



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

*2943rd EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 18 May 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"I. ESDP OPERATIONS AND MISSIONS

South Caucasus

EUMM Georgia

1. The Council welcomed the work done by the mission in contributing to stabilising, normalising and confidence building in Georgia. The Council also welcomed EUMM's involvement in establishing an Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in theatre. It reaffirmed its determination that the mission would continue to implement its mandate with the same level of engagement over the coming months in close co-operation with other international actors on the ground. The Council noted the lessons and recommendations identified regarding the planning phase of the mission.

Western Balkans

Operation ALTHEA

2. The Council assessed Operation ALTHEA and approved the recommendations made in the Secretary General/High Representative's six-monthly report on the operation.

P R E S S

3. The Council noted that, despite the challenging political environment, the security situation in Bosnia-and-Herzegovina (BiH) remained stable. The Council welcomed the positive contribution of the force to the safe and secure environment in BiH, and added that the EU-led force (EUFOR) continued to provide reassurance and remained ready to respond to possible security challenges throughout the country.
4. The Council welcomed the progress on the preparatory work for a possible evolution of Operation ALTHEA. The Council approved, for planning purposes, the Concept, and the Provisional Statement of Requirements, for the possible evolution of Operation ALTHEA towards a non-executive capacity-building and training operation, in the light of advice and conclusions of relevant Council bodies. The Council reconfirmed that it would keep this planning work under regular review so that a decision on the future of the operation could be taken once the necessary conditions had been met. The Council reiterated that approval of the Concept does not prejudge a political decision on the possible evolution of Operation ALTHEA, which would need to take political developments, including the future role of the EU Special Representative, into account.
5. Coherence of EU action in BiH - involving all EU actors including the Commission and EU Heads of Mission - remains important. The EU Force Commander, the EUSR and the Head of EUPM continue to consult each other regularly prior to taking action. EUFOR has also maintained a close working relationship, including on operational matters, with other international actors. Cooperation with NATO continues to work well in respect of Operation ALTHEA.

EULEX Kosovo

6. The Council welcomed the declaration of full operational capability for the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO) on 6 April 2009. The Council commended the mission's efforts to ensure a successful deployment of all components throughout Kosovo. The Council noted with satisfaction the initial results achieved by EULEX KOSOVO in assisting the Kosovo authorities in consolidating the rule of law and in contributing to a safe and secure environment for all inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origins. The implementation of the EULEX KOSOVO mandate will play an important role in strengthening the stability of the region, in line with its European perspective.

EUPM Bosnia and Herzegovina

7. The Council welcomed the efforts carried out by EUPM to achieve its mandate and noted the important role played by the mission as part of the overall EU efforts to stabilise BiH with a view to its European perspective. It welcomed the support provided by the mission to BiH authorities in the fight against organised and serious crime, in the implementation of police reform and in improving the coordination between the police and the judiciary system.

8. The mission will continue its activities until the end of its mandate, contributing to the comprehensive EU enhanced engagement in BiH. In due time, the Council will decide on the prospects and conditions for a civilian ESDP engagement in BiH beyond 2009. EUPM will continue to work closely with the OHR/EUSR and in the future with the reinforced EUSR.

Asia

EUPOL Afghanistan

9. The Council reaffirmed its determination to make a significant contribution to the reform of the Afghan national police, and welcomed the continued and increasing deployment, in Kabul and in sixteen provinces of Afghanistan, as well as the planned deployment of the mission to two additional provinces in Eastern Afghanistan of the EUPOL Afghanistan Mission. The Council welcomed the progress made by the mission during the last months, at strategic, operational and tactical levels, in particular in the key areas of anti-corruption strategy for the Ministry of Interior and the Afghan National Police, intelligence-led policing / criminal investigations and linkages with the wider rule of law. The Council also welcomed EUPOL Afghanistan's central role in the training of the Afghan police on its role and performance during the upcoming elections.

Middle East

EUJUST LEX

10. The Council welcomed that EUJUST LEX will be extended for one year and that the mission is preparing the first pilot activities on Iraqi territory to provide training, strategic advice and mentoring to senior officials of the Iraqi Criminal Justice Sector, as the security conditions allow. The Council underlined the strong commitment of the European Union to the support of the area of rule of law in Iraq, more specifically to the police, the penitentiary and the judiciary.

