

Council conclusions on ESDP (Brussels, 15 May 2006)

Caption: In its conclusions on the European security and defence policy (ESDP), adopted on 15 May 2006, the General Affairs Council analyses the progress achieved in various fields in order to define the future needs of the ESDP more effectively in the long term. The Council considers, in particular, the development of the European Union's military capabilities, its capacity to undertake rapid response operations, the implementation of the research and technology programme and the improvement of civil-military coordination in the field. It also emphasises the importance of a comprehensive approach by the European Union to security sector reform in the Western Balkans.

Source: Council Conclusions on ESDP. 2727th General Affairs Council meeting. Brussels: Council of the European Union, 15.05.2006. 5 p. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/esdp/89598.pdf.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/council_conclusions_on_esdp_brussels_15_may_2006-en-9f0ea77f-97e0-468d-bc72-4912a918fe7b.html

Last updated: 25/08/2015

Council Conclusions on ESDP

(2727th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting - Brussels, 15 May 2006)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"European Security and Defence Policy

Military Capabilities - Civil-Military Co-ordination/Management of Operations - Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the Western Balkans

A. Military Capabilities

Headline Goal 2010

The Council noted with satisfaction the progress achieved with regard to the development of new methodologies for the qualitative approach to capability planning called for by the Headline Goal 2010.

The Council recognised the Roadmap to the Progress Catalogue as an important basis for achieving a far more advanced capability development process. It establishes a common understanding of the process of Scrutinising, Assessing and Evaluating of capabilities, using the Capability Development Mechanism (CDM), and in defining intermediate steps towards the Progress Catalogue in particular.

The Council noted the new bidding process against the Requirements Catalogue 05 using the Headline Goal Questionnaire, which represents an improved level of refinement over the previous Requirements Catalogue. Thereby the qualitative aspects of Member States' commitments to fulfilling the Headline Goal 2010 will be emphasised.

The Council welcomed the establishment of the methodology of scrutinising and the introduction of the Scrutinising Handbook as important elements in elaborating a qualitatively improved, capability based approach in the development of the EU's military capabilities that will be used to establish the Force Catalogue as the next step in the Capability Development Mechanism.

The Council looks forward to the further development of the methodologies and the finalisation of the Compilation of Member States Contributions by June 2006 as well as the timely development of the Force Catalogue in the second half of 2006.

Single Progress Report

The Council noted the Single Progress Report on military capabilities, drawn up in line with the EU Capability Development Mechanism, including the Capability Improvement Chart, which records progress made in the development of EU military capabilities since November 2005.

An overview of the chart will keep the public and the media informed.

In this context, the Council welcomed in particular the improvements achieved in the shortfall area of Strategic Airlift through the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS). SALIS is an initiative by 14 Member States and Canada and Norway assuring timely availability of an additional capability to deploy outsized cargo.

With regard to the improvement of the European strategic transport capability the Council welcomed the launch of the initiative "Improving Strategic Airlift Capability Across Europe" and the work done so far. The Council invited the EDA, as part of ongoing work, to identify potential airlift solutions and coordinate requirements between interested participating Member States, keeping the EUMC informed.

With regard to the maritime dimension in ESDP, the Council noted that work is ongoing to investigate the contribution of EU maritime forces in ESDP missions/operations and their use in a rapid response capacity. It looks forward to further progress in this field.

The Council recognized that there has been further progress in capability development since the Helsinki Progress Catalogue 03, but stressed again the urgent need for further progress to be made in the development of military capabilities to remedy the current shortfalls and to address the largely qualitative limitations and constraints stemming from them.

The European Defence Agency, working with the EU Military Committee assisted by the EU Military Staff and in close co-ordination with the Political and Security Committee, gave added impetus to this work.

The Council noted that the EU-NATO Capability Group had continued to address issues of coherent and mutually reinforcing development of military capabilities in the EU and NATO where requirements overlap. All EU Member States were informed of these issues.

Rapid Response

In the context of Rapid Response, the Council noted the successful outcome of the Battlegroups Coordination Conference on 3 May. It is ensured that from January 2007 on the EU will have the full operational capability to undertake two battlegroup size operations of rapid response, including the ability to launch two such operations nearly simultaneously. The Council also welcomed the progress made by its subsidiary bodies in implementing the EU Battlegroups Concept, and particularly on aspects of the Lessons Learned methodology.

The Council recognised that, in line with the “EU Military Rapid Response Concept”, consideration is being given to a Rapid Response Air Initiative for further development within the framework of the Headline Goal 2010. This initiative aims at enhancing the generation of Air Rapid Response elements and proposes a draft concept on European Deployable Air Station.

European Defence Agency

The Council noted the report submitted by the Head of the Agency on its activities and welcomed the progress made.

