



EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY PRESS RELEASE

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NEW EDA PROJECT ON SPACE-BASED EARTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

The EDA Steering Board has agreed to approve a project for the next generation European military earth observation satellites. This Multinational Space-based Imaging System (MUSIS) project has been launched by six European Union Member States: Belgium, Germany, Greece, France, Italy and Spain. The project has now become an EDA Category B project and will be open to participation of other EDA participating Member States, if their proposed contribution is acceptable to the existing contributing Members.

The Agency's Capability Development Plan (CDP) considers space-based imaging capacities essential for ESDP missions. The MUSIS project aims at establishing a multinational space-based imaging system for surveillance, reconnaissance and observation to ensure continuity of services from the current French Helios II, German SAR LUPE and Italian Cosmo-Skymed and Pléiades systems, from 2015-2017 onwards.

"Space-based related assets are critical to improve European military capabilities, including for information-gathering. The approved project will be critical to ensure this capability in the longer-term and I welcome very much the initiative of the six EU Member States to bring it to EDA", Javier Solana, Head of the Agency, said.

One of the roles for EDA will be to seek synergies with earth observation programmes on the civilian side, in particular with the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme of the European Commission.

"This is another example of how EDA is proving its added value, not only in bringing together participating Member States' efforts, but connecting at the same time military to civil space agendas. We will liaise with the Commission and the European Space Agency to ensure complementarity of research and technology, and to seek other synergies", Alexander Weis, EDA's Chief Executive said.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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- Background information -

The European Defence Agency (EDA) was established by the Council on 12 July 2004. It is designed "to support the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the ESDP as it stands now and develops in the future". More specifically, the Agency is ascribed four functions, relating to:

- a) defence capabilities development;
- b) armaments cooperation;
- c) the European defence technological and industrial base and defence equipment market;
- d) research and technology.

These functions all relate to improving Europe's defence performance, by promoting coherence in place of fragmentation.

The EDA is an Agency of the European Union. High Representative Solana is Head of the Agency, chairman of the Steering Board, which acts under the Council's authority and within the framework of guidelines issued by the Council.
