



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on pooling and sharing of military capabilities**

*3157th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting  
Brussels, 22 and 23 March 2012*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council emphasizes the urgent political necessity to retain and develop the military capabilities for sustaining and enhancing CSDP. European cooperation on pooling and sharing of military capabilities represents a common response to European capability shortfalls, aiming at enhancing operational effectiveness in a context of financial austerity and a changing strategic environment. Military capabilities and the political will to generate forces underpin the EU's ability to contribute to security and stability through operational engagement.
2. In this context the Council welcomes the significant progress on concrete cooperative initiatives facilitated by the European Defence Agency (EDA) such as on Air-to-Air Refuelling, Medical Support, Training (Counter-IED, Helicopter Training Programme, Air Transport Crew, Fast Jet and Naval) and Maritime Surveillance. The EDA Steering Board on 22 March 2012 endorsed a Political Declaration on Air-to-Air Refuelling and welcomed a Declaration of Intent for the establishment of Multinational Modular Medical Units. These projects, as well as other collaborative projects established by Member States within bilateral or regional frameworks, constitute a package of concrete initiatives developed so far as part of the Ghent process for strengthening defence cooperation. They underline the strong commitment of Member States to strengthen European military capabilities and demonstrate the added value of European actions and efforts in that regard and the long-term potential of pooling and sharing, bearing in mind the upcoming NATO Chicago Summit.
3. The Council also calls for further efforts in Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Future Military Commercial Satellites (SATCOM), Smart Munitions, and Naval Logistics and encourages continuous work on Training and Education facilitated by the EUMS.

# **P R E S S**

4. The Council welcomes the cooperation between the EU and NATO on military capability development for crisis management, in particular the Pooling and Sharing and Smart Defence initiatives. It notes with satisfaction the productive contacts between the staffs of the two organisations, and strongly encourages these contacts to continue in a transparent manner in order to avoid duplication, ensure coherence and mutually reinforcing capability development.
  5. While significant progress has been made, the Council reiterates the need for a more sustainable and structured policy on Pooling and Sharing on the longer term. Systematic cooperation will require a change of mindset and continuous political momentum and commitment. The Council encourages Member States, in the very early stages of their national processes, to systematically explore the possibility for Pooling and Sharing solutions.
  6. In the context of further developing the systematic approach to Pooling and Sharing, the Council welcomes the work conducted in the framework of the EDA on enablers for multinational cooperation. Pooling demand, harmonising procedures for qualification/certification, and sharing surplus equipment, will support capability improvements and reduce through-life costs. Noting the potential of “Save and Reinvest”, the Council invites EDA to explore this further.
  7. Acknowledging the wider implications of defence for technology, innovation and growth, the Council notes with concern the overall reduction of defence Research and Technology investment and its implications on Europe's ability to develop future defence capabilities. The Council reiterates its commitment to cooperation in Research and Technology. It encourages the EDA and the Commission to pursue synergies with European policies and in particular in the field of Research and Technology, including regarding the new European Framework Programme for Research and Technology (Horizon 2020). This will contribute to strengthening the European Defence Industrial and Technological Base."
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