



EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY SEEKING SAVINGS THROUGH POOLING AND SHARING

Brussels, 9 December 2010

European Defence Ministers have agreed that the Agency's activities on **Pooling and Sharing** of national military capabilities should be enhanced. In addition to successful existing projects – such as improving helicopters availability, air transport, third party logistics support and airworthiness – more pooling and sharing opportunities exist in areas like satellite communications, medical support and naval logistics. In many cases pooling and sharing also offers opportunities for civil-military dual-use.

“The Agency has quickly reacted to the needs of European Defence Ministers, who are looking for opportunities to work closely together in order to improve capabilities while budgets are under pressure. Pooling and sharing offers potential for savings, while increasing interoperable capacities”, said **Catherine Ashton**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission and Head of the European Defence Agency.

Defence Ministers also discussed the impact of the **Single European Sky** initiative of the European Commission for military aviation. The Single European Sky's objective is to replace the currently fragmented airspace over Europe by one air traffic management system, thereby increasing capacity, reducing pollution and improving safety and security. The SES Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR) Joint Undertaking is addressing the technological challenges. Ministers have tasked the Agency to engage with the SESAR Joint Undertaking in order to identify important financial and operational risks as well as emerging opportunities for the defence community.

Following new opportunities under the Lisbon Treaty regarding **Defence Research** at Union level, Ministers called for a constructive dialogue in the coming months between the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Agency and the participating Member States on the preparation of the 8th Framework Programme for investment in technology areas of common interest at the European Union level.

Ministers were informed on the progress made with the project to deploy a **field laboratory for forensic research of road-side bombs explosions**. With France as lead-nation, supported by several other Member States, the mobile laboratory will be deployed to Afghanistan by mid-2011. Technical preparations, procurement and planning of the laboratory's manning are all on track.

“This is a concrete contribution to urgent operational needs, as road-side bombs are endangering the lives of soldiers and civilians day-after-day. It is a direct European contribution to the Alliance’s operation in Afghanistan”, Acting Chief Executive, Adam Sowa, said.

The Steering Board approved the **Agency’s Work Programme 2011**. The Agency’s budget will be € 30.5 million, as decided by the Foreign Affairs Council in Defence Ministers formation.

Ministers were informed on the results of the Agency’s collection of **2009 defence data** and on the assessment of the **collective benchmarks** for defence R&T and equipment procurement. A dedicated booklet has been released.

The Steering Board approved that the Agency can start the book-building process for the new **Joint Investment Programme (JIP) on protection against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats**, with the nations willing to participate indicating their financial contributions. The JIP-CBRN is the first EDA programme in the context of the European Framework Cooperation, which aims at systematic synchronisation of research investment by the Agency, the European Commission and the European Space Agency.

Defence Ministers took stock of the progress made in the Agency's work on the **Level Playing Field**. They reaffirmed that the LPF initiative is a strategic and long-term exercise, which in full respect of the specificities of defence aims at contributing to the creation of a truly European Defence Equipment Market, whilst focusing on strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. The Agency will continue its work to develop a common understanding of those issues which may hamper the establishment of a Level Playing Field, based on an agreed categorisation of issues as a first step towards prioritisation.

Furthermore, the Ministerial Steering Board tasked the Agency to analyse defence-related aspects of the **EU Radio Spectrum Policy Programme** (RSPP), recognising that this programme will have medium to long term operational and cost implications on the use of spectrum by the military. Radio frequencies are of crucial importance for EU crisis management operations. The Agency will develop recommendations regarding defence issues in order to support the participating Member States' interests.

During the Steering Board meeting Defence Ministers of Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden signed the programme arrangement for **Unmanned Maritime Systems**, a new major EDA R&T programme of more than € 50 million for mine counter measures and other naval applications. Norway also contributes to the UMS programme.

The Polish Defence Minister signed a Letter of Intent to participate in the **Multinational Space-based Imaging System** (MUSIS) project, joining Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain.

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European Defence Agency

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 CSDP 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. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton is Head of the Agency, chairwoman of the Steering Board, which acts under the Council’s authority and within the framework of guidelines issued by the Council.