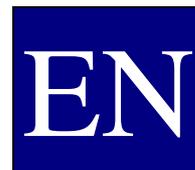




COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



Council conclusions on Military Capability Development

*3055th Foreign Affairs (Defence) Council meeting
Brussels, 9 December 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The Council stressed the need to turn the financial crisis and its impact on national defence budgets into an opportunity, to give a new impetus to European military capability development in order to meet its level of ambition, to address remaining shortfalls and to safeguard the defence capabilities required to support the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as well as to achieve national capability targets, while avoiding unnecessary duplication between Member States.
2. Building on existing processes, the Council highlighted in particular the following solutions:

Cooperation as a force multiplier

3. The Council encouraged Member States to exchange information, as appropriate, and enhance transparency on current and forthcoming defence budget cuts, and to examine the impact of these budget cuts on capability development.
4. With a view to strengthening military capabilities in Europe for sustaining and enhancing CSDP, the Council called on Member States to seize all opportunities to cooperate in the area of capability development. It particularly stressed the need to develop pooling and sharing options, building on successful multilateral examples such as the European Air Transport Command launched in September 2010, and to explore role specialisation.

P R E S S

5. The Council welcomed the input by the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the German-Swedish initiative as contributions to the follow-up to the informal meeting of Defence Ministers in Ghent (September 2010). It encouraged Member States to systematically analyse their national military capabilities and support structures, taking into account criteria such as operational effectiveness, economic efficiency and sustainability. This would form the basis for Member States to consider: measures to increase interoperability for capabilities to be maintained on a national level; exploring which capabilities offer potential for pooling; intensifying cooperation regarding capabilities, support structures and tasks which could be addressed on the basis of role- and task-sharing.
6. The Council encouraged the EDA to intensify its work to facilitate the identification of areas for pooling and sharing, including potentially through the establishment of a Wise Pen Team, taking into account the diversity of experiences across the Member States, and to support Member States in their voluntary efforts to implement pooling and sharing initiatives. The Council underlined that such a Wise Pen Team would rely on an active engagement of the participating Member States.
7. The Council tasked the Political and Security Committee to remain seized of this matter, and agreed to examine progress by mid 2011.
8. In this context the Council also noted the existing bilateral and multilateral initiatives and the signature of agreements between Member States, such as the recent UK-France Defence Cooperation Treaty, which promise to contribute to improving European defence capabilities. These initiatives should help create a dynamic for stimulating further opportunities for cooperation between the Member States.

Civil-military synergies

9. The Council underlined the potential benefits of developing civil-military synergies in capability development and the added-value of dual use capabilities. In this regard, it emphasized the need for further cooperation between the European Defence Agency and the European Commission, notably in research and technology.
10. With a view to avoiding unnecessary costs and duplication, the Council underlined the need for the Member States and other relevant EU actors, to channel as appropriate military requirements, standards and other ongoing developments to those civilian bodies whose activities may have implications for the defence community.

EU-NATO cooperation in capability development

11. The Council reiterated the need for continuing to develop cooperation with NATO regarding the development of military capabilities, adhering to the principles of inclusiveness and autonomy of decision-making. The Council welcomed progress in the areas of Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices and Medical Support, two essential domains for the protection and sustainability of troops. It looked forward to the rapid implementation of the proposals and stressed the need to continue staff-to-staff contacts on capability development, with a view to identifying possible additional areas of concrete cooperation under the political guidance of the PSC, the outcomes of which will be available to all Member States.

Potential of the Lisbon Treaty

12. The Council underlined the need to take advantage of the post-Lisbon context, including the establishment of the European External Action Service, as a catalyst for reinforcing coordination leading to a better and more coherent utilization of resources. Possibilities for the use of Permanent Structured Cooperation shall be explored in order to enhance defence capabilities with a view to strengthen the EU's ability to respond to crises.

Way ahead

13. The Council invited the High Representative to take forward work on these solutions, cooperating closely with Member States through the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee and the EDA, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Council invited the High Representative to present a report on the state of play by mid 2011."
