



EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE



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Every year the European Defence Agency organises a Conference, which focuses on an important theme for EDA's activities in that year. The 2009 EDA Conference was dedicated to **“Helicopters – Key to Mobility”**.

Increasing the availability of helicopters has been identified as one of the priority actions for the European Defence Agency. The 2009 Annual Conference was organised to **enhance the support for EDA's work on helicopters, to generate concrete activities and indicate possible solutions.**

The Conference highlighted key contextual issues surrounding the need for helicopters and outlined the challenges that need to be collectively overcome, in the short, medium and longer-term. Potential solutions, including collaborative opportunities to enhance helicopter availability, were proposed and industrial contributions to meet the challenges were presented.

Some 240 participants from 25 participating Member States, European industries and other international organisations were welcomed by **ALEXANDER WEIS**, EDA's Chief Executive. The Conference was opened by three keynote speakers, **JAVIER SOLANA**, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union and Head of the EDA, **GENERAL HENRI BENTÉGEAT**, Chairman of the EU Military Committee and **ALLAN COOK**, President of the AeroSpace & Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD).

The first panel, “Setting the scene”, focused on describing reality and lessons learned from recent military as well as civilian/disaster relief operations. The second panel, “Potential Solutions”, provided Industry the opportunity to offer their view on solving the problems which can be used in EDA's ongoing work on helicopters.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

RAQUEL PATRÍCIO GOMES
raquel.patricio-gomes@eda.europa.eu
www.eda.europa.eu

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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.

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