EUPOL COPPS

11. The Council welcomed the work done by the mission so far in the area of police and criminal justice. The Council agreed to take work forward on addressing further action in the broader rule of law in the Palestinian Territories. EUPOL COPPS activities in this area will enhance synergies with Community action in this field.

EUBAM Rafah

12. The Council confirmed the EU's readiness to redeploy at the Rafah Crossing Point, in case circumstances allow. The Council underlined that since the closure of the Rafah Crossing Point the mission has maintained its operational capability.

Africa

Operation ATALANTA/EU NAVFOR

13. Following the launch in December 2008 of Operation Atalanta, the first ESDP military maritime operation, in support of UN Security Council Resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008), 1846 (2008) and 1851 (2008), the Council reiterated its readiness to contribute actively to the improvement of maritime security off the Somali coast, in the context of the European Union's overall action to help stabilize Somalia.
14. The Council commended Atalanta's achievements to date, particularly the protection of World Food Programme vessels delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia, its contribution to the protection of vulnerable vessels sailing in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast, including ships aiming at sustaining the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and its contribution to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast. The Council welcomed the Norwegian decision to participate in Operation Atalanta with naval assets.
15. The Council expressed its concern at the surge in piracy acts occurring at distances increasingly remote from the coastlines of East Africa. It recognized the complex challenges involved and called for an enhanced and further coordinated effort from the international community. The EU participates in the work of the International Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and has established cooperative frameworks and arrangements to enable Operation Atalanta to cooperate effectively with other naval forces and assets deployed in the region. Coordination with the maritime community has been actively pursued, including through the support provided by Atalanta's Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa.
16. The Council welcomed the exchange of letters between the EU and Kenya for the transfer of piracy suspects detained by Operation Atalanta. This arrangement constitutes an important contribution to counter-piracy efforts. In this context, it welcomed the contribution which the European Commission will provide to the Kenyan judicial system. It further welcomed that efforts are being made also to conclude arrangements with other countries in the region.
17. The Council noted that a broad involvement of all interested actors/parties to build institutional capacity and restore the Law and Order ashore is required to provide a lasting response to the root causes of piracy. The International Conference in support of the Somali Security Institutions held in Brussels on 23 April 2009 represented an important contribution towards the establishment of the Somali Security forces and the civilian Somali Police Force in line with the Djibouti Agreement of August 2008.

Operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA

18. Following the successful and timely transfer of authority between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and the UN mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) on 15 March 2009, the Council welcomed the fulfilment of EUFOR's mandate and underlined the exemplary cooperation at all levels between the European Union and the United Nations during the conduct phase of the operation. Lessons will have to be learned from this cooperation, but it can already serve as a basis for future collaboration.
19. The Council noted that, throughout its mandate, EUFOR made a tangible contribution towards the protection of civilians and in particular refugees and displaced persons, affected by the neighbouring crisis in Darfur, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, and protecting the staff of the United Nations. In observance of its mandate, EUFOR acted in an impartial, neutral and independent manner.
20. The Council underlined the importance of the global and regional approach which was followed in planning and conducting this operation, thereby maximising the EU's impact on the ground.
21. During the latter stages of EUFOR's mandate, the planning effort was progressively focused on the hand over to MINURCAT and recovery of EUFOR. To this end, effective collaborative planning with the United Nations was undertaken. Planning support, information and data transfer, contractual arrangements and reverse support on the ground ensured an efficient hand over. Around 2 000 troops from European countries who served under EUFOR are currently under the MINURCAT banner, which further underlines European support to UN peacekeeping operations.
22. The Council pointed out that EUFOR's redeployment did not mark the end of the European Union's involvement in Chad, in the Central African Republic or in the region as a whole. The European Union remains active at a political and diplomatic level in Chad, in the Central African Republic and especially in Sudan. The European Union continues to be active also in the region in the field of humanitarian and development activities.

