



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10009/09 (Presse 137)

PRESS RELEASE

2943rd Council meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

External Relations

Brussels, 18-19 May 2009

President

Mr Jan Kohout

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Czech Republic

Mr Martin Bartak

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Czech
Republic

* Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the 2942nd meeting on
General Affairs (10008/09).

P R E S S

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Main results of the Council

*As the fighting drew to an end in **Sri Lanka**, the Council reiterated its call on the Government of Sri Lanka urgently to proceed towards a comprehensive political process. It called on the Government and the LTTE to take all necessary steps to prevent further loss of life and called for the alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law to be investigated through an independent inquiry.*

*The Council conducted its half-yearly examination of developments and projects in the field of **European Security and Defence Policy**, with ministers for defence present.*

In particular, it:

- *welcomed progress on the preparatory work for the possible evolution of Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina into a non-executive capacity-building and training operation, without prejudice to a political decision on this issue;*
- *welcomed the declaration of full operational capability for the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO) on 6 April 2009 and commended the mission's efforts to ensure a successful deployment of all components throughout Kosovo;*
- *commended the achievements to date of the counter-piracy operation Atalanta, particularly the protection of WFP vessels, its contribution to the protection of vulnerable vessels in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast, and its contribution to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery;*
- *following the successful and timely transfer of authority between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and MINURCAT on 15 March 2009, welcomed the fulfilment of EUFOR's mandate and underlined the exemplary cooperation at all levels between the EU and the UN;*
- *decided to extend the EU SSR GUINEA-BISSAU mission for six months, i.e. until the end of November 2009;*
- *welcomed recent progress made on capabilities and on member states' commitment of battlegroup packages;*
- *welcomed progress made in implementing the EDA (European Defence Agency) strategic framework, as well as the establishment and/or implementation of specific cooperative projects such as improving helicopter availability, or MUSIS (Multinational Space-based Imaging System).*

*Development ministers held their six-monthly meeting within the Council. They adopted conclusions underlining that in spite of the global downturn, the EU will honour its commitments for **development aid**.*

*The Council took note of the final preparations for the **EU-Russia summit** which will be held in Khabarovsk, Russia, on 21 and 22 May 2009.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS	5
ITEMS DEBATED	
PREPARATIONS FOR THE EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT.....	8
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.....	9
SRI LANKA - <i>Council conclusions</i>	10
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, INCLUDING OPERATION EUFOR ALTHEA.....	12
SOMALIA, INCLUDING OPERATION EU NAVFOR ATALANTA - <i>Council conclusions</i>	13
EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY - <i>Council conclusions</i>	15
IRAN.....	29
GEORGIA.....	29
BURMA/MYANMAR.....	29
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION	30
Supporting developing countries in coping with the global crisis - <i>Council conclusions</i>	30
Economic partnership agreements.....	31
Support to democratic governance - Towards an enhanced EU framework - <i>Council conclusions</i>	31
Access to sustainable energy sources at the local level in developing countries - <i>Council conclusions</i>	32
EU strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries - <i>Council conclusions</i>	32
ANY OTHER BUSINESS.....	33
IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL.....	33

¹ Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks. Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>). Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none

PARTICIPANTS

The governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Karel DE GUCHT
Mr Pieter DE CREM
Mr Charles MICHEL
Mr Olivier CHASTEL

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Minister for Defence
Minister for Development Cooperation
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for preparing for the EU Presidency, attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Deputy Minister for Defence

Czech Republic:

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Mr Martin BARTÁK
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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence
Minister for European Affairs

Denmark:

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M. Günter GLOSER
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Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Mr Peter POWER

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Mr Giuseppe COSSIGA

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
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Mr Costas PAPACOSTAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
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Mr József BALI

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State Secretary, Ministry of Defence

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Political Director General

Netherlands:

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Mr Eimert van MIDDELKOOP
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Minister for Defence
Minister for European Affairs
Minister for Development Cooperation

Austria:

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Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
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Ms Gunilla CARLSSON

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Minister for Defence
Minister for European Affairs
Minister for Development Aid

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Mr David MILIBAND
Mr Gareth THOMAS

Baroness TAYLOR

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Consumer
Affairs
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International
Defence and Security

Commission:

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER
Mr Louis MICHEL
Ms Catherine ASHTON

Member
Member
Member

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

ITEMS DEBATED**PREPARATIONS FOR THE EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT**

The Council discussed preparations for the EU/Russia summit to be held in Khabarovsk, Russia, on 21 and 22 May 2009.

