

## The European security and defence policy (ESDP) (June 2006)

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[Commentator] It's early morning in a small village in Central Bosnia. Dutch EUFOR soldiers with a Bosnian policeman alongside are going from house to house to search for hidden weapons. More than a decade after the bloody war, people still have guns and grenades in their homes, nervous that the conflict may reignite. European Union peacekeepers reassure villagers, if they hand in their weapons voluntarily, there will be no prosecution. This amnesty, known as Operation Harvest, last year netted 30 000 hand grenades, several thousand small arms and more than a million rounds of ammunition.

[Major General Marco Chiarini (EUFOR Commander)] 'But I think that there is a lot of sympathy between ourselves and the local peoples, because they understand that we are here just to help. Just a few days ago, my Carabinieri gave some cakes to the children, and they responded just to thank them giving them a grenade — 88 mm. So, I mean, this is not exactly what we expected, but that means that there was really a flow of sympathy between my soldiers and the locals.'

[Commentator] Here in Pale, once the headquarters of Bosnian-Serb strongman, Radovan Karadžić, EUFOR troops are setting up roadblocks. It's part of a crackdown on smuggling and organised crime networks, which are threatening economic progress and protecting former warlords. When the EU took over peacekeeping duties from NATO at the end of 2004, their aim was to build confidence among local people. EUFOR soldiers are living in 50 villages throughout the country, getting to know the people, and also gathering intelligence — eyes and ears on the ground, as the search continues for indicted war criminals.

[Major General Marco Chiarini] 'What we would like to have here is a very stable situation and an area in which people can travel freely without fearing of anything at all. Obviously, the progress are slow, but that's normal after a so dramatic war, but the people now are travelling in the country, and I think we have improved a lot. I am really confident that this country is really quite close to a perfect normal situation.'

[Commentator] The 6 000-strong mission in Bosnia is by far the most ambitious EU military deployment to date — a sign of the EU's commitment to the security of the country. The police mission already at work here is further evidence of that commitment as it helps the Bosnian police force meet international standards. It's perhaps fitting that Europe is deploying its new military capabilities here. It was in the Balkans, after all, in the 1990s, that the EU learned many lessons during the break-up of the Former Yugoslavia. An American-led NATO intervention finally ended the conflict. But Europe knew that, in future, it *must* be able to deal with crises on its own doorstep.

[Javier Solana (EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy)] 'The European Union is a group of countries — 25 countries — with a population altogether of double the population of the United States, four times the population of Japan. We have to be an actor in international affairs. We are not to construct an army to go to war. We want to have forces which can be together from different countries in order to maintain peace or to create peace where peace has been broken.'

[Commentator] In 1999, a Summit in Helsinki marked the birth of Europe's security and defence policy. EU leaders pledged to build up a European crisis-management capacity of up to 60 000 soldiers, able to deal with 21st-century dangers. A military structure was established in Brussels, including an EU Military Staff for early-warning strategic planning.

[Lieutenant General Jean-Paul Perruche (Chief of European Military Staff)] 'When you think of the balance of the Cold War, it was terrifying. The world could be destroyed hundreds of times over then. Today we don't face the same sort of threats. The dangers are smaller but more probable. There are more attempts on security — paradoxically — which can occur in the world today than in the old world.'

[Commentator] The crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo was the first test for the EU's peacekeeping operations without NATO involvement. In June 2003, the United Nations asked Europe to intervene. It was to be the first EU military mission outside of Europe, manned mainly by the French, but under an EU flag. The successful Congo Mission showed how the EU *can* play its own role without duplicating the efforts of

NATO. From that, came an ambitious plan to create 13 rapid-reaction ‘battle groups’ of up to 1 500 soldiers which can be sent to stabilise trouble spots or protect humanitarian operations anywhere in the world. The battle groups will be fully operational from January 2007. The key is swift deployment decisions within just five days.

[Geoff Hoon (UK Minister for Europe)] ‘We simply cannot afford to sit back and say we’re going to debate this for several weeks or months before we deploy force. And really, underlying the European approach — ‘battle groups’ — is a recognition that these kinds of modern crisis have to be resolved quickly in order to prevent them getting out of hand, in order to prevent this becoming a still worse problem.’

[Commentator] The battle-group concept is part of a package of defence measures to shake up Europe’s military capabilities by the end of the decade. The European Defence Agency was set up in 2004 to play a key role: to help EU countries rethink and coordinate their EUR 180 billion defence spending.

[Nick Witney (European Defence Agency)] ‘We still collectively across Europe spend too much on heavy metal and high explosive and not enough on those more modern technologies, which are highly relevant to deployed operations around Europe’s periphery — communication technologies, observation technologies. We are, in effect, moving from the industrial age of warfare to the information age. There’s a technological revolution going on.’

[Commentator] But where does NATO fit in as the EU builds up its own military strategies? In reality, Europe’s defence policy is being developed in partnership with the Atlantic Alliance, and a large EU operation, such as in Bosnia, still shares NATO facilities, for example communications and satellite systems.

[Major General Marco Chiarini] ‘We have a very strong relationship with NATO and we are working very well with them. Yes, and they are contributing to our nation with some equipment like communication equipment, for instance, because NATO has very strong communication equipment. But having said that, I think we are just working not vis-à-vis but you would say hand-by-hand. Because, I mean, we are colleagues, and we have no problem working together.’

[Commentator] The EU’s security and defence policy is based on more than just military means. Europe has the huge advantage of being able to call on diplomatic and economic measures to manage crises, as well as civilian intervention. A major EU civilian operation is under way in the Indonesian province of Banda Aceh. Even before the 2004 tsunami, there was a state of emergency here. For 30 years, the Free Aceh Movement — the GAM — had been waging a separatist rebellion. A Peace Agreement was finally obtained in August 2005, and a request made to the European Union to oversee its implementation. So the Aceh Monitoring Mission was born — the AMM — involving more than 200 European monitors, known to everyone because of their white uniforms, the colour to emphasise the entirely civil nature of their mission. An important part of the work is to supervise the handing over and destruction of weapons from the GAM rebels. In return for this disarmament, the Indonesian Government is committed to withdrawing a certain number of troops and police from Aceh province.

[Bror Gevelt (Aceh Monitoring Mission)] ‘What we are doing really is getting contact with the GAM personnel and decide on an area where we should collect the weapons. We have made arrangements with the police and the TNI, which is the military, to safeguard the GAM personnel so they come in safely into the site.’

[Commentator] The European monitoring teams also spend a lot of time going out to meet local people in the more remote villages. At each stop, they listen to the concerns and explain the details of the Peace Agreement.

[Peter Woetmann (Aceh Monitoring Mission)] ‘The most important thing for us is that they read it and they understand it. Make them comfortable about the situation and give them a sort of belief in the future that, this time, it will work — they will have the peace.’

[Commentator] This is the first time the EU has carried out this sort of peace mission in this part of the world and so far from Europe.

[Pieter Feith (Head of the Aceh Monitoring Mission)] ‘We started the presence there already on the day of the signature of the Helsinki Agreement. So what I’m saying is that there was no vacuum in which the parties could again circumvent the commitments they had made or the situation could destabilise. We were there at the right moment in rapid-response deployment and I think that is something we have never done before.’

[Commentator] The EU believes it *can* play a vital role in building lasting peace in Banda Aceh, just as it is doing in a different way in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and no doubt in many other areas of Europe and the world in the future, to demonstrate that the European Union *has* now come of age as a global security player.