



## EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

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### PRESS RELEASE

## **STEERING BOARD SETS DIRECTION FOR AGENCY'S EFFORTS TO BUILD EUROPEAN DEFENCE CAPABILITIES (BRUSSELS, 21 JUNE 2005)**

The most senior planners from the defence ministries of the European Union, meeting as the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency, held their first review today of the Agency's proposals to help build the defence capabilities that will be needed under the EU's plans to respond quickly and effectively to future crises.

The Steering Board, the decision-making body of the Agency on which the 24 participating Member States and the European Commission are represented, was meeting for the first time in "Capabilities" formation, involving national Capabilities and Defence Planning Directors.

"This community is crucial to the work of the Agency because of our role in determining the speed and direction of transformation and defence reform in each nation, and the priorities for defence expenditure," said Lo Casteleijn, Director of the General Policy Directorate of the Defence Ministry of the Netherlands, who chaired the meeting on behalf of the Head of the Agency, Javier Solana.

"We must understand the future military requirements of the European Security and Defence Policy, know what we have today and are already planning to acquire, and then work together to address the gaps," he added.

The Steering Board reviewed the Agency's proposals for a way of working which will ensure that the future needs of ESDP operations provide the main orientation for all EDA activity.

This innovative "matrix" approach will marry military priorities to industrial and technological possibilities to ensure that Europe's future military needs are addressed in a comprehensive, systematic and realistic fashion. It also ties together the Agency's different agendas, covering military capabilities, armaments programmes, research and technology and the strengthening of Europe's defence industries.

Central to this approach will be the use of integrated development and project teams, bringing together military, armaments and research expertise from within the Agency and from a wider community of stakeholders, including industry.

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More specifically, the Steering Board discussed initial priorities for the Agency's R&T agenda, laying particular stress on the importance for future operations of minimising casualties.

“We must focus our research efforts on the technologies that our crisis-management operations will require in the future,” said Nick Witney, Chief Executive of the Agency. “We need to look at whatever technology can offer to improve force protection and to limit the damage, human or material, of military operations which will often be conducted among civilian population.”

The Board also approved a wide-ranging agenda for the Agency in the critical area of Command, Control and Communication (C3), one of the Agency's four flagship programmes for its first full year of operations. This agenda includes:

- work on improving the capacity, security and interoperability of communications for ESDP operations, starting with the battle groups which are at the heart of the EU's future plans;
- work to converge European thinking on how best to apply the concepts of network-enabled operations to the context of crisis-management operations;
- the pursuit of European convergence and cooperation on the emerging technologies of software defined radio.

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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 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 Agency's tasks are:

- to work for a more comprehensive and systematic approach to defining and meeting the capability needs of ESDP ( supporting, for example, the "Headline Goal 2010" initiative);
- to promote equipment collaborations, both to contribute to defence capabilities and as catalysts for further restructuring of the European defence industry.
- to promote European defence-relevant R&T, as vital both to a healthy defence technological and industrial base and to defining and satisfying future capability requirements. This will involve pursuing collaborative use of national defence R&T funds, in the context of a European policy which identifies priorities.

The EDA is an Agency of the European Union. All EU Member States, except Denmark, participate. High Representative Javier Solana is Head of the Agency and chairman of the Steering Board, which acts under the Council's authority and within the framework of guidelines issued by the Council.

Nick Witney was appointed EDA Chief Executive on 30 July 2004.

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