The Council welcomed in particular the results achieved in pursuance of the Hampton Court Defence R&T agenda. It noted: the proposed targets for increasing Europe’s spending, overall and on collaboration; the way forward on launching ad hoc R&T projects; the approach to develop a European Defence R&T Strategy; and the proposal of a new mechanism for funding and managing joint investment in R&T programmes. The Council noted the recent conclusion of the Agency’s General Conditions, the necessary legal framework for launching R&T projects and programmes.

The Council took note of the progress made concerning the Capabilities priorities under “Hampton Court”, welcoming especially the promising initiatives in the Command, Control and Communications area. It invited the Agency and its participating Member States to continue work on solving the shortfalls in Strategic Lift and Air-to-Air Refuelling, noting the improvements achieved through SALIS.

The Council noted with satisfaction that work was well on track for the implementation of the Code of Conduct on defence procurement on 1 July 2006.

It noted the good co-operation of the European Defence Agency with the Commission on this topic, as well as on others.

The Council welcomed the progress made to develop an initial Long Term Vision for European capability and capacity needs, for Member States’ consideration directly after the summer of 2006. The aim of the

initial LTV is to provide a foundation for follow-on work to better define future ESDP capability needs and to provide an informed context for nearer term industrial, technological and investment decisions.

Looking ahead, the Council stressed the importance of the elaboration of a sound and viable financial framework and agreed priorities for the Agency for the years 2007-2009, to be approved by the Council unanimously in the autumn of 2006.

B. Civil-Military Co-ordination – Management of Operations

The Council noted that effective co-ordination of all the instruments that the EU has at its disposal is necessary for the EU to achieve maximum impact and exert maximum political leverage through its crisis management operations.

The Council therefore welcomed the continued efforts that have been undertaken, building on the work carried out under previous Presidencies to improve Civil-Military Co-ordination: A Framework paper of possible solutions for the management of EU Crisis Management Operations has been noted by the PSC as a living document, open to amendment as and when new developments or operational experience call for it, for example in light of the results of the work being undertaken by the SG/HR as a follow-up to Hampton Court.

The Council underlined that each EU engagement will have a unique character. This paper provides some concrete recommendations and possible solutions for Civil-Military Co-ordination in the field and should serve as an orientation guide for further work, recommendations on which should be made available by July 2006.

While noting that the Framework paper constitutes a further step in improving Civil-Military Coordination, the Council welcomed the intention of the incoming Finnish Presidency to pursue work on Civil-Military Co-ordination.

C. Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the Western Balkans

The Council recalled its conclusions from 21 November 2005 when it noted the EU Concept for ESDP support to Security Sector Reform and recalled that support to SSR in partner countries is a core area for EU action as identified in the European Security Strategy (ESS). It underlined that SSR in the Western Balkans is part of a broader agenda set out at the Thessaloniki summit in 2003 and through the Stabilisation and Association Process which will remain the framework of the European course of these countries.

The Council noted that the EU has continued its engagement through its ESDP operations in the region and is planning for its future engagement in Kosovo in the field of police and rule of law. It also noted that the Community has maintained a number of programmes aimed at supporting Justice, Freedom and Security and that Member States are active on a bilateral basis. It therefore underlined the importance of a comprehensive EU approach to SSR in the Western Balkans, building on existing EU policies and instruments and respecting the following principles which will need flexibility in their implementation:

- Responsibility and ownership for the reform of their security sector lies with the countries in the region themselves;
- SSR is part of the long-standing requirement regarding fostering the rule of law, democratic institutions and respect for internationally agreed human rights principles in the region.
- Democratic accountability and parliamentary control of the security sector is paramount for the development of stable democratic societies. Parliamentary contacts are considered useful in this regard and are encouraged. Information and involvement of the civil society in the region should be sought as well.

- There is a need for a holistic approach towards the region with a view to finding solutions to existing problems and contributing to stability and security; at the same time, the EU's SSR activities should be modulated to the country-specific situation and requirements;
- SSR can contribute to co-operation amongst the countries of the Western Balkans and to the stabilization and development of the entire region. Therefore, SSR projects that support confidence-building and regional co-operation should be encouraged to the extent possible;
- EU support should continue to contribute to fighting organized crime in individual countries and in the region as a whole as well as proactively encourage cooperation between the countries of the region to fight cross-border crime more effectively;
- EU support should be well coordinated within the EU (need for an integrated and cross-pillar approach) and with activities of EU Member States;
- There is a need to coordinate with other international actors and donors active in the region;

Bearing in mind the need for appropriate co-ordination and exchange of information, the Council invited the Council General Secretariat and the Commission to elaborate an overview of ongoing EU SSR activities in the Western Balkans supported by the Council, the Commission and Member States in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure coherence of efforts of all EU actors in this field. This should pave the way for an integrated approach."