It took note of a preparatory note from the Presidency, the Commission and Council Secretariat.

The Summit will focus on the global financial and economic crisis and the need for the EU and Russia to coordinate responses and to resist protectionist measures. Furthermore, the summit will take stock of progress in EU-Russia relations, focusing on key issues covered in the four Common Spaces such as trade issues and WTO accession, investment, energy-, climate change, visa issues, rule of law and human rights, as well as progress made in negotiations on the new framework Agreement with Russia.

As regards regional and international issues, these will include Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Iran, the Middle East and Afghanistan/Pakistan, as well as the question of European security.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The Council debated the current political crisis in the Republic of Moldova and the EU's efforts to stabilise the situation including the promotion of democratic rules and principles.

After the debate, the Presidency concluded that:

- there was a need for political dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition, with the aim of negotiating a viable solution to the political crisis in Moldova;
- an independent and transparent investigation of human rights violations and the events of 7 April was of key importance. It expressed full support for the work of the Council of Europe in this regard;
- there was a need for rapid normalisation of relations of the Republic of Moldova vis-à-vis Romania.

The EU has taken a leading role in trying to initiate a political process between the Government and the opposition, with a view to negotiating a viable solution to the crisis that followed the parliamentary elections of 5 April 2009. The Prime Minister of the Czech Republic visited Chisinau on 22 April, followed by High Representative Javier Solana on 24 April.

SRI LANKA - Council conclusions

The Council had an exchange of views on the recent developments in Sri Lanka and adopted the following conclusions:

- “1. The EU has monitored the events of the last 48 hours and is appalled by the loss of innocent lives as a result of the conflict and by the high numbers of casualties, including children, following recent intense fighting in northern Sri Lanka.
2. As the fighting draws to an end, the EU reiterates its call on the Government of Sri Lanka urgently to proceed towards a comprehensive political process. It therefore calls on the President of Sri Lanka to outline a clear process leading to a fully inclusive political solution, based on consent, equality and the rule of law. Long-term security, post-conflict reconstruction and prosperity in Sri Lanka can only be achieved through such a process, to address the legitimate concerns of all Sri Lanka's communities. The EU expects all parties to engage without delay and stands ready to support this process.
3. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to take all necessary steps to prevent further loss of life, welcoming the reported escape out of the combat zone of a significant number of civilians. The EU reiterates the need for all parties to a conflict to fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. The EU calls for the alleged violations of these laws to be investigated through an independent inquiry. Those accountable must be brought to justice.
4. The EU acknowledges steps already taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to address the humanitarian situation of those it is holding in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), but significant obstacles remain. The civilian nature of the camps, freedom of movement and early return for IDPs should be ensured. Full and unhindered access to all IDPs must be guaranteed and current restrictions on the humanitarian aid agencies, such as visa and checkpoint problems, should be removed. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to give the ICRC a monitoring role and share with them lists of persons screened by the Government while leaving the conflict zone.
5. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to take, without delay, all necessary steps to facilitate the evacuation of civilians, as well as the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to them, in line with its obligation to protect all people under its jurisdiction. The EU underscores that fighting terrorism must be done in full respect for the rule of law and Human Rights.

6. The EU welcomes the UN Security Council Press Statement of 13 May and continues to support the efforts of the UN to help alleviate the situation in Sri Lanka. It supports an early visit by the Secretary-General to the country. The EU urges the Government of Sri Lanka to extend full cooperation to the UN in order to resolve the humanitarian crisis.
7. The EU condemns the LTTE, a terrorist organisation, in particular for the use of civilians as human shields and the forced recruitment of civilians. The EU calls on the LTTE to lay down its arms and to renounce terrorism and violence once and for all.
8. The EU expresses its deep concern about the human rights situation, and considers that ensuring respect of media freedom is crucial. It welcomes the work being undertaken by the UN Special Rapporteurs and joins their call for thorough monitoring of developments. The EU continues to call for appropriate action by the United Nations Human Rights Council.
9. The Council will keep the situation in Sri Lanka, including its humanitarian aspects, under close scrutiny and will revert to the issue as appropriate.”

