



EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

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PRESS RELEASE

EDA HOSTS SEMINAR ON NETWORK-ENABLED CAPABILITY (BRUSSELS, 25 April 2006)

The European Defence Agency hosted a seminar on 24-25 April at which more than 100 experts from national ministries, armed forces, EU institutions, NATO and industry debated network-enabled capability (NEC) concepts and how they might support ESDP capabilities for crisis management operations.

NEC capabilities could improve the effectiveness of such operations by linking all EU bodies, Member States, and international and local actors, to provide them with better situational awareness.

“In the information age, NEC is a tool which will enhance the scope, speed and quality of the decision-making process. We must consider, on a national level and especially a multinational level, how to assess what capabilities we will need, taking into account costs and benefits”, said Pierre Hougardy, EDA Capabilities Director.

The seminar sent a strong signal that the European Union needs to look seriously into the potential of this new technology and it has helped to prepare the ground for defining the EU’s ambitions and future strategy in the NEC area.

“The seminar has been a very good venue to exchange national experiences and perspectives, which is a good basis for future efforts”, said Colonel Tapani Hyötyläinen of Finland. He added that the forthcoming Finnish presidency was willing to contribute to this work.

The seminar was organised as a series of panel discussions so that representatives from Member States, who are the key actors for the future of NEC issues within ESDP, were given as much opportunity as possible to express their opinions.

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“The EU’s multidimensional approach to defence and security, which encompasses a wide range of diplomatic, economic and military instruments, presents a particular challenge to Member States who will have to go beyond familiar military applications of information-age technology,” said EDA Deputy Chief Executive Hilmar Linnenkamp, who chaired the seminar.

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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.