EUSEC RD Congo

23. Restoration of governance in general and defence reform in particular remain central factors in creating lasting conditions for stability in DRC. To contribute towards that goal, EUSEC's continued cooperation with the DRC Government and close coordination of EUSEC with EUPOL RD Congo, the Community activities and Member States' bilateral activities, as well as with the UN and other relevant international actors are of great importance.

24. The Council underlined the importance of EUSEC's key tasks of providing advice and assistance for security sector reform with the aim of contributing to the Congolese efforts to restructure and reform the Congolese army, including through contributing with specific EUSEC expertise to the integration of CNDP and other armed groups, and via a number of practical activities. Launched in December 2005, the "chain of payment" project has now at the request of the Congolese authorities been extended to all army personnel. On 29 December 2008, EUSEC RDC completed the census of the FARDC. By this date, approximately 130.000 military personnel were identified. EUSEC will continue to assist in the organisation of FARDC administration.
25. To complement in a coherent manner its primary advisory role in the reform of the army, EUSEC implements or supervises projects in areas such as Gender, Human Rights, Health and Infrastructure, financed or initiated by Member States and/or the EC. The Council underlined that these projects currently play a determining role in increasing the visibility and the credibility of actions undertaken at the strategic level.

EUPOL RD Congo

26. The Council welcomed the work of the EUPOL RD Congo Mission in supporting the reform of the Congolese national police and its interaction with justice. The Council noted the decision on setting up a Project Cell within EUPOL RD Congo with a complementary approach in order to implement small projects within the mission's mandate and also to provide reinforced coordination and technical assistance to Member States and Third States that so require to their own projects and under their own responsibility. The extension of the mission's mandate until 30 June 2010 has been agreed in principle.

EU SSR Guinea-Bissau

27. The Council welcomed the work accomplished by the EU SSR GUINEA-BISSAU mission. The Council decided in May 2009 to extend the mission EU SSR GUINEA-BISSAU for six months, i.e. until the end of November 2009. The purpose of the extension is mainly to fully accomplish the mission's current mandate, to further explore the capacity and the commitment of the new government to carry forward the reform process and to assess the willingness of the International Community to support it.

Human Rights; Gender and Children Affected by Armed Conflict

28. The Council welcomed and further recalled the importance of the systematic consideration of Human Rights, Gender and Children Affected by Armed Conflict in the planning and conduct of ESDP missions and operations, including their mandates and staffing, and in the subsequent lessons learned process. The Council also emphasized the importance of close co-operation on these issues with the Special Representatives of the European Union (EUSRs), as well as with the Commission. The Council recognizes the importance of cooperation with local actors, such as NGOs and civil society.

29. In this context, the Council commended the efforts made to date in implementing the substance of UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 in ESDP missions and operations with the aim of achieving more concrete progress on gender issues and thus adding to the credibility and effectiveness of those missions and operations on the ground.

II. CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CRISIS MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES

Civilian Capabilities

Civilian Headline Goal 2010

30. The Council welcomed the adoption of Civilian Capability Improvement Plan in January 2009 in accordance with the Civilian Headline Goal (CHG) 2010 and in line with the Declaration on strengthening capabilities adopted by the Council and endorsed by the European Council in December 2008. The Council noted that the implementation in the first half of 2009 was focused on the development of the Goalkeeper software environment (Civilian Capability Management Tool) and on the reflection on national strategies facilitating the deployment of civilian personnel for ESDP.
31. The Council recalled the informal discussion among Foreign Ministers in Hluboka in March 2009 on the need to further develop civilian capabilities. It stressed the need to make progress in this field.

Force Generation

32. The Council welcomed progress recently made in the field of force generation, notably in human and financial resources and provision of equipment. Improved procedures have been put in place as far as selection of staff, calls for contribution and standardised job descriptions are concerned.

Lessons Learned

33. The Council looked forward to full implementation of the guidelines on identifying and implementing lessons and best practices in civilian ESDP missions, adopted in November 2008. In particular, it underscored the need to take forward the work on implementing lessons agreed to date and new horizontal, thematic reports on lessons.

Military Capabilities

Headline Goal 2010

34. The Council welcomed progress made by Member States in the development of military capabilities, including in the light of the Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities adopted by the European Council in December 2008, which will contribute to enhancing the EU's crisis management capacity. The Council called for continued efforts in this regard.

