: Innovation, Heritage, and Artistic Exchanges*

We agree to further upgrade our centuries-old cultural exchange and cooperation, also with the aim of contributing to the protection and development of the European cultural identity.

We wish to intensify our collaboration within the framework of the existing Italian-German film-industry co-production agreement.

We will support the strengthening of partnerships between our publishing companies and exchanges between literary festivals, also promoting the translation of books in the language of the other Party through the “Mazzucchetti-Gschwend” Prize.

We intend to jointly realize and finance a project for a cultural route through Italy along the travel route of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's “Italian Journey” from 1786 to 1788, aiming at a broad international public.

We commit to promoting the circulation of artworks, with particular attention to contemporary creation, by supporting travelling exhibitions, fostering dialogue and encouraging the exchange of artists through residency programmes.

We will strengthen cooperation and joint initiatives in digital cultural heritage, focusing on AI, semantic web technologies and interoperable standards, with special attention to archaeological heritage through shared methodologies and spatial data infrastructures.



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#### *5.4 Think Tank cooperation*

We will promote a regular dialogue and enhanced cooperation between Italian and German Think Tanks in order to produce shared analysis and policy recommendations on issues of strategic relevance for both countries – i.e. through tandem projects as a policy advice and network tool.

We will continue the Strategic Trilogue with France organized by Villa Vigoni.

#### *5.5 Collective memory*

We remain determined to honour the memory of past grievances and uphold our ambition to educate future generations about our history. We will uphold our cooperation on raising awareness and promoting collective commemoration on World War II atrocities and on the Holocaust. We will perpetuate the German-Italian Future Fund, taking into account the work of the Italian-German Historians' Commission.

#### *5.6 Protection of cultural heritage*

Building upon the successful cooperation between the relevant offices of Carabinieri and Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), we intend to enhance our cooperation and exchange of best practices on the protection of cultural heritage from disasters, conflicts and crises and in the fight against illicit trafficking. We will cooperate on the protection of cultural heritage, also in conflict zones, also using Copernicus and other satellite data for purposes of protection of cultural heritage.



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## **II. Follow-Up**

□ Partner Ministries will be responsible for the implementation of the relevant provisions of this Plan of Action in accordance with the respective national legislations and the obligations arising from the common membership of the EU and the International law.

□ Bilateral Governmental Summits will regularly review the implementation of the Plan of Action, in order to adapt it to new priorities and challenges.

□ Farnesina Secretary General and AA State Secretary will include in their regular consultations progress reviews of the implementation of the Plan of Action in preparation of the bilateral Governmental Summits, also collecting relevant inputs arising from parliamentary dialogue and from the exchanges with representatives of Italian-German civil society, reflecting the richness of the different dimensions of the Italian-German partnership.

This Protocol is non-binding and it does not constitute an international Treaty.

Signed in Rome on January 23th 2026

For the Government of the  
Italian Republic

President of the Council of the Ministers  
Giorgia Meloni

For the Government of the  
Federal Republic of Germany

Federal Chancellor  
Friedrich Merz



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## Annex

### **Milestones**

for the implementation of the  
Italian-German Plan of Action on Strategic Bilateral and EU Cooperation  
envisaged in 2026

#### **Strategically Advancing the European Agenda**

- Promoting a common competitiveness agenda at the European Union level;
- European Seminar to deepen strategic exchange on the development of the European Union;
- Colloquia and international roundtable discussions in the "Reconstructions 2.0" project of Villa Vigoni;

#### **Promoting Competitiveness, Innovation, Energy**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ministerial Forum between the Italian Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy and the German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy;
- 1<sup>st</sup> Italian-German Bilateral Macroeconomic Forum;
- Joint Ministerial Event on Artificial Intelligence in the workplace at the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin;
- Joint declaration of Intent on Cooperation between the Smart&Start Italia Programme and the German Central Innovation Programme ("Zentrales Innovationsprogramm Mittelstand" - ZIM);



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- Signing of a Joint declaration of intent on Strategic Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Algae Sector;
  - Cooperation to promote investments in the critical raw materials sector through aggregation of projects and demand, including a possible collaboration of the Strategic Fund for Made in Italy and the German Fund for Critical Raw Materials. Stakeholder exchange initiative on cooperation on Industrial Artificial AI, incl. projects for IPCEI-AI (Important Project of Common European Interest);
  - Expanding Spaceopal's business areas; joint application for the Galileo Service Operator II treaty by Spaceopal for the operation of the Galileo control centres;
  - Strategic support for the Award for excellent Vocational Education and Training "Premio di Eccellenza Duale" and for six bilateral vocational training networks in the framework of the bilateral ConnActions project;
  - Expansion of cooperation in the field of energy research and joint Italian-German call for proposals ("Green Hydrogen Research: A Collaboration to Empower Tomorrow's Energy");
  - Encouraging the additional launch of new direct air connections between Rome and Berlin;

### **Enhanced Cooperation to Foster Peace, Security and Defence**

- Signing of and implementing the Agreement on Enhanced Cooperation on Security, Defence, and Resilience;
- Preparations for next 2+2 meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Defence, incl. meetings at Senior Officials level;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Italian-German Defence Round Table;



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- Promoting the accession of Italy to the Agreement on Defence Export Control (with France, Spain and the United Kingdom);
  - Negotiations on a new Agreement on the Exchange and Mutual Protection of Classified Information;
  - Development of a joint framework agreement aimed at improving cooperation between our law enforcement authorities;
  - Adoption of a joint agenda to counter hybrid threats, disinformation, and cybercrime;

#### **Partnerships, development and migration**

- Joint Project on migration management in the Sahel Region;
- Cooperation between the Egyptian-European Center for Migration and Development with the Italian DEMO project in Egypt;
- Launch of a high-level Italy-Germany dialogue on development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and stabilisation, involving the respective Ministries, as well as their Agencies for development cooperation and financing for development;
- Strengthening coordination in the field of humanitarian assistance building upon the Joint Italy–Germany Declaration on Gaza dated 15 December 2025;

#### **Deepening People-to-people Contacts and our Cultural Partnership**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic Trilogue at the Villa Vigoni;
- 6<sup>th</sup> Italian-German Young Leaders' Dialogue ("Spinelli-Forum") on European key challenges and expansion and deepening of the alumni network;



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- Joint project to develop a cultural route along the travel route of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "Italian Journey" from 1786 to 1788;
  - Promoting partnerships between the respective publishing houses strengthening and renewing the 'Mazzucchetti-Gschwend' Prize;
  - 40th anniversary event of the Villa Vigoni Association and Vigoni Lecture.