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, INCLUDING OPERATION EUFOR ALTHEA

In a joint session between Foreign and Defence Ministers, the Council assessed the political environment and the security situation in Bosnia- and- Herzegovina (BiH). It agreed to continue to follow on the political developments in BiH.

The Council also assessed operation ALTHEA and its contribution to a safe and secure environment in BiH.

High Representative Javier Solana announced that he would be travelling to Bosnia- and- Herzegovina on 19 May 2009 together with Joseph R. Biden, Vice President of the United States of America, to reiterate the EU and US common objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

SOMALIA, INCLUDING OPERATION EU NAVFOR ATALANTA - Council conclusions

In a joint session between the Foreign and Defence Ministers, the Council discussed the situation in Somalia and the EU naval operation against piracy EU NAVFOR – Operation ATALANTA.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- “1. The Council condemns the recent fighting in Mogadishu, targeting the Transitional Federal Institutions and the Djibouti peace process. The Council calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities to avoid further civilian casualties and deplores the humanitarian consequences of recent attacks.

2. The Council welcomes the steps taken by the new Transitional Federal Institutions to consolidate the inclusive political process, consistent with the Djibouti peace process, towards a successful and timely completion of the Transitional Federal Charter leading to free and fair elections and a comprehensive solution for Somalia. The Council welcomes the leadership which President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has demonstrated in these endeavours and calls on all Somalis to renounce violence and support the political process. The Council underlines the important political role of the countries in the region, expresses its appreciation for the commitment shown by the African Union and stresses the importance of continued international coordination within the International Contact Group on Somalia, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Ahmedou Ould Abdallah.

3. The Council notes that a stable security environment in Somalia is vital for building state institutions, providing adequate humanitarian aid, kick-starting recovery efforts and reducing the threat of piracy. It expresses its appreciation to the AU and to AMISOM troop contributing countries for their contribution to stabilising the situation in Mogadishu. The Council supports the ambition of the new Transitional Federal Government to focus on the development and strengthening of national capacity in the security sector. The security sector should be firmly committed to the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the principles of good governance and accountability.

4. The Council was encouraged by the unanimous support of the international community for the new Transitional Federal Institutions of Somalia, as manifested at the recent International Conference on Security in Somalia, convened by the UN Secretary General and hosted by the EU in Brussels on 22-23 April. The Council recalls the substantive contribution by the EU to AMISOM and to the Somali security sector, notably the Police Force. The Council stresses the importance of building up the Somali National Security Force (NSF) as soon as possible. It welcomes the important financial contributions to the NSF made at the International Conference. The Council invites the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission, in consultation with UNPOS and the AU, to study possible ways of contributing further to the security sector, including the NSF, in support of the strategy of the Transitional Federal Government.

5. The Council reiterates the mutually reinforcing links between security and development. Recalling the EU contribution to international efforts against piracy through EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, the Council stresses the continued engagement of the EU, including in the delivery of humanitarian aid as well as for reconstruction and development. The Council hopes that efforts directed at demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants can begin soon.”

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY - Council conclusions

As usual once every six months, the Council included a substantial ESDP component, in which defence ministers took part.

A European Defence Agency (EDA) steering board meeting, chaired by High Representative Javier Solana, was held in the margins of the Council.

Defence ministers discussed ESDP operations and missions, capabilities, including battle groups, and issues involving the EDA.

Regarding EU operations and missions, the discussions focused on:

- military operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- the naval operation against piracy EU NAVFOR Somalia - Operation ATALANTA;
- military operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA in eastern Tchad and in the north-east of the Central African Republic.

At lunch, defence ministers discussed cooperation with partners, specifically EU-UN, EU-NATO cooperation and relations with the African Union.

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.
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 prejudice 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.”

The full text of the conclusions is given in document [10087/09](#).

See [Edited remarks by Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, at the meetings of EU defence ministers in the framework of the General Affairs and External Relations Council](#).

IRAN

At lunch, Ministers debated in particular the nuclear dossier and Iranian ambitions in the region

GEORGIA

Ministers also exchanged views at lunch on EU-Georgia relations as well as on recent developments in the region, including the Georgian domestic situation, the state-of-play at the Geneva talks and the future of international presences in Georgia.

BURMA/MYANMAR

The Council assessed the latest developments in the country. It strongly condemned the arrest of opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi days before her house arrest was due to expire. It called for her immediate release.

