



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



15396/08 (Presse 319)

PRESS RELEASE

2903rd meeting of the Council

General Affairs and External Relations

External Relations

Brussels, 10 and 11 November 2008

President

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of France

Mr Alan JOYANDET

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Main results of the Council

*The Council conducted its half-yearly examination of developments and projects in the field of **European Security and Defence Policy**, in the presence of the Ministers for Defence. It noted a number of real advances, such as:*

- *the adoption of a Joint Action on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the **Somali** coast*
- *the endorsement of ministerial commitments as regards the development of **military capabilities** and of **civilian capabilities***
- *progress on **force projection** (European airlift fleet, European carrier group interoperability, helicopters), including the signing of declarations of intent*
- *the signing by five Member States of a letter of intent relating to **space surveillance***
- *the adoption of a statement on a European **young officers exchange** scheme, modelled on Erasmus.*

*The Council discussed **EU-Russia relations**, with a view to the summit meeting in Nice on 14 November. In a statement, the Presidency reaffirmed in particular the relevance of the Council conclusions of 1 September and 15 and 16 October on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia and the implementation of the agreements of 12 August and 8 September. It noted that an in-depth examination of relations between the EU and Russia had been carried out, and that it will continue, in particular in the light of Russia's actions, and will be taken into account in the further negotiations on the new agreement with Russia and in other aspects of EU-Russia relations.*

*The Council also discussed recent events in the east of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. It expressed utmost concern at the increase in clashes in North Kivu and the consequences for the population and for the whole region. It urged all the parties involved to respect the ceasefire and emphasised the urgency of finding a political solution, to which the EU stands ready to contribute. It reiterated its support for the MONUC and called for enhanced cooperation between the EU, its Member States and the MONUC. Finally, it welcomed the organisation of a summit on the crisis in Nairobi on 7 November and the final declaration of the Heads of State and the involvement of the States of the region in the quest for a solution to the crisis.*

*Concerning development cooperation, the Council approved the EU's position for the forthcoming UN conference on **financing for development** in Doha.*

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OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

PARTICIPANTS

The governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Karel DE GUCHT Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Pieter DE CREM Minister for Defence

Bulgaria:

Mr Ivailo KALFIN Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Spas PANCHEV Deputy Minister for Defence

Czech Republic:

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ms Vlasta PARKANOVA Minister for Defence

Denmark:

Mr Søren Gade JENSEN Minister for Defence
Mr Michael ZILMER-JOHNS State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Ib PETERSEN State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ms Heidemarie WIECZOREK-ZEUL Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development
Mr Franz-Josef JUNG Federal Minister for Defence

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Jaak AAVIKSOO Minister for Defence

Ireland:

Mr Micheál MARTIN Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr William O'DEA Minister for Defence
Mr Peter POWER Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs
(with special responsibility for Overseas Development)

Greece:

Ms Theodora BAKOYANNI Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Evangelos-Vassilios MEIMARAKIS Minister for Defence

Spain:

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Mr Guido CROSETTO State Secretary for Defence

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Mr Costas PAPACOSTAS Minister for Defence

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Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Mr Jean-Louis SCHILTZ

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Minister for Communications, Minister for Defence
Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

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Mr Frans TIMMERMANS
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Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Minister of State with responsibility for European Matters
Minister of State with responsibility for International
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Minister for International Defence and Security

.....
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Mr Olli REHN
Mr Louis MICHEL
Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Member
Member
Member

.....
General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

The Council noted with satisfaction the EDA's efforts to ensure that its work was complementary with the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) and the LoI and consistent with NATO work, in compliance with the provisions of the Joint Action. The finalisation of an administrative arrangement between the EDA and OCCAR will enable the two bodies to organise their cooperation on the basis of the Statement on cooperation between the EDA and OCCAR (see Annex I).

European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB)

The Council emphasised the need for the European Union to pursue its efforts, also within the EDA, to secure a robust and competitive EDTIB capable of meeting the Member States' capability requirements and of supporting the ESDP. In particular, further consideration should be given to the questions of reinforcing security of supply, opening up national markets and strengthening supply chains, notably through measures to encourage SMEs.

Training

In a separate statement (see Annex II), the Council approved the launching of the European young officers exchange scheme, modelled on Erasmus. The aim is to develop exchanges between officers in their initial training phase, in order to reinforce the ability of the European armed forces to work together and the interoperability of forces. This initiative, which will facilitate exchanges between national training colleges, will be implemented on a national and voluntary basis, with assistance from the European Security and Defence College.

The Council noted that work on the study into the outlook for the European Security and Defence College was under way.

(...)

The full text of the conclusions on ESDP appears in 15465/08.

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