35. The Council noted the Force Catalogue 2009 which includes revised contributions made by Member States and looked forward to the results of the assessment of these new contributions.
36. The Council noted the Single Progress Report and that work has continued on capability development in accordance with the Methodology for Measuring Progress and Reviewing Priorities and following the Report on lessons identified from the Headline Goal 2010 process.
37. The Council recalled the 2010 horizon of the Headline Goal. The Council noted that initial reflections on the post 2010 horizon are ongoing and encouraged reflections to be pursued with a view to fostering the delivery of European capabilities.
38. The Council underlined the importance of the initial Capability Development Plan (CDP), as agreed in July 2008, to help Member States orientate their capability plans. The Council welcomed the cooperative work launched by the Military Committee and the European Defence Agency on the first tranche of twelve CDP priority actions.
39. The Council welcomed the ongoing work on options which would facilitate the potential use of multinational forces in ESDP operations without prejudice to existing national decision making procedures.
40. The Council stressed the importance of the interoperability of military forces, including with civilian actors. It noted that work is ongoing on this issue and welcomed the cooperative efforts made to this end by Member States taking into account the expertise of relevant organisations and entities.
41. The Council welcomed the approval of the EU Concept for Special Operations which defines the tasks and characteristics of military special operations and provides the principles for the use of Special Operations forces across the full range of EU-led military operations.
42. The Council noted the ongoing developments relating to the EU Operations Wide Area Network (EU OPS WAN) and the accreditation of national Operation and Force Headquarters with the remaining potential EU Headquarters currently in the process of being accredited or connected to the EU OPS WAN. The Council looked forward to other capability improvements aimed at enhancing secure exchange of information between EU bodies, Operation Headquarters (OHQs) and Member States.
43. The Council welcomed increased cooperation between EU military and civilian bodies to support both EU military and civilian capability development processes and facilitate synergies between these processes as appropriate.

Rapid Response

44. The Council welcomed the revision of the Military Rapid Response concept which defines the military rapid response time as a period from 5 to 30 days from the approval of the Crisis Management Concept to the moment when operations commence in the Joint Operations Area. The Council recalled the importance of maintaining a high level of ambition in Rapid Response.

45. The Council noted that an analysis of the impact of the revised Military Rapid Response concept on the Air and Maritime Rapid Response concepts has been undertaken. It underlined the need to ensure an overall coherence of all concepts relating to Rapid Response. The Council welcomed the results of the Air and Maritime Rapid Response Information Conferences held in October and April.
46. The Council welcomed the results of the six-monthly Battlegroup Coordination Conference held on 23 April where Member States committed in detail the required BG packages until the second Semester in 2010 and committed further packages until the second Semester in 2011. The Council encouraged further contributions by volunteering Member States beyond 2011.

Organisation Development

47. The Council looked forward to the appointment of a Deputy Director General who will head the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) and to the implementation of the organisational measures taken by the Secretary General High Representative to establish the CMPD with the aim to further improve EU civilian and military coordination. The Council noted that the relevant documents will be amended accordingly.
48. The Council noted that the implementation of the Post Wiesbaden measures has generated significant improvement in the ability of the EU to undertake early military planning in support of informed decision-making and welcomed the final report on this issue.

European Defence Agency (EDA)

49. The Council welcomed the good progress made in implementing the EDA strategic framework completed last year, including with the establishment of concrete projects and initiatives and associated policies:
 - Capability Development Plan (CDP): Nine out of the first tranche of twelve CDP priority actions have been taken forward by the EDA. For most of the nine actions, related Strategic Context Cases for collaborative projects within the EU have been developed.
 - European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB): Work on identifying key industrial capabilities for preservation or development in Europe has been tested in the area of Future Air Systems. The Steering Board approved the Reporting Monitoring System for the Code of Conduct on Offsets adopted last October, which will be critical to make the Code fully effective, transparent and accountable between subscribing Member States. All subscribers to the Defence Procurement Regime will apply the Code of Conduct on Offsets (25 participating Member States plus Norway), to start on 1 July this year. Furthermore, efforts to open up national defence markets in Europe have been intensified. Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Defence Procurement through the Electronic Bulletin Board on “Government Contracts” is on the whole positive, with an increase in the percentage of cross-border awarded contracts.

