

## **Achievements of the 18-month Trio Presidency of the EU Council in the area of defence**

The priorities of the 18-month programme in the area of the European Security and Defence Policy were, among other things, a review of the EU Military Rapid Response concept and continuation of work on the Progress Catalogue, where the focus was on current deficiencies and the future development of capabilities.

The tasks laid down in the joint presidency programme were as follows:

- efforts for further development of the European Security and Defence Policy;
- continuation of crisis response operations aimed at the provision of stability and peace, and operations of a humanitarian nature;
- efforts to further reinforce military and civilian capabilities;
- support for the development of the European perspective in the Western Balkan countries;
- strengthening relations with strategic partners, in particular with the United Nations, NATO and the African Union.

As regards operations and missions, the Presidency saw the successful implementation of the envisaged plans and the commencement of implementation of four new missions, namely EUPOL Afghanistan, EUSSR Guinea Bissau, EULEX Kosovo and EUSSR Congo. In other EU civilian missions, activities are being carried out successfully and are meeting the established objectives.

The EU military operation EUFOR CHAD/CAR was, in spite of initial standstills, successfully launched. The level of basic operational capabilities was achieved and, by the end of the Slovenian Presidency, all forces and capabilities are expected to be deployed. The main task of the EU forces is to secure the refugee camps and to ensure the stabilisation of the region, particularly on the Sudan/Darfur border.

As regards ALTHEA, the successfully EU-led military operation carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the fourth year, the decision was taken to keep the presence of EUFOR forces pending full stabilisation of the security situation. Unless otherwise decided, the objectives and tasks of EUFOR remain unchanged; further reduction of military forces or possible conclusion of the operation will, however, depend on a detailed analysis of the situation in the wider region.

The development of capabilities particularly focused on achieving the Military Headline Goal 2010 and the Civilian Headline Goal 2008. Progress in this area was made by removing the established deficit in capabilities and by providing a definition of the development processes facilitating the achievement of the required level of EU military capabilities. In the area of civilian capabilities, the parties involved reached an agreement on the joint training of civilian experts, members of the police and armed forces, and on harmonised development of ESDP civilian and military capabilities.

As for the preparation of the Capabilities Development Plan and based on the results of the discussed trends in military capabilities development, cooperation between the European Defence Agency and the EU Military Staff was strengthened.

As regards strengthening the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries, this process saw enhanced cooperation between the countries in the region and the opening of dialogue regarding implementation of defence sector reform.

Meeting the commitments undertaken at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon and the need to obtain cooperation from the African partners constituted the main topics of the Africa-related discussion held by the defence ministers, who particularly advocated any possible improvement.

Jointly, the Presidency succeeded in promoting discussion of key obstacles to cooperation between the EU and NATO and in encouraging finding proposals to improve this cooperation, particularly in the area of crisis management, providing mutual development of key military capabilities and more effective coordination in various operations. The EU-NATO Capability Group began to work on certain significant projects, such as supplementary action in providing helicopter capabilities, cooperation in the area of strategic transport and the introduction of the Group's joint website.

Cooperation between the EU and the UN has seen gradual implementation of the Joint Declaration on EU-UN Cooperation in the area of crisis management, which includes several specific proposals. Among other matters, they cover enhanced dialogue between senior UN and EU officials, security sector reform, the African capabilities for peacekeeping operations and multi-dimensional aspects of maintaining peace. At the operational level, EU-UN cooperation continues by focusing on the support provided to the missions in Chad and the DR Congo, as well as in Kosovo, where a civilian mission within the ESDP will take over a number of tasks currently performed by UNMIK.

The protection of human rights and, in particular, the situation of children and women in armed conflicts is becoming increasingly important. Slovenia's priority in this area was the treatment of children and women in armed conflicts.

The publication of the amended Manual for the Integration of Human Rights, Rights of Children and Gender Equality into the ESDP – a compilation of relevant documents – can also be considered a great success of the Trio Presidency. The Manual has been published as a joint project of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian presidencies and is available to the general public as of this month.

Two areas which are not part of the ESDP but fall within the competence of the Slovenian Ministry of Defence are civilian protection and the protection of critical European infrastructure facilities.

In line with national priorities, significant results in strengthening cooperation with the Western Balkan countries were achieved. Based on the Bled Initiative on cooperation with the Western Balkan countries in the area of civilian protection, drafted at the relevant seminar in February, the Council adopted conclusions requiring that the Commission prepare a comprehensive programme of future cooperation with the Western Balkan countries in this area.

Through the adoption of the second package of Council decisions, the path for EU disaster response was paved and the required activities in the whole cycle of disaster management indicated.

The Inventory of EU Instruments in the area of CBRN hazards and the EU Manual for Disaster and Crisis Response Coordination were also brought in line and updated.

During the Slovenian Presidency, the report on the realisation of tasks envisaged in the action plan was updated within the implementation of the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection.

In harmonising the Directive on identification and designation of European Critical Infrastructure (ECI) and assessment of the need to improve their protection, the Slovenian Presidency managed, by investing great efforts, to prepare and harmonise a compromise draft proposal. The June session of the Justice and Home Affairs Council reached a political agreement on the text of the Directive, which lays down the identification, designation and protection procedure for the ECI at the level of the EU Member States and envisages gradual regulation of this area. Thus, the objective of the Presidency in this area was achieved.