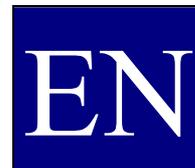




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on ESDP

*2870th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 26 and 27 May 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"I. ESDP Missions and Operations

Western Balkans

Operation ALTHEA

1. The Council reiterated that the EU remained actively committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), including through Operation ALTHEA, and that, as part of the EU's overall engagement in the country, the EU-led military presence would remain there for as long as necessary. The Council welcomed the positive contribution of the force to the safe and secure environment in BiH. The security situation remains stable and the EU-led force (EUFOR) continues to provide reassurance, and remains ready to respond to possible security challenges throughout the country.
2. The Council further welcomed the continued contribution of EUFOR, together with other forms of EU engagement, to international efforts to support reform of the security sector in BiH.
3. Following the successful reconfiguration of Operation ALTHEA in BiH in 2007 EUFOR numbers some 2500 troops on the ground, backed up by over-the-horizon reserves. Its operational focus remains the maintenance of a safe and secure environment and the transfer of Joint Military Affairs (JMA) tasks to relevant national authorities. Elements of the European Gendarmerie Force have successfully participated in the Integrated Police Unit of EUFOR since November 2007.

P R E S S

4. Coherence of EU action in BiH - involving all EU actors including the Commission and EU Heads of Mission - remains a priority. The EU Force Commander, the EUSR and the Head of EUPM continue to consult each other regularly prior to taking action. EUFOR has also maintained a close working relationship, including on operational matters, with other international actors. In respect of Operation ALTHEA, cooperation with NATO has continued to work smoothly and efficiently.

EUPM BiH

5. The Council welcomes the adoption of the police reform laws and supports the efforts of EUPM in aiding BiH authorities in the implementation of those laws. The Council notes the progress made by BiH authorities in tackling the most serious forms of criminality, with the operational assistance of EUPM. The Council welcomes the efforts of EUPM to improve the coordination of the police and the judiciary in BiH with the aim to establish an effective criminal justice system and to adopt a country-wide coordinated approach to the fight against organised crime.

EULEX KOSOVO

6. In line with the conclusions of European Council of 14 December 2007, which underlined the readiness of the EU to play a leading role in strengthening the stability in the region, Council welcomes the preparations for the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO), including the on-going deployment of the mission staff. The Council commends the work of the European Union Planning Team for Kosovo (EUPT), whose mandate was extended until 14 June 2008.

Middle East

EUBAM Rafah

7. The Council reiterates the EU commitment and readiness to redeploy to the Rafah crossing point as soon as conditions allow it. Ever since the closure of the Crossing Point, EUBAM Rafah has continued to maintain operational capability. The Council decided to extend the mandate of the mission for a further 6 months until 24 November 2008.

EUPOL COPPS

8. EUPOL COPPS has continued its efforts in support of the Palestinian Civil Police. The mission supports the implementation of the Palestinian Civil Police Development Plan, including through the training of Palestinian police and facilitating and coordinating the provision of equipment in close cooperation with European Community activities. The Council also agreed to expand EUPOL COPPS' activities in the area of the criminal justice system, including the judiciary, the prosecutors as well as penitentiary service.

EUJUST LEX

9. The EU has been contributing towards strengthening the rule of law in Iraq and promoting human rights through its Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX), by providing training courses and work experience secondments in EU Member States for senior Iraqi police, judicial and penitentiary personnel. The Council welcomes the continuation of EUJUST LEX's work in partnership with the Iraqi authorities and international bodies until 30 June 2009.