- In order to turn the European Armaments Cooperation Strategy into reality, the Steering Board approved a roadmap describing the application of the Guide to conduct programme preparation, education, best practice, and standardisation.
- European Defence Research and Technology Strategy: Work has continued on identifying cross-links between common Research and Technology (R&T) priorities and CDP priorities with a view to defining key technologies directly linked with CDP needs. Integrated roadmaps for fully transversal collaborative projects resulting from the CDP/R&T connectivity were developed for four areas (with Maritime Mine Counter Measures, CBRN, Counter MANPADs and Counter Improvised Explosive Devices).
- The implementation of the Joint Investment Programmes on Force Protection and on ICET (Innovative Concept and Emerging Technologies) has been providing useful experience, which should be taken into account when considering possible further ad hoc (category A) R&T programmes.

50. The Council welcomed the establishment and/or implementation of concrete cooperative projects and the preparation of other important initiatives. It took note, in particular, of the following ones:

- Good progress continued on activities to improve helicopters' availability in the short, medium and long-term in full cooperation and complementarity with the multinational Helicopter Fund and NATO agencies, as appropriate. Concerning the short-term activity – related to training, EDA has been preparing the ground for the launch, in 2010, of the European Programme for Helicopter Tactics Training. Its content will be shaped by the outcome of ongoing work, the two EDA studies and the EDA supported multinational exercise which took place this March.

As for the medium-term, options for upgrading existing helicopters have been developed, with initial focus on Mi-Helicopters.

For the longer term - beyond 2020 – the ad hoc (category B) project on the “Future Transport Helicopter”, based on a Franco-German initiative, was established in the Agency’s remit.

- Work on the establishment of a European Air Transport Fleet (EATF) has progressed. The status of the preparations for the Letter of Intent (including its skeleton), was presented to Ministers at the Steering Board on 18 May, with a view to its signature next November.
- The European Third Party Logistics Support (TPLS) Platform was established, for a nine months trial phase, with the aim of providing a solution for improving awareness on existing options for contracting services in support of Crisis Management Operations.
- The MUSIS (Multinational Space-based Imaging System) ad hoc project related to the second generation of military earth observation satellites was established.
- A new EDA Project Team dedicated to Space Situational Awareness (SSA) was established.

- Positive progress has been made on preparing the establishment of a European Satellite Communication Procurement Cell, in the dedicated Ad-Hoc Project Group.
 - Work has continued in the EDA on an integrated approach to Maritime Surveillance in consultation with all the relevant actors, and in particular with the Commission.
 - In order to address the European shortfall in biological detection, identification and monitoring, a new project (Biological Equipment Development and Enhancement Programme – Bio EDEP) was established in EDA, with the aim to provide participating Member States’ forces with a robust and reliable protection system by 2015.
 - EDA is collaborating with the Council General Secretariat on the identification of Information Exchange Requirements (IERs), and was encouraged to pursue its work in order to identify clear Communications and Information Systems (CIS) requirements for potential common projects.
51. EDA has intensified its working relationships with the Commission and other relevant bodies, including OCCAR (Organisation conjointe de coopération en matière d'armement), the European Space Agency and NATO, in accordance with the Joint Action establishing EDA and in consultation with the participating Member States.
52. The Agency has increased its efforts to seek synergies between its defence R&T work and the Commission’s activities on civil security Research, e.g. in the area of the Software Defined Radio, force protection and Space. The Agency was tasked by the Steering Board in Defence Ministers formation to prepare, working together with the European Commission, a European framework cooperation for synchronising defence and civilian security-related research activities, taking fully into account the respective competences and decision-making procedures of the different institutions.
53. On 2 April the Steering Board approved a Directive to the Head of Agency to negotiate an Administrative Arrangement (AA) with OCCAR, on the basis of agreed Principles, with a view to submitting the draft AA for the Council’s approval next November. The Council endorsed the EDA's Steering Board recommendation to take forward work on the establishment of a Security Agreement between the EU and OCCAR, with the objective of it being available in time for the approval of the draft Administrative Arrangement between the Agency and OCCAR.