The Council recalled that when it renewed the EU restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar in April 2007, it underlined its readiness to amend or reinforce these measures in the light of developments on the ground. The Council asked its preparatory bodies to examine further steps. It also agreed to step up dialogue with Asian countries on Burma/Myanmar.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Supporting developing countries in coping with the global crisis - *Council conclusions*

The Council discussed the impact of the global economic and financial crisis on developing countries and agreed on a number of measures to support them.

While no region in the world is spared by the current downturn, developing countries are particularly affected: the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is at risk, tens of millions of people are falling into poverty and significant development gains are being reversed.

While the EU disbursed an unprecedented figure of almost € 50 billion in 2008 (0.40% of its GNI), the Council clearly reaffirmed the EU's commitment to achieving the MDGs and meeting its Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets. This comes at a time when national budgets have come under pressure because of the economic and financial crisis. Nevertheless, the EU is sending a clear signal that it intends to continue its positive ODA trend. The conclusions adopted by the Council sketch out the EU support to developing countries in coping with the crisis:

- in spite of the global downturn, the EU will honour its ODA commitments;
- it will mobilise all possible sources of financing for development as instruments to leverage assistance;
- counter-cyclical and accelerated actions by the European Investment Bank will be intensified;
- at least 600 million EUR will be provided to support regional infrastructure, access to energy and water.

The EU also sought to ensure the optimal spending of development assistance, which will be achieved inter alia by:

- accelerating progress in the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda;

- targeting assistance;
- increasing coordination between Member States, the Commission and the European Investment Bank, in cooperation with international institutions and partner countries.

One of the new elements of the EU response is the Commission proposal to use a novel mechanism, the vulnerability FLEX, to frontload aid which should allow for a timely EU support by the EU to those ACP countries that are most vulnerable. The Council has taken positive note of this proposal and looks forward to further discussing it, when the Commission comes forward with more details.

The EU is actively contributing to the preparation for the UN High-level Conference on World Financial and Economic Crisis, held in New York on 1-3 June, where it will continue to provide global leadership. Today's Council Conclusions are an important contribution to this process.

The conclusions are set out in document [10018/09](#) + [10018/09](#) *CORI*.

Economic partnership agreements

The Council took stock of progress in the negotiation and conclusion of economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with ACP countries and regions.

A number of interim agreements are on the point of being concluded and negotiations on full EPAs are ongoing. Further developments are expected in the coming months.

Support to democratic governance - Towards an enhanced EU framework - Council conclusions

The Council held an orientation debate on democratic governance and adopted conclusions entitled "Support to Democratic Governance - Towards an enhanced EU framework" ([9908/09](#)). In the context of the increasing use of budget support to developing countries, ministers discussed strengthening and coordinating the policy dialogue which constitutes the framework for such aid.

The Council renewed its support to the governance initiative, a mechanism to back ACP partner countries' efforts in strengthening democratic governance based on dialogue and incentives, and invited the Commission to consider using the experience and lessons learned with the governance initiative in addressing democratic governance processes in other regions.

Access to sustainable energy sources at the local level in developing countries - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions aimed at addressing a key energy challenge: helping developing countries to have access to modern energy services in order to ensure basic human needs, accelerate economic growth and improve the livelihoods of their people. Access to sustainable energy is also closely linked to two other energy challenges, i.e. energy security for all and mitigating climate change. The conclusions are set out in document [9909/09](#).

EU strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries - Council conclusions

The conclusions are set out in document [9920/09](#).

ANY OTHER BUSINESS**Kenya**

The Dutch delegation drew the attention of ministers to the deteriorating political situation in Kenya (9830/09 - LIMITE).

Climate change

The Swedish delegation presented the final report of the international Commission on Climate Change and Development, chaired by the Swedish minister for international development cooperation (9831/09).

Meeting of G8 Development Ministers

The Italian delegation informed the Council of the preparation for the meeting of the G8 development ministers on 11 and 12 June in Rome.

UN High-level Conference on World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development

The German and Dutch delegations briefed the Council about the upcoming UN High-level Conference on World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, to take place in New York on 1-3 June.

IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

- Meeting of defence ministers with non-EU European allies and candidate countries;
- EU-New Zealand ministerial troika;
- EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Council (10113/09);
- EU-EEA European Economic Area Council (EEE 1605/09);
- EU-Turkey association council (10074/09).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

See press release *10008/09*.