Africa

EUFOR Tchad/RCA

10. The Council recalled the urgent need to protect civilians and improve the humanitarian situation in the whole region. The Council reaffirmed its full commitment to contribute to the implementation of UNSCR 1778 (2007) which authorizes the deployment in the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic of a multidimensional presence, the military element of which is provided by the EU. In accordance with this resolution, the EU is conducting the military bridging operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA for a period of 12 months from the declaration of initial operational capability (IOC) on 15 March 2008. The Full Operational Capability (FOC) is expected to be achieved before the end of June 2008; the deployment of EUFOR has been progressing on schedule. EUFOR's mandate is to contribute to the protection of civilians in danger, particularly displaced persons and refugees, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel and to contribute to the protection of UN personnel, facilities, installations and equipment. In observance of its mandate EUFOR Tchad/RCA will act in an impartial, neutral and independent manner. The Council looks forward to the mid-term review and report foreseen in UNSCR 1778(2007) which will report arrangements for following up EUFOR Tchad/RCA after the one-year period for which it has been authorized by the UN Security Council. The Council stressed the need for a timely start of preparatory work in this respect.
11. Negotiations with some Third states that have shown willingness to contribute to the operation are ongoing. Agreements with Russia and Albania, which have made a formal offer, are under negotiation or about to be concluded. Non-EU European NATO members and other countries which are candidates for accession to the EU have been regularly informed about the development of the operation.
12. The deployment of EUFOR Tchad/RCA is a major EU contribution to the international efforts, which, together with UN mission MINURCAT in the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic and in coordination with the Hybrid AU/UN mission UNAMID in Darfur, helps to address conflict in the region and its devastating effects on the humanitarian situation. In this context, the Council urged the Government of Sudan to facilitate a speedy deployment of UNAMID. The EU will continue its close cooperation and coordination with all actors involved, in particular with the UN and the AU.
13. EUFOR is part of the EU's multi-faceted support to the area. The EC and Member States continue their ongoing development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The EU will continue to support a process of inclusive national dialogue, in order to promote the necessary conditions for the holding of free and transparent elections.

14. Given the cross-border involvement of armed groups the Council called on the governments of Sudan and Chad to improve their relations and to immediately stop supporting and equipping these groups. It called on the countries of the region to contribute to good neighborhood relations and improve their cooperation. In this context, the Council welcomed the Dakar Agreement of 13 March, brokered by the Senegalese President Wade, and signed by the Presidents of Chad and Sudan to effectively end their disputes; noting particularly the built-in implementation mechanism with regular high-level meetings between government representatives from not only Chad and Sudan, but also Libya, Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Gabon and Eritrea. Continued pressure on the parties concerned by the international community will be crucial for sustainable successful implementation.

EUSEC RD Congo

15. The Council supported current efforts aiming at the re-launching of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, as part of the overall effort to restore stability in the DRC. Deploring the continued violence exerted against women in the East, the Council expressed its support for a stronger involvement of MONUC in this regard to address robustly exactions by armed groups. The Council expressed its concern at the rise in the recruitment of child soldiers to armed groups in the Eastern DRC and underlined the need for all actors in the field to address this problem as a priority.
16. Security Sector Reform (SSR) remains necessary to reach a sustainable stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo. To that end, the continued work and close co-ordination between the ESDP missions (EUSEC RD Congo and EUPOL RD Congo) and Community activities are of great importance. Further stabilization of the DRC is one of the most important factors for peace in the whole Great Lakes region. Concerning the reform of the defence sector, the Council underlined its willingness to continue its support, via the mission EUSEC RD Congo, to sustainable reforms which are respectful of key principles of good governance and human rights.
17. The Council underlined practical activities undertaken by EUSEC, including the continuation of the biometric census of the Armed Forces personnel as well as the chain-of-payments project which has achieved real progress, notably the better delivery of increased salaries to the military. A gradual transfer of responsibilities to the Congolese administration is now an objective to be achieved by June 2009.
18. The Council underlined the importance of the full implementation by all parties of their commitments taken at the Goma Conference and in the Nairobi Communiqué. The current peace process represents a chance for a lasting stability enabling the Government to focus on long-term reforms. Of crucial importance is a developed dialogue with the Congolese people and authorities to promote a better national ownership of the reform process. Coordinated support from the EU Member States will contribute to a successful outcome. The Council commended the efforts of the EUSR for the African Great Lakes Region in providing essential support to the Congolese parties in keeping the Goma process firmly on track, as well as his support to follow-on of the Nairobi Communiqué. In this regard, the Council recalled that the mission EUSEC RD Congo has provided support to the EUSR for the African Great Lakes Region in his effort aiming at keeping these processes on track.

