



**EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY**  
**PRESS RELEASE**

Brussels, 10 November 2008

**EUROPEAN AIR TRANSPORT FLEET LAUNCHED**

European Defence Ministers, meeting in the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency, launched today concrete initiatives and projects for improving European military capabilities. Decisions were taken on programmes related to air transport, maritime surveillance and helicopters, amongst others.

*"This is the concrete follow-up to the discussions which took place at the Informal EU Defence Ministers meeting in Deauville early October. We are seeing today that the Agency can very quickly translate political intentions into concrete proposals. These programmes will create tangible European capabilities and improve the capacity for crisis management operations",* said Head of the Agency Javier Solana, who chaired the meeting.

**European Air Transport Fleet**

European Defence Ministers launched today EDA work on establishing a **European Air Transport Fleet (EATF)**. A Declaration of Intent on participation in the initiative was signed by Defence Ministers of Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

The EATF aims at reducing European air transport shortfalls by pooling aircraft such as the A400M and C130. Participation can take different forms: making aircraft available; purchasing, providing or exchanging flying hours; or to provide and benefit from shared and/or pooled support functions (training, maintenance, etc.). Milestones have been set with the aim of reaching EATF initial operational capability by the next decade.

*"The EATF Declaration is most welcome, as pooling European aircraft and services will improve the lift capabilities and alleviate a significant European shortfall",* said Alexander Weis, the Agency's Chief Executive.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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### **Maritime Mine Counter-Measures**

The Steering Board also launched two other projects. Ten Member States (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Sweden) plus Norway will work closely together in an EDA project for the future replacement of their **maritime mine counter-measures** capabilities in an EDA project. Activities will commence with an assessment phase, leading to recommendations for the selection of systems solutions and addressing all relevant aspects. Mine counter-measures in littoral sea areas has been identified as one of the initial 12 prioritised actions in the context of the Agency's Capability Development Plan (CDP).

### **Future Unmanned Aerial System**

Another project, related to Maritime Surveillance, is the launch of work for a **Future Unmanned Aerial System**. Based on common requirements, seven Member States (Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) will begin the preparations for the development of an unmanned aerial system, which will be able to take off and land on a ship's deck. This future system will increase the capability for wide area surveillance in support of ESDP operations, a need which has been identified in the Capability Development Plan.

### **Space-based Earth Surveillance System**

Five Member States (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Spain) signed a Letter of Intent on the second generation of space-based imaging capacity. This Multinational Space-based Imaging System for surveillance, reconnaissance and observation (MUSIS) project aims at continuity of service from 2015 onwards. The MUSIS partners intend to launch an EDA Category B project on the basis on their initiative, which will be open for other Member States' participation.

### **Helicopters**

The Steering Board endorsed a roadmap for the Helicopter Tactics Training Programme, part of the Agency's work to improve availability of helicopters for ESDP operations. The contents of this programme will be defined in the course of 2009, based on the results of two studies – focussing on the requirements – and the lessons learned from an exercise, to take place in France in spring 2009. The Programme itself will start in 2010.

*“The Agency is quickly progressing with its helicopter work. The Helicopter Tactics Programme is proving that in some cases training can provide additional capabilities in the short-term. Improving ESDP capabilities does not always require new equipment”*, said Alexander Weis, EDA's Chief Executive.

Ministers also took stock of the progress made on the Agency's work on upgrading helicopters, with the aim to offer a detailed menu with upgrade options by spring 2009.

Germany and France informed the Steering Board of their intent to bring their bilateral initiative for a Future Transport Helicopter into the Agency in the near future, opening up the project to other interested Member States. The project aims at developing intra-theatre transport helicopter for the 2020+ timeframe.

### **European Defence Research and Technology Strategy**

Ministers endorsed the **European Defence Research and Technology (EDRT)** Strategy to enhance and develop more effective research collaboration to deliver timely the right technologies in support of military capabilities. The Strategy defines “ends” (key technologies to invest in), “means” (how to invest better, such as through improved R&T collaborations) and “ways” (roadmaps and action plans). Four of the 12 priority actions of the Capability Development Plan have been chosen for identifying potential R&T projects: Counter-Man Portable Air-Defence Systems (C-MANPADS), Mine Counter-Measures, Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) and Chemical, Biological and Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) - specifically detection of biological weapons.

The EDRT Strategy completes the EDA work on its strategic framework. With the CDP as the overall strategic tool this framework consists of the EDRT Strategy, the Armaments Cooperation Strategy (endorsed in October 2008) and the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base Strategy (endorsed in May 2007).

### **Innovative Concepts and Emerging Technologies**

Ten Member States (Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain) plus Norway signed the Programme Arrangement for the **Joint Investment Programme on Innovative Concepts and Emerging Technologies (JIP-ICET)**. The Programme aims at promoting basic research cooperation, for example on an integrated navigation architecture and on nanotechnologies for soldier protection.

### **Forum for Military Airworthiness Authorities**

Ministers decided to create a European Union-wide **Forum for Military Airworthiness Authorities**. This Forum will be used to harmonise the different national military airworthiness regulations within the European Union in order to stop duplication of work, to reduce costs and to shorten timelines for multinational procurement.

### **Work Programme**

The Steering Board approved the **Agency's Work Programme for 2009**. The focus of the Work Programme is on concrete projects, in particular related to the 12 prioritised actions stemming from the Capability Development Plan. The Agency will have a 2009 budget of € 30m, including € 8m operational budget for studies, and will recruit ten new staff. The budget was adopted by the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Defence Ministers formation.

### **Defence Data 2007**

Ministers were informed on the results of the Agency's defence data-collecting for 2007 and on the assessment of the collective benchmarks for Defence R&T and equipment procurement. A dedicated brochure has been released.

## 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 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.