EU Satellite Centre (EUSC)

54. The Council welcomed the support provided by the EUSC to the military operations of the EU, in particular its support to the operations Atalanta and EUFOR Tchad/RCA, as well as its increasing role in support to the EU civilian missions, in particular in the support to the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

55. The Council encouraged the facilitated access of the EUSC to governmental imagery, in particular in areas where access to commercial imagery is limited. In this regard, the Council welcomed the use of Helios II imagery, in particular for EUFOR Tchad/RCA, and looked forward to the use of Cosmo-Skymed and Sar-Lupe imagery.
56. The Council encouraged the EUSC to continue to explore cooperative opportunities where benefits for further improvement in EU crisis response capabilities could arise.

Training

57. The Council noted with satisfaction that two pilot courses initiated and organised by Member States under the aegis of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), the first on Security Sector Reform and the second on mission planning at the strategic level, have been established by the ESDC Steering Committee as formal courses.
58. As regards the future format of the ESDC, work is ongoing on the elaboration of a new Council Decision evolving the European Security and Defence College in line with the ESDC Steering Committee recommendations approved by the Council in December 2008.
59. With regard to the implementation of the measures agreed on 10 November 2008, the Council welcomed the progress on the European initiative on the exchange of young officers during their initial training inspired by Erasmus as presented by the SG/HR in his special report on the voluntary initiative. The Council noted with satisfaction ongoing work focused in particular on stocktaking of the current exchange activities, the development of common training modules and their conduct, the establishment of an information platform including a discussion forum and the development of a legal framework document for the exchange of officers.

Exercises

CME 08

60. The Council welcomed the successful conduct of the exercise and the fact that the majority of its objectives were achieved. It provided a tangible opportunity to undertake co-ordinated and synchronised planning for an ESDP military operation and a civilian ESDP mission engaged in the same theatre. The Council recalled the importance of effective civil-military co-ordination. The Council looked forward to implementation of lessons identified as a result of the exercise. The EU OHQ activated at Mont Valérien for command of EUFOR Tchad/RCA conducted that ESDP operation and planned the ESDP operation within the exercise at the same time. The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) conducted a number of missions and planned the reconfiguration of the ESDP mission within the exercise at the same time.

CME 09

61. The Council underlined the importance of continued preparatory work for the EU crisis management exercise CME 09.

62. CME 09 will focus on EU crisis response which would include operational planning for both a military and a civilian operation engaged in the same theatre. Both the EU Operations Centre and the CPCC will be involved in the context of an appropriate scenario requiring EU rapid response to the crisis.

MILEX 09

63. The Council welcomed that final preparations are under way for the conduct of the fourth EU Military Exercise MILEX 09, scheduled to take place from 17 to 26 June 2009. This exercise will focus on the interaction between the EU OHQ (provided by Greece and located in Larissa) and the EU FHQ (provided by Italy and located in Naples) in an EU led military operation.

Security Sector Reform (SSR)

64. The Council stressed the importance of Security Sector Reform in which the EU is increasingly active. It recalled its agreement in November 2008 to reinforce EU SSR expertise by the creation of a pool of European SSR experts which would enable deployable teams of EU experts to be set up to take part in SSR activities in partner countries. The aim is to create a community of European experts in the field of SSR which will be provided by Member States and EU institutions.
65. The Council noted with satisfaction that the work on the implementation of the concept is ongoing and encouraged further progress to be made.

III. PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE SECURITY

EU-UN

66. The Council reiterated the importance it attaches to EU-UN co-operation in crisis management. In this context, the Council welcomed the successful transition and continuing cooperation between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and MINURCAT. The Council also emphasised the need for continued close coordination and cooperation between the two organisations in other operational theatres, notably in Kosovo, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Somalia and Georgia.
67. The Council welcomed the further progress in implementation of the 2007 Joint Statement on UN-EU Co-operation in Crisis Management through a series of concrete steps taken, *inter alia* in the field of reinforced dialogue (including regular consultations between senior UN officials and the PSC), on SSR, African peace-keeping capabilities, and the multidimensional aspects of peace-keeping.