EUPOL RD Congo

19. The Council welcomes the achievements of EUPOL RD Congo in support of the reform of the Congolese police and the latter's interaction with justice, especially the operationalisation of the coordinating mechanism through the CSRP (Comité de Suivi de réforme de la Police). The Council also expresses its appreciation for the mission's contribution to EU overall efforts intended to bolster the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process in DRC, and takes note of the ongoing preparatory work to extend EUPOL RD Congo for another year, including with a limited deployment in Eastern DRC, in support to the stabilization process.

EUSSR Guinea Bissau

20. The Council notes the deployment of an advance team to Guinea-Bissau to launch EU SSR GUINEA BISSAU by the month of June. The Council underlines the comprehensive character of the mission, having tasks with police, judicial and military components contributing to security sector reform. EU SSR GUINEA BISSAU will provide advice and assistance to the local authorities on reform of the security sector in Guinea-Bissau in order to contribute to creating the conditions for implementation of the National Security Strategy in close co-operation with other EU, international and bilateral actors, and with a view to facilitating there through subsequent donor engagement.

Asia

EUPOL AFGHANISTAN

21. The Council commends the progress achieved by EUPOL AFGHANISTAN in the implementation of its mandate and in its deployment throughout the country. The mission has supported, in close coordination with its key international partners, the Afghan Government's efforts in reforming and strengthening its police and more broadly the rule of law sector in Afghanistan.
22. With respect to the EUPOL AFGHANISTAN the Council recalls the Council Conclusions on Afghanistan adopted on May 26 2008.

II. Capabilities

Civilian Capabilities

23. As civilian crisis management continues to grow, the further development and consolidation of underlying civilian capabilities becomes all the more important. The Council notes that implementation of the new Civilian Headline Goal 2010 started with work on a new common pilot illustrative scenario supportive of both civilian and military ESDP capability development processes, taking into account relevant capabilities available to the European Community. The Council stresses that, in the further development of the capability planning process under CHG 2010, special attention must continue to be dedicated to synergies between civilian and military ESDP and between ESDP and European Community activities.

24. Council noted that the work has begun on the development of a systematic approach regarding the human resources with a view to put in place a clear framework that would help to recruit and have in place the most qualified staff, so as to achieve optimal success in the area of civilian crisis management.

Military Capabilities

25. The Council welcomed the continued progress made in the EU military capabilities development process.
26. The Council noted that in accordance with the recommendations of Progress Catalogue 2007, based on the Initial Orientation findings, additional information was compiled and analysed against Capability Shortfalls in order to derive the First Prioritisation for addressing capability shortfalls.
27. The Council encouraged Member States to undertake the appropriate actions in order to address the identified capability shortfalls, in particular in the areas of force protection, deployability and information superiority, including through good use of opportunities for cooperation aiming at improving the EU's capability to act and the European Defence Agency to continue being actively involved in capability development, in close co-operation with the EU Military Committee.
28. The Council welcomed progress made in the elaboration of the Capability Development Plan (CDP), which participating Member States are elaborating through the European Defence Agency and the EUMC in active and efficient co-operation. The Council encouraged Member States to use the CDP, of which the first tranche of the actionable conclusions will be presented at the EDA Steering Board in July, as a tool to orientate their efforts to further improve their military capabilities.
29. The Council agreed to terminate the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) . The Council looked forward to being informed on the follow-up of the issues highlighted by the former ECAP project groups on Special Operations Forces, Headquarters, and Air and Missile Defence in their final reports.
30. The Council noted the work on Information Exchange Requirements (IER) aimed at identifying operational requirements for exchanging information between all entities, both civilian and military, that may interact in support of ESDP operations. This work includes the development of vignettes covering military and civilian operations, as defined in the revised Global Overview and Roadmap noted by the PSC in December 2007. The Council looked forward to further Steps in accordance with the IER Methodology.
31. The Council noted that the work on IER is undertaken in close co-ordination with the work undertaken on the ESDP Network Enabled Capabilities.

