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**Address by
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**at the European Security and Defence Policy Conference:
"From Cologne to Berlin and beyond - Operations, institutions and capabilities"**

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Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me first thank the German Presidency for organising this seminar. I can think of no better place for us to take stock together on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) than in Berlin, following the tremendously successful operation EUFOR RD Congo that concluded just before the end of 2006, and at the start of this important Presidency. Thank you.

Today we cover operations, institutions and capabilities. As we look back at the past, we can understand how far we have come and how much we have accomplished. But we are also reminded of the challenges ahead and the need to be ready for the future.

Operations:

Let us have a look at operations first:

Last year, the European Union conducted 10 operations with around 10 000 men and women serving in them. The global reach and the scope of these different operations is striking. Across three continents, they cover the spectrum from 'pure' military operations - through security-sector reform and institution building - to police and rule-of-law missions. And their impact is significant. From Aceh to Rafah, and from Kinshasa to Sarajevo, the EU is providing the "key enablers" for peace and stability.

- In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a country which has seen three million of its citizens killed in a five-year conflict, we acted decisively to ensure that the electoral process enabled the peaceful transition to a democratically elected government.
- In Aceh, the EU moved quickly with its Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) partners to capitalise on their post-Tsunami desire for peace and opportunity.
- In Rafah, we acted two weeks after an Israeli and Palestinian request to enable the opening of the border crossing point. By working alongside Israelis and Palestinians, we provide the only safety valve for the pressure cooker that is Gaza.

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- In the West Bank, in Kinshasa, in Darfur and in Bosnia and Herzegovina we mentor, monitor and support the local police.
- Also in Bosnia and Herzegovina our military force, run under the Berlin Plus arrangements, continues to ensure a safe and secure environment.
- We also have security-sector reform and rule-of-law training missions in the DRC and Iraq respectively.

And the demand on the EU is increasing. This year, we will add to these responsibilities the conduct of a police and rule-of-law mission in Kosovo and a police mission in Afghanistan. In Kosovo, we will launch our largest ever civilian mission. It is already clear that this mission will form a critical part of the agenda for ESDP this year and beyond. It is also right that we take on a greater operational role in our 'backyard' and our planning for this mission is well under way.

Combined, these operations represent a significant engagement by the EU on the key stability challenges. The EU has responded to the demands of its Member States, to the demands of countries in crisis and to the calls for help from the UN. And we had to respond to the changing world, even before our doctrines and structures had caught up completely.

Let us look back and remember that the original design of our crisis-management structures was based on - understandably - developing an EU capacity to respond to the past Balkan crises. A 60 000 strong military force in 60 days for up to a year. The civilian missions were neatly divided into police, rule-of-law and civilian administration.

Of course, this was an assessment of future requirements, based on past needs. But the reality was ARTEMIS (the EU military operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and EUFOR Congo, and a series of new security support missions - such as political, financial, police and military support to African Union Mission in the Darfur region of Sudan (AMIS), a security-sector reform mission - and disarmament and border monitoring missions (in Aceh and Rafah).

Each crisis threw up its own set of different and unpredicted requirements: some required a rapid, robust military response to the centre of Africa, some a rapid deployment of police and border monitors to a Middle East hotspot. Some, such as Aceh, support to AMIS and EUSEC (EU mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo) required a different mix of civilian and military instruments.

The battlegroups concept has been validated. It is not just a concept but already a reality. And, increasingly, our battlegroups capacity is at the heart of the EU's ability to act quickly and robustly where needed. But what all operations had in common was that they required a joined-up agile, tailor-made and rapid response, each drawing on a mixture of civilian, military, economic, political and institution-building tools. This - rightly - is becoming our trademark. And this is why we are in demand.

And where we have acted we have succeeded. We have helped governments take forward their peace processes and we have helped to make those processes more sustainable by strengthening their institutions. Most of all, although much remains to be done, of course, in all of these places, we have improved the lives of people and given them hope.

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

Beyond this, let's look at how ESDP has changed our Union, and our wider impact on the world. CFSP has changed our Union and how we interact with the world. It is a vital, visible and effective part of our daily lives. Imagine a world where there were no unified positions of the EU: on Iran, on the Middle East, on Africa, on climate change and on the Doha Round?

It is true that the business of reaching unified positions is sometimes painful. But this is just a fraction of the pain felt when a common position is not reached. And, when we don't agree, the pain is not just felt by ourselves, but often far beyond. Fortunately, this is not often the case.

CFSP strengthens the effectiveness of ESDP. The political framework gives our operations clear objectives and deep support. And ESDP has made CFSP more credible, and it has given our dialogue with third countries strength.

It makes multilateralism effective, and it helps shape the thinking of others. It means we can act together to address a range of different issues that concern us. Our unity, our influence and our action benefits us, of course. But it also serves many others. And, actually, it is often easier for us to act together than alone. Solidarity and shared political objectives are good force generators, and our collective weight counts. It is also true that in many cases Member States can no longer act alone to any great effect.

Now, can you imagine a Europe that is just a Europe of dialogue and common positions and no action? Not for many people in Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans – who have benefited from our action. And not for many citizens of our own countries or for our many partners around the world who have been calling for more European action and not less.