68. The Council noted that consultations continued also in other areas of cooperation between the two organisations such as early warning, training and exercises, planning and arrangements between the EU and UN for transition between operations and encouraged these efforts to be developed further.

EU-NATO

69. The Council recalled the objective of strengthening the EU-NATO strategic partnership, in a spirit of mutual reinforcement and respect for their decision-making autonomy. It noted NATO's statement in the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit Declaration concerning the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence and welcoming the EU's efforts to strengthen its capabilities and its capacity to address common security challenges. The Council particularly stressed the importance of efficient operational cooperation between the EU and NATO, in particular concerning theatres in which the two organisations are both committed. In this context, the Council also welcomed the close dialogue between the SG/HR and NATO SG. The Council noted that the Berlin plus arrangements have proven to be effective and efficient as demonstrated by Operation ALTHEA. It also reiterated the necessity to continue to further exploit the approved framework for association of non-EU European Allies with the ESDP, in accordance with EU procedures.
70. The Council underlined the need for continued cooperation with NATO regarding the development of military capabilities. In this regard, it welcomed the efforts to make the best use of the EU-NATO Capability Group, within the agreed framework, where requirements overlapped. The EU-NATO Capability Group has contributed to transparency between the two organisations in accordance with the Capability Development Mechanism (CDM). With the participation of senior policy-makers from the capitals, as envisaged by the CDM, the Capability Group discussed issues regarding the coherence of capability planning processes and operational availability of helicopters supported with a number of non-papers delivered in advance by several nations to all Member States. A single issue meeting with national experts was dedicated to unmanned air vehicles. Before the Capability Group meetings, all Member States discussed in detail the agenda items and were briefed accordingly after these meetings. In order to continue improving coherence, mutually reinforcing development of military capabilities and transparency, the Council called for further efforts to ensure effective working methods of the Capability Group, while recalling that the participation of all the EU Member States would further facilitate exchange of information in the field of military capabilities.

71. The Council welcomed continuing efforts to ensure transparency and coherence between the two organisations, including through PSC-NAC meetings, EU and NATO Military Committees' meetings as well as meetings with non EU European NATO members and other candidate countries to the EU. The Council also welcomed the regular staff to staff meetings on issues of common interest and underlined the importance for the PSC to continue being regularly informed. The Council noted with satisfaction that staff-to-staff technical contacts between EU and NATO experts were established in order to advance the development of a common Information Gathering tool accessible to all Member States, based on the NATO Defence Planning Automated Software System under specific conditions relating to the decision-making autonomy of both organisations. It welcomed NATO experts' readiness to work with the EU on a tool, which will satisfy EU and NATO requirements.

EU-Africa Partnership on Peace and Security

72. The Council welcomed the progress in the 'Peace and Security' partnership of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, centred around the AU as well as other African actors.
73. The Council noted that political dialogue continued with regular meetings between the EU and Africa at a political as well as at a technical level including through the EU delegation to the AU.
74. Regarding the reinforcement of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the operationalisation of the African Stand-by Force, the Council noted that the EuroRecamp-Amani Africa cycle continued with the Contributors' Conference, the Initiating Planning Conference and the Senior Decision Makers Seminar. The Council noted with satisfaction that work has been initiated on the support to African Training Centres and on the development of a strategy for African training initiatives. Progress was also achieved in the fields of mediation and support to the AU Continental Early Warning System.
75. In response to the urgent request of the African Union, the EU has provided support to the Strategic Planning Management Unit of the Peace Support Operations Division in Addis Ababa, which is responsible for the planning and conduct of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The support has included three staff officers from the EU Military Staff and, subsequently, four long-term EU experts contracted by the European Commission and one seconded police training advisor.
76. The Council looked forward to the report of the UN Secretary General due in September 2009, building on the the AU/UN Report from the Panel chaired by R. Prodi, with a view to reaching an understanding and assessment of the challenges ahead. The Council encouraged the discussion to continue in the AU-EU Joint Expert Group.

Mediterranean Partners

77. The Council welcomed the efforts made to pursue the dialogue and the co-operation among the Euro-Mediterranean Partners on ESDP, including the participation of several partners in ESDP missions and operations and in training activities."
-