Rapid Response

32. The Council noted that work has started on the revision of the EU Military Rapid Response Concept and looked forward to further work on this revision, which shall be concluded in 2008. The Council welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Maritime Rapid Response and Air Rapid Response Concepts agreed in November and December 2007 respectively. This includes the first Maritime Rapid Response Information Conference (MarRRIC) held in April 2008, where Member States reviewed the assets and capabilities they have declared for the second semester of 2008 and their indicative declarations for the first semester 2009. In view of the next MarRRIC scheduled for October 2008, Member States are invited to provide further indications to the EUMS.
33. The Council welcomed the outcomes of the Battlegroup Co-ordination Conference (BGCC) on 24 April, where Member States have committed in detail the required BG packages until the second Semester in 2009 and have committed packages until the first Semester in 2011. The Council strongly encouraged volunteering Member States to make new offers at next BGCC in October 2008 in order to fill in particular the vacant slot in the second semester of 2010. The Council looked forward to a Generic Preparation Guide, which Member States may use on a voluntary basis in order to facilitate their BG preparatory activities.

EUMS Organisation Development

34. The Council welcomed work conducted in order to implement the SG/HR report on the EU Military Staff's ability to conduct military planning at the strategic level for EU-led operations, as requested by the Council in May 2007, following the Wiesbaden Ministerial Conference. This resulted in a provisional restructuring of the EUMS and a limited revision of its Terms of Reference and organisation, aimed at enhancing the military ability to conduct early planning at strategic level in order to better inform and accelerate the Member States decision making process. The Council recalled that it will revert to this issue as soon as practicable during the course of 2008, including the need for any additional personnel, on the basis of an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the measures and actions in responding to the Council request to the SG/HR.
35. The Council welcomed the declaration made in March of the Initial Operational Capability of the EU Watchkeeping Capability which monitors ESDP operations.

European Defence Agency

36. The Council noted the report by the Head of the Agency on its activities and welcomed the achievements.
37. The Council welcomed the progress made in developing and implementing the long-term strategies:

- a) Preparation, in close cooperation with the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff, of the Capability Development Plan (CDP) in view of delivering its initial version at the Steering Board in Capabilities Directors' formation in July this year with the first tranche of Actionable Conclusions. Good progress has been achieved in the four strands of the CDP. The two strands under the responsibility of the EUMC, strand A (which provides the EUMC guidance on the first prioritisation of identified shortfalls) and strand D (which provides lessons identified from EU and non-EU led military operations) were completed and forwarded to EDA for follow-up work on CDP. Regarding the two strands under the Agency's lead, work has progressed towards the identification of the potential capability trends and characteristics up to 2025 and beyond, and participating Member States have accelerated the inputting of potential collaborative projects into the CDP Projects and Initiatives Database with their national projects, programmes and initiatives across all capability lines of development.
 - b) Implementation of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) strategy with, notably, some progress on the identification of key industrial technologies to be developed or preserved in Europe (it was agreed by the Steering Board in National Armament Directors (NAD) formation that work would focus initially on Future Air Systems), and the establishment of Security of Supply Points of Contacts/National Representatives.
 - c) Development of a European Defence Research and Technology Strategy, with progress on the definition of key technologies and on a number of new tools to manage Research and Technology (R&T) activities and to improve the generation of opt-in R&T projects under EDA's umbrella.
 - d) Development of a European Armaments strategy meant to describe the translation process between a capability need and a cooperative armaments programme. This strategy will be delivered for approval by the ministerial Steering Board in November 2008.
38. The Council encouraged EDA to continue with advertising its potential added value in specific ad hoc cooperative projects and programmes with a view to enhancing and improving European cooperation. The results deriving from the CDP will assist participating Member States to achieve a more coherent and coordinated capability development effort. In this respect, the EDA is encouraged to launch concrete projects and programmes.
39. The Council also welcomed the results achieved on policies and specific projects and initiatives:
- a) Positive assessment of the overall implementation of the Regime on defence procurement, indicating that in general subscribing Member States have adapted their procurement practices to the provisions of the Code of Conduct (CoC). The Council underlined the need to increase the awareness of the CoC, and the importance of ensuring higher value cross-border awards and of encouraging cross-border biddings. The Council welcomed the decision of Bulgaria to join the Regime on 23 April 2008, which brought the number of subscribing Member States to 25. The Council also welcomed the Steering Board's approval of Norway's participation in the Regime.
 - b) Successful implementation of the first Agency Defence R&T Joint Investment Programme, in the area of Force Protection, with contracted projects launched and further calls for projects under way.

