EU wins Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Peace Prize for 2012 has been awarded on 12 October to the European Union for its contribution “to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe”.

While being rewarded for the crucial role it played in the transformation of the continent over the last sixty years, the EU is more committed than ever to promote its values and foster peace beyond its borders. “The European Union is really the biggest peacemaking institution ever created in world history, and we have still a mission of promoting peace, democracy, human rights – in the rest of the world”, said Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, stressed that these core European values are “the ones that people all over the world aspire to. These are also the values that the European Union promotes in order to make the world a better place for all.”

Engagement of the Union through CSDP is a very tangible expression of this commitment. Under the CSDP, more than 80,000 people, from soldiers to policemen to rule of law experts, have been deployed since 2003 in 27 civilian missions and military operations. Whether patrolling sea lanes, protecting refugees, policing post-conflict societies or monitoring ceasefires, these missions bring together traditional peacekeeping, state-building and stabilisation efforts with the other tools of the EU’s external action, in particular development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

This challenge requires effective political tools strengthening the EU’s capacity to act. Delighted at the award’s announcement, High Representative Catherine Ashton underlined that “the creation of the European External Action Service has enabled us to develop a comprehensive approach to better promote Europe’s core values throughout the world. I will continue to work tirelessly to drive this process forward.”

Video statement by the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy

Statement by EU High Representative / Vice President Catherine Ashton

Statement by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy and President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso

European Parliament calls for greater role for CSDP

On 9th October, EEAS Deputy Secretary General Maciej Popowski had a constructive exchange of views with the Subcommittee on Security and Defence of the European Parliament (EP), covering both the informal defence ministerial of last September and the EP’s annual report on the implementation of CSDP.

L’UE engagée à soutenir le Mali à sortir de la crise

Lors de la réunion des ministres des affaires étrangères du 15 octobre, l’UE a réaffirmé sa préoccupation quant à la situation au Mali, et sa détermination à apporter son concours en vue de résoudre la grave crise politique et sécuritaire qui affecte le pays. L’UE mobilise à cet effet l’ensemble de ses instruments dans le cadre de sa Stratégie pour le Développement et la Sécurité au Sahel, y compris par la reprise graduelle de la coopération au développement (sous réserve d’avancées concrètes), une aide humanitaire accrue, l’appui à un cadre de dialogue national, mais aussi en envisageant un soutien à la reconstruction des capacités de l’armée malienne ainsi qu’un appui à l’engagement des partenaires régionaux tels que l’Union Africaine et la CEDEAO.

Le Conseil a demandé “que les travaux de planification d’une éventuelle mission militaire dans le cadre de la PSDC soient poursuivis et approfondis de manière urgente, en élargissant en particulier un concept de gestion de crise relatif à la réorganisation et à l’entraînement des forces de défense maliennes”. Dans le cadre d’une approche globale, le Conseil a également appelé à “utiliser le potentiel des synergies avec les autres activités de l’UE dans la région, notamment avec la mission EUCAP SAHEL Niger et sa vocation régionale”.

Conclusions du Conseil sur la situation au Mali

Fiche d’information sur l’UE et le Sahel (en anglais)
SEDE Chair and rapporteur Arnaud Danjean expressed the view that CSDP instruments could be used more extensively. He welcomed the overall support of the main political groups for his draft report, which he sees as a demonstration of the level of ambition the EP in the field of CSDP.

DSG Popowski thanked SEDE for the opportunity to discuss the report. He addressed some of the main elements, underlining in particular the added value of the “comprehensive approach”, which creates synergies between the missions and the other EU policies.

**EU Aviation Security Mission to strengthen aviation security in South Sudan**

The European Union Aviation Security Mission (EUAVSEC) has now started to deploy to Juba in South Sudan. EUAVSEC is the European Union’s first engagement in South Sudan under the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy.

This civilian mission responds to an invitation by South Sudan and is part of the EU’s comprehensive approach to assist South Sudan in becoming a viable, stable and prosperous state. Head of mission for EUAVSEC Mr. Lasse Rosenkrands Christensen said: “Improving the airport security will not only contribute to the fight against crime and international terrorism, but also enable the increased flow of people and goods, thus helping to boost trade and promote regional integration.”

EUAVSEC South Sudan aims to assist and advise South Sudan to establish the aviation security organisation at the Ministry of Transport and to strengthen aviation security at Juba International Airport. EUAVSEC will train and mentor security services, provide advice and assistance on aviation security, as well as support the coordination of security activities related to aviation.

Factsheet on CSDP mission in South Sudan

**Upcoming activities**

21-26 October: Catherine Ashton travels to the Middle East
13-14 November: EU-Egypt Task Force in Cairo

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**EU naval force quick to capture suspect pirate boat**

On 11 October, EU Naval Force flagship, ITS San Giusto, stopped and apprehended a skiff with 7 suspect pirates onboard. The EU warship, that was carrying out counter-piracy patrols as part of Operation Atalanta, had sighted the skiff carrying a ladder and up to 20 fuel drums 180 miles east of Socotra and immediately launched its helicopter to investigate. Once at the scene, the boarding team from San Giusto boarded the vessel and apprehended the men. After gathering intelligence, the skiff was destroyed, thus preventing the suspect pirates from using it to attack ships in the future.

Rear Admiral Potts, the Operation Commander of the EU Naval Force, said “My message to the pirates is clear – we are watching you and we plan to capture you if you put to sea. Equally, this is an indication that pirates still intend to get out to sea and all involved in countering piracy, whether they are the military or industry, must remain vigilant and prepared.”

Watch ITS San Giusto in action

**Green Blade 2012: Interoperability and mutual trust**

With the redeployment of the last helicopters and ground forces, Green Blade 2012 came to an end. This joint and combined exercise organised by the Belgian Department of Defence and supported by Luxembourg, was held under the auspices of the European Defence Agency’s Helicopter Training Programme.

Three weeks, 49 missions and 487 flying hours later, the 550 participants from four countries emerged from the Belgian Air Base Kleine-Brogel better trained and better prepared for multinational missions.

Green Blade 2012 videos and photo gallery