**Informal Defence Ministers meeting: towards a sustained policy of military capabilities**

High Representative Catherine Ashton chaired an informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers, on 18 April, their last meeting before the NATO Chicago Summit in May. Building on the work of recent months, they confirmed the EU's commitment and its unique position as a security provider in a context of financial austerity and a changing strategic environment.

The EU-NATO partnership is already a reality, both in the operational engagement and in the area of capability development, where close cooperation has allowed ensuring in practice full complementarity, especially on Pooling and Sharing and Smart Defence.

Ministers also took this opportunity to discuss the longer-term multinational military capability development, including the need to continue to invest in innovation and the capabilities of the future, to pursue synergies with European policies and in particular in the field of Research and Technology.

Full press release [here](#)

**Council conclusions on pooling and sharing of military capabilities, adopted on 22 March 2012**

Political resolution drives pooling & sharing (EDA)

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**EUNAVFOR Atalanta rescues Somali crew held by pirates**

Spanish warship ESPS Reina Sofia, operating as part of Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta, on Saturday 14 April, boarded a Yemeni dhow believed to have been used as a mother ship and related to several pirate attacks in the area. The 20 men were transferred from the dhow to Reina Sofia, including four innocent Somali crewmembers.

The French Air Force airborne warning and control system (AWACS) E3F, FS Dixmude and its helicopters, as well as an Australian maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft contributed to this operation. The latter prevented the 16 pirates from using the dhow as a mother ship to attack merchant shipping in the Indian Ocean. The dhow and the Somali crew could subsequently return safely to the homeport in Yemen.

More news [here](#)

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**EUJUST LEX-Iraq holds course for senior prison leadership in Basra**

EUJUST LEX-Iraq held a one-week penitentiary course in Basra on 12 April. The course was given by in-house expertise to 12 senior prison managers, including the Deputy Director General of the Iraqi Correctional Service and two female prison managers. It aimed to familiarise the prison managers with a human rights based approach to prison management.

Amongst the different topics, managers were introduced to the concept of dynamic security in prisons and how to achieve a balance between security and good conditions for prisoners and staff.

It also focused on the management of vulnerable groups of prisoners, on how to improve communication, on prison auditing and international prison standards as well as on emergency incident planning.

Participants engaged fully in the course and shared ideas and thoughts constructively, especially during the simulation exercise that tested their ability to manage a serious incident.

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**The European Union and New Zealand enhance their cooperation on crisis management**

High Representative Catherine Ashton and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, Murray McCully, signed on 18 April a Framework Agreement for the participation of New Zealand in EU crisis management operations.

New Zealand is already an active partner in the area of the CSDP, having contributed to both EU military and civilian operations: EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU Police mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan.

The Agreement, by setting down a legal framework governing any future participation by New Zealand in the full range of EU-led operations and missions, enables smooth involvement of New Zealand in on-going and future EU crisis management efforts in different theatres.

Full press release [here](#)
Interview du Général António Martins, Chef de la Mission EUSEC RDC

Le Chef de la mission EUSEC RD Congo, le général António Martins, a rendu compte au Comité politique et de sécurité (COPS) des activités de la mission depuis octobre 2011, en même temps que EUPOL RD Congo, la mission sœur qui soutient la réforme de la police nationale en RDC.

Ces six derniers mois, la mission a notamment créé une cellule de conseil stratégique pour soutenir le Ministère de la Défense Nationale et le Chef d'État-Major Général et a aidé à la finalisation de la distribution des cartes d’identité militaires permettant une meilleure maîtrise des effectifs. Dans le domaine de la formation, elle a également permis la réouverture de l’Académie militaire de Kananga et la première promotion de l’Ecole de formation des sous-officiers à Kitona. Enfin, la mission a poursuivi son travail en soutien à la logistique, notamment à la sécurisation du transport et du dépôt d’armes et de munitions.

Cliquez sur l’image pour voir l’interview

Présentation du Guide des libertés publiques grâce au soutien d’EUPOL RD Congo


Ce Guide est un document pratique qui se veut d’utilisation régulière et aisée aussi bien par la police et la société civile. Il poursuit deux grands objectifs : aider les policiers à remplir leurs obligations vis-à-vis de la population pour la préservation des droits et libertés du citoyen, et informer les Congolais de l’étendue et des limites de leurs droits, dotant ainsi les ONG d’un outil leur permettant d’en soutenir l’application. À cette occasion, le Commissaire Divisionnaire Hervé Flahaut, Chef de mission adjoint d’EUPOL RD Congo, a rappelé l’importance du “strict respect des libertés publiques par la police [comme] une garantie de paix et de sécurité publique”.

Plus d’infos ici

EUMC’s visit to the European Defence Agency (EDA)

Continuing the cooperation and teamwork on the best capability projects and solutions for the Member States, the EUMC visited the EDA.

The Chairman of the Committee, Gen. Håkan Syrén, together with the Military Representatives had an exchange of views on pooling and sharing and on Single European Sky with the Chief Executive of EDA, Claude-France Arnould, and the Directors. Both the stakeholders confirmed their support to the way ahead on these two important issues.

The debate was held in light of the discussions at the 24th April 2012 EUMC meeting at Chiefs of Defence level.

Upcoming activities

23April : HR Ashton chairs Foreign Affairs Council
24April : EUMC meeting at Chiefs of Defence level

EUMM Georgia support to confidence building: concrete progress for agricultural works

Participants of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in the South Ossetian theatre, which brings together the parties to the conflict, have come together to address security challenges faced by the local population in terms of agricultural works in the vicinity of Kveshi.

This week, EUMM has received information from local farmers that now they are able to cultivate their lands, which is imperative in the season of spring agricultural works. The EU Monitoring Mission expressed its appreciation to all parties for their efforts and hopes that people on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line will benefit from the initiative.