- c) Approval by the Steering Board in Defence Minister's formation of a new Defence R&T Joint Investment Programme, in the area of Innovative Concepts and Emerging Technologies.
 - d) Initiation of activities to improve the availability of helicopters for ESDP operations: investigating the potential for co-operation of participating Member States who operate the same types of helicopters, to create upgrade and/or support programmes to enhance deployability; and investigating the opportunities for participating Member States to share training and maintenance facilities for existing and new helicopters.
 - e) Preparatory work in view of implementing the roadmap to fly UAVs in regulated airspace, including with the approval of four priority areas where the € 6 m earmarked revenue agreed in November 2007 could be used.
 - f) Progress on the drafting of the NEC Concept, to be discussed by the Steering Board in Capabilities Directors' formation (July 2008), after which the SG/HR will decide on further handling, for consideration of the Council bodies, including the PSC.
 - g) Establishment of a Project Team to study viable business and operational models for the development of a European Air Transport Fleet and their implementation modalities.
 - h) Adoption of Rules and Procedures for ad hoc projects and programmes for mutual use of governments test facilities and cooperative test and evaluation, which will increase transparency and interdependencies in Europe in this area.
40. The Council welcomed the Agency's efforts to seek synergies between military and civilian activities, in consultation and coordination with the European Commission (in relation to its research activities), especially in the areas of SDR, UAV and Maritime Surveillance.

III. Conflict Prevention

41. ESDP has since the outset been also intended to strengthen the EU's capacity to act in the field of conflict prevention. In this respect further emphasis has been put on achieving the necessary synergies between activities undertaken at the European level and bilateral activities of the Member States. In this regard the EU launched the process with a view to start an exchange of best practices, assist Member States in building up national capacities, capabilities and skills in the field of conflict prevention, improve coordination and coherence of the activities undertaken at the European level and to raise awareness in this field.

IV. Strategic Partnerships

EU-UN

42. The Council reiterated the importance it attaches to EU-UN co-operation in crisis management. In this context, the Council welcomed the recent exchange of letters on co-operation between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and the UN mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) dealing in particular with mutual support. The Council also emphasised the need for continued close coordination between the two organisations in other operational theatres, notably in Kosovo as well as Afghanistan, the DR Congo and Guinea Bissau.

43. The Council welcomed the progressive implementation of the 2007 Joint Statement on UN-EU Co-operation in Crisis Management through a series of concrete recommendations approved by the PSC, *inter alia* in the fields of reinforced dialogue (including regular consultations between senior UN officials and the PSC), SSR, African peace-keeping capabilities, and the multidimensional aspects of peace-keeping.