However, all this risks could make us a victim of our success. We are called upon to undertake more missions and in more difficult circumstances. In Africa or in Asia, on nuclear issues, man-made or natural disasters - we are being solicited. And we have no choice but to be ready and to say "Yes".

Therefore, we need to make sure we are structured and staffed to meet all these different challenges. Important decisions such as those establishing the Civilian/military Cell and the Operations Centre, have to be followed by further developments if we want to be up to the task.

Institutions:

So let us look at institutions briefly: many of the tools we could have used to be more efficient and effective, and to equip us for the 21st Century, were contained in the draft constitution. I fully support Chancellor Merkel's efforts to seek a resolution to this issue. It is worth noting that despite many dire predictions for the EU in 2006, it was one of our busiest years and not without its successes.

In a great speech to the European Parliament, Chancellor Merkel compared the EU to a house in which we all live. Well, in the ESDP wing of the house, we have also been building it and extending it at the same time. And now it is time to do some renovation.

Last year, in the light of six years of experience, we decided to make a number of simple changes to strengthen the coherence, the assessment and implementation capacity in Brussels. They are the minimum that are required now.

We have set up a board, that will see that consolidated advice is prepared at important moments during the planning and conduct of an operation, and to ensure coherence. The Political and Security Committee (PSC) chair will attend at key moments, and this is a good thing.

Following the practice in a number of Member States and following the demands of past Operation Commanders, we have brought together the civilian and military intelligence and assessment capacity, to provide a single, comprehensive service to all those engaged in the planning, conduct and oversight of operations.

To strengthen the civilian chain of command, we will have a civilian operation commander for our civilian missions. He will be responsible for the direction and support of civilian Heads of Mission. We are now examining what structure would best allow the Civilian Operation Commander to fulfil his tasks. This should build on present structures and contribute to enhancing civilian-military cooperation in the planning and conduct of operations. It should also improve the use of existing assets. A watch-keeping facility intended to provide a more comprehensive service to communicate with our missions on the ground will be established.

We will also establish closer and more systematic coordination between civilian and military staffs, and, when required, we will also concentrate them in a combined planning group that can operate in Brussels and beyond.

Finally, the facilities of our Operations Centre are ready to be used, thereby increasing the possibilities for and flexibility of an EU military response as well as the overall capacity of the ESDP. In response to the mandate I received from the EU Heads of State and Government at Hampton Court, I will soon be taking forward the remaining steps in order to further enhance the EU's crisis-management capability.

Finally, we all know change is not always easy. But if the world continues to change, then we all have to change too.

Capacities:

On capacities, our starting point must be: will we be able to act in response to a range of likely threats to our interests and values? What know what these threats are. We have analysed them very successfully in our European Security Strategy, where we also set down how we should become more capable:

- establishment of a defence agency
- systematic use of pooled and shared assets
- greater capacity to bring all necessary civilian resources to bear in crisis and post-crisis situations
- common threat assessments
- wider spectrum of missions, including disarmament operations and security-sector reform
- and the EU-NATO permanent arrangements.

Here our record, I'm afraid, is a bit more mixed.

On the positive side, we have established the Defence Agency and it has taken some significant steps forward. The launch of the 22 nation Code of Conduct on defence procurement became operational last summer, and it started the move towards the creation of a genuine defence equipment market in Europe. This means that national defence contracts are open to Europe-wide suppliers.

It has also launched a Joint Investment Programme on Force Protection, in which 20 Member States, with Germany playing a key role, participate with 50 million Euros. In line with our Security Strategy, we have defined our level of ambition and the required level of resources in our military and civilian Headline Goals. The Agency's Long-Term Vision paper looks ahead to a 20-year horizon and helps us understand what we need to do now, to be ready for then.

We have also enjoyed two successful operations conducted through our permanent arrangements with NATO. They have been so successful in fact that one has been concluded and the other is about to be downsized! We have also worked closely and effectively side-by-side in Darfur, and we will be doing so in Kosovo and Afghanistan this year.

But, on the negative side, it is by no means certain that we are on track to meet all our military capability shortfalls set out in the Headline Goal 2010, or in the civilian Headline Goal 2008. And there is no mystery why. We need to spend more and to spend better. Only a handful of Member States' defence spending is over two per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Furthermore, the United States defence budget is more than twice the aggregate of European defence spending – and over 30 per cent of it goes on research and equipment.

In Europe, we invest less than 20 per cent of our spending in that way. Consider research and development, and the mismatch is even worse. Defence research and development spending by European governments is now only about one-sixth of what the Pentagon spends. No surprise, then, that North America holds five times as many aerospace and defence patents as Europe!

On the civilian side, Member States have not yet fully addressed how to resource additional police, prosecutors, judges and penitentiary officials for external deployment, when they are usually in short supply at home. If we don't change this, then we have to face up to the fact that supply will not meet demand, and ambition will be greater than the capability to realise it. Of course political willingness to act and take risks in support of our values is the most important capability of all. However, it is interesting that there is often more willingness when there is more capability.

I just wanted to make a final remark: from Cologne, June 1999, no-one could have envisaged the operational challenges we were asked to face. But we succeeded. As we look to the next seven years, it is likely that we will have to address as much – if not more – uncertainty in the world. We must make sure that we are clear about one thing – our willingness and our capacity to act, and to act successfully.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much.
