



S340/05 (bis)

**Summary of Remarks by**  
**Javier SOLANA,**  
**EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy**  
**at the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency**  
**Lynham, UK, 13 October 2005**

The European Defence Agency is only just over one year old and today was the fourth ministerial meeting of the EDA Steering Board and the eighth in all. But it is only in the last few months that the Agency has been fully staffed and has become fully operational.

So, we have reached the end of the beginning. Now, the moment has arrived to conduct real business and to deliver. Expectations are high. This Agency has to prove that Europe can deliver the military capabilities needed for crisis management.

There is much good work going on: for instance on capability analysis, the identification of R&T priorities and the decision to set up innovative mechanisms, such as the Code of Conduct on defence procurement.

But that is only half an Agency. The other half is an Agency of ad hoc projects, of groups of participating Member States pooling their efforts and providing the required resources. Most likely they would operate in smaller groups, within which decisions will be made on such collaborative efforts. There, much more must be done. Particularly in Research and Technology, Europe urgently needs more and more focussed cooperation.

Our challenge is to move beyond the phase of studies and analysis and start projects to address the military shortfalls which we have identified. In the end, it is up to the participating Member States to deliver these capabilities, but the EDA should be used extensively to assist and support you in your efforts to improve Europe's defence performance and to develop further the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

*Enclosed: EDA Press releases*  
*"EDA Steering Board reviews Agency's plans for 2006"*  
*"Ten EU Governments launch new EDA initiative to fill air-to-air refuelling gap"*

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FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

The Spokesperson of the Secretary General, High Representative for CFSP

☎ +32 (0)2 285 6467 / 8239 / 5150 / 5151 ☎ +32 (0)2 285 5694

internet: <http://ue.eu.int/solana>

e-mail: [presse.cabinet@consilium.eu.int](mailto:presse.cabinet@consilium.eu.int)



# EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

Brussels, 13 October 2005

## PRESS RELEASE

### **EDA STEERING BOARD REVIEWS AGENCY'S PLANS FOR 2006 (BRUSSELS, 13 OCTOBER 2005)**

European Union Defence Ministers agreed today that spending on defence-related Research & Technology needs to increase and to be more effective through greater collaboration between EU countries.

At a meeting of the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency at RAF Lyneham in the United Kingdom, the Ministers reviewed the Agency's plans for 2006. Ministers agreed that the Agency should move into launching ad-hoc projects as soon as possible.

Ministers witnessed a demonstration of U.K. air-to-air refuelling capabilities and 10 countries issued a statement announcing that they had agreed to create an ad hoc group, supported by the EDA, to consider possible new approaches to solving the EU's shortfall.

"I very much welcome this step. It is a good example of the way forward" said Javier Solana, Head of European Defence Agency. "We need more projects like this to address the military shortfalls which are still there in many areas, six years after the start of the European Security and Defence Policy. We need commitments to allocate resources. We need multinational initiatives in smaller or larger groups," he added.

The ministers also reviewed the principles for a voluntary Code of Conduct to bring more cross-border competition in the European Defence Equipment Market and confirmed their commitment to take a final decision on the initiative at their Steering Board meeting next month.

The Steering Board considered moves to rationalise testing and evaluation of defence equipment, where there may be scope for significant savings by creating centres of excellence in specific technologies in different EU states, and said such work should be pursued energetically.

The ministers also looked at suggested indicators and strategic targets for measuring progress on the EU's agenda to transform its military capabilities to meet the requirements of ESDP and asked the Agency to prepare formal proposals for a decision at the next meeting.

"In the end, this transformation can only be done by national governments," said Solana. "The EDA will do everything it can to help, but the Agency does not deliver capabilities itself. Its participating Member States will have to. But they can now use the EDA instrument to support their efforts to improve Europe's defence performance."

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## **EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY**

Brussels, 13 October 2005

PRESS RELEASE

### **TEN EU GOVERNMENTS LAUNCH NEW EDA INITIATIVE TO FILL AIR-TO-AIR REFUELLING GAP (BRUSSELS, 13 OCTOBER 2005)**

European Defence Ministers, meeting informally today at RAF Lyneham (U.K.), were given a demonstration of air-tanking capability and launched a new effort to fill the gap in tanking capability which constrains Europe's Rapid Reaction aspirations.

Following their meeting in the European Defence Agency's Steering Board, the Ministers of 10 Member States (Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium and Portugal) issued the following joint announcement:

“Initiatives to build European air-to-air refuelling capabilities, whether in NATO or the EU, have not made the necessary progress in recent years, despite the efforts of some individual EU Member States. ESDP's new Headline Goal 2010, like the Helsinki Headline Goal before it, will fall short unless we can find a new approach to filling this key capability gap. At Javier Solana's initiative, therefore, we reviewed current air to air refuelling national capability plans. As a result of our discussion, we have decided to instruct our national staffs to work together, in an EDA-supported ad hoc group, to monitor current developments and consider possible new approaches to filling the capability gap.”

## **BACKGROUND ON AIR-TO-AIR REFUELLING**

The [EU Headline Goal](#) process has identified confirmed the importance of air-to-air refuelling (AAR) capability for European crisis-management operations. The current requirement is in the range of just over 70 strategic tankers. Six Member States contribute to this capability: the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. There is a major shortfall based on what is currently available or planned. The current contributions make up less than half the agreed requirement.

The role of strategic tankers is growing while European fleets are getting older. Operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan have shown the importance of these assets. They have undertaken over 30% of the total flying sorties, ensuring that attack and support aircraft can get to and from their targets and enabling fighters to stay airborne to protect friendly civilian populations and military forces. All lessons identified from recent operations have highlighted AAR assets as a 'force multiplier' - allowing more efficient and effective use of expensive and scarce fighter and attack aircraft within the theatre of operations.

There are currently European based initiatives in the UK, Germany and Italy. Germany is taking delivery of 4 converted A-310 aircraft and Italy is acquiring 4 new KC 767 to replace their ageing B707TTs. In both initiatives the aircraft will be configured to be Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) capable. The UK is currently in contractual negotiations to provide a replacement to their VC-10 and Tristar aircraft through a Public Finance Initiative (PFI) solution.

The European Capability Action Plan (ECAP) and NATO's Prague Commitment Conference (PCC) have considered various ways forward. The new initiative co-ordinated by the EDA will enable Member States who are willing to commit resources to adopt a more integrated and comprehensive approach to remedying the shortfall. For example, a way forward incorporating the MRTT principle, providing a significant transport capability (both cargo and personnel), could address another significant ESDP capability shortfall - strategic airlift - for both intensive combat situations and in support of civilian operations such as humanitarian assistance.

The EDA co-ordinated Ad Hoc Project Team will examine the UK Private Financing Initiative (PFI) model. This considers the provision of a 'capability service' - airborne refuelling stations supplied by a commercial consortium - rather than a classical procurement of aircraft. But it will also review other acquisition options, such as joint procurement, and look at such approaches as pooling of assets.

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FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Malgorzata Alterman - Head of Media and Communication  
+32 (0)2 504 2810 mobile +32 (0) 478 96 30 97  
e-mail: malgorzata.alterman@eda.eu.int