EU-NATO

44. The Council welcomed the ongoing coordination and cooperation efforts between the SG/HR and NATO SG and cooperation on the ground between the EU and NATO with regard to theatres where the two organisations are engaged, in particular Kosovo and Afghanistan. It underlined the need to further strengthen EU-NATO coordination, including on the strategic level, in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of the efforts of the two organisations and further develop their strategic partnership in crisis management, whilst respecting the decision-making autonomy of each organisation.
45. The Council reaffirmed the need for continued cooperation between EU and NATO on issues of military capability development. The EU-NATO Capability Group continued to provide a forum for exchanging information on the development of military capabilities in the EU and NATO where requirements overlap. All Member States were informed of these issues. The Council welcomed the document "Considérations sur le groupe UE-OTAN des capacités militaires" which was made available to NATO in order to foster transparency and reciprocity and noted that the participation of all EU Member States to the Group would further facilitate the exchange of information between the two organisations in the domain of military capabilities. In the light of this document, preparatory work in the appropriate EU working parties was reinforced and information on a number of new relevant capability related issues of interest to both the EU and NATO was exchanged with, on the EU side, strong participation from EDA experts. The EU-NATO Capability Group had an initial exchange of views on the need to improve the availability of European helicopters. Discussion will continue based on further work, respectively in the EU, including the EDA for the benefit of all its participating Member States, and in NATO.
46. The Permanent Liaison Arrangements between the EU and NATO continue to facilitate EU-NATO contacts across a wide range of issues, in accordance with the terms of reference.

EU-AU

47. The Council reaffirmed the importance it attaches to the implementation of the EU/Africa Joint Strategy adopted during the last EU/Africa Summit held in Lisbon on 8 and 9 December 2007. The main objectives of this strategy are to promote peace and security, sustainable development, democratic governance and human rights, and to support regional and continental integration in Africa. The Council welcomed the appointment of the EUSR/Head of Delegation to the AU and the establishment in Addis Ababa of the EU delegation, as well as the appointment the SG/HR Special Advisor for the African Peacekeeping Capabilities.

48. The Council encouraged all stakeholders involved in the Action Plan on strengthening the partnership between Africa and the EU in the field of African capabilities for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, adopted by the Council in May 2007, to continue their efforts. This includes the development of EURO RECAMP, which is the main vehicle of the African Standby Force (ASF) Training Plan adopted by the AU in March 2008 and is supporting capability-building in the AU Peace and Security Operations Division; the forthcoming support to African Training Centres, including through the participation of African personnel in Member States' training programmes. In the framework of this support, the Council agreed to develop further the link with the African Sub-regional Organisations.

EU-Mediterranean Partners

49. The Council welcomed of the continuation of the dialogue and co-operation among the Euro-Mediterranean Partners on ESDP and recalled the declaration of the European Council of 13-14 March 2008 on the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". It welcomed the initiative undertaken by the EU Institute for Security Studies to launch a series of seminars, together with the Mediterranean partners, with a view to deepen Euro-Mediterranean dialogue in the field of security and defence. A first such seminar was held on 14 March 2008 in Rabat in Morocco.

V. Security and Development

50. Following the adoption of Council Conclusions on Security and Development in November 2007, further steps have been taken to strengthen EU activities in the nexus between security and development.
51. The Council welcomes the Commission's initiative to launch a study to draw lessons from current and past experiences in selected countries in close coordination with Member States and the Council Secretariat. The study, together with contributions from other processes, will constitute the basis for developing an Action Plan, the swift implementation of which will improve sequencing and coordination of the EU activities in the area of development and security.
52. In line with the comprehensive approach, these include, further efforts made especially in the field of children affected by armed conflict (CAAC) as well as gender and armed conflict and humanitarian aid and security actors. In respect to a regional focus on Africa, the EU-Africa Joint Strategy and most notably its Peace and Security and Governance Strategic Partnerships are progressing through the identification of the implementation plans for the defined actions.

VI. Human Rights, Gender, Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC)

Human Rights

53. The Council recalled the continued need to systematically include Human Rights issues, including Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) and Gender issues in the planning and conduct of ESDP missions and operations, and subsequently evaluated in the lessons learned process. The Council also called for closer co-operation on these issues with EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), whose mandates now contain specific provisions to address Human Rights issues, including CAAC and Gender issues, as well as with the Commission. In addition, the Council called for systematic consultations with the Personal Representative of the SG/HR on Human Rights in regard to human rights, CAAC and gender issues in the planning and conduct of all ESDP missions and operations.

Gender

54. The Council recalled the importance of Gender mainstreaming and called for reinforcement of efforts in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and relevant EU documents, particularly with a view to achieving more concrete progress in this field on the ground. The study conducted on Enhancing the EU response to women and armed Conflict was seen as instrumental in this regard. The Council also recalled its invitation to Member States in this context to nominate more female candidates for CFSP/ESDP senior management positions, including for EUSRs as well as for ESDP missions and operations in general.

Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC)

55. With regard to CAAC issues and the further implementation of UNSCR 1612, the Council appreciated the study made on this subject, as well as the review of and the concrete amendments to the Council document Checklist for the Integration of the Protection of Children affected by Armed Conflict into ESDP Operations, based on a detailed questionnaire, particularly emphasising the aim to further enhance its implementation on the ground.

VII. Training

56. In January 2008, the Council approved the EU Training Programme in the field of ESDP 2008 to 2010 which is made available under the webpage of the ESDC within the Council webpage. The details of the programme will be kept regularly up to date.
57. Training activities in the field of ESDP of the various European actors and of the Member States conducted in 2007 have been evaluated through the regular Comprehensive Annual Report on Training relevant to ESDP (CART 2008). The Council noted this report and approved its conclusions defining steps to further improve training relevant to ESDP.
58. The European Security and Defence College (ESDC) concluded its third ESDP High Level Course with the 5th and final module on 11 April 2008 in Ljubljana. Other modules were held in Brussels, Lisbon, Prague/Brno and in Tartu. Hosted by the Slovenian Presidency, former course participants of the ESDP High Level Courses convened for a first ESDC Alumni Seminar in Ljubljana from 10 to 12 April 2008.

59. Furthermore, two ESDP Orientation Courses took place, one in February 2008 in Palermo hosted by CASD/Rome and a second in May 2008 in Brussels hosted by the NL Defence College.
60. Based on the ESDC Steering Committee report (Article 13 Report), the PSC had a debate in February 2008 on the activities and perspectives of the ESDC. Subsequently, as tasked by the Council, the Relex Group started to examine a draft revision of the Joint Action establishing the ESDC taking into account the findings of this report. The Council will revert to the issue in November 2008 on the basis of a study on the future perspectives of the ESDC based on an agreed training need analysis.
61. All on-going ESDP missions have continued with their regular training activities in the area of civilian crisis management. Particular attention is being focused on training for EULEX Kosovo personnel where Member States are responsible for mission specific training before deployment and EUPT Training Team organises a short in-mission induction training. This induction training plays a crucial role in ensuring a common approach and vision amongst the mission staff.

VIII. Exercises

62. The Council approved the EU Exercise Programme 2009 - 2013 on 26 May 2008 , thus defining the five year rolling programme of EU exercises and exercise-related activities.
63. The Council welcomed that final preparations are under way for the conduct of the third EU military exercise MILEX 08, scheduled to take place from 19 to 27 June 2008. This exercise will focus on the interaction between the EU OHQ (provided by Italy and located in Rome) and the EU FHQ (provided by Spain and located in Valencia) in an EU led military operation.
64. The Council underlined the importance of continued preparatory work for the EU crisis management exercise to be held in the fall of 2008 (CME 08). This will provide an opportunity to undertake for the first time operational planning in parallel for a military operation and a reconfigured civilian ESDP mission engaged in the same theatre. The EU OHQ for this exercise will be at Mont Valérien and will be provided by France. The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability will be participating in an EU crisis management exercise for the first time.
65. The Council welcomed the preparatory work undertaken for the EU Military Exercise to be held in 2009 (MILEX 09), focusing on military aspects of crisis management at the military strategic and operational level for an EU-led crisis management operation without recourse to NATO common assets and capabilities. The EU OHQ for this exercise will be provided by Greece and is located in Larissa. In addition, the EU FHQ will be in Naples and is provided by Italy.
66. The Council recalled the importance it attaches, in accordance with the EU exercise policy, to the planning and conduct of regular crisis management exercises, including together with NATO and with the participation of all EU Member States.