Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy

The idea of a common defence policy for Europe dates back to 1948 when the UK, France, and the Benelux signed the Treaty of Brussels.

The agreement included a mutual defence clause laying down the foundations for the creation of the Western European Union (WEU), which remained until the late 1990s, together with NATO, the principal forum for consultation and dialogue on security and defence in Europe.

Following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent conflicts in the Balkans, it became clear that the EU needed to assume its responsibilities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. The conditions under which military units could be deployed were already agreed by the WEU Council in 1992 but the so-called “Petersberg Tasks” where now integrated in the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam. In addition, the post of the “High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy” was created to allow the Union to speak with ‘one face and one voice’ on foreign policy matters.

At the Cologne European Council in 1999, Member States reaffirmed the Union’s willingness to develop capabilities for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces. A key development was the “Berlin Plus agreement” giving the EU, under certain conditions, access to NATO assets and capabilities.

In 2003 the former High Representative Javier Solana was tasked by the Member States to develop a Security Strategy for Europe. The document entitled ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’, analysed for the first time the EU’s security environment and identified key security challenges and subsequent political implications for the EU. The implementation of the document was revised in 2008.

The Lisbon Treaty came into force in December 2009 and was a cornerstone in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The treaty includes both a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause and allowed for the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP). The two distinct functions of the post give the HR/VP the possibility to bring all the necessary EU assets together and to apply a "comprehensive approach" to EU crisis management.

Since the creation in March 2002 of the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Council Joint Action, some 30 civilian and military missions and operations have been launched under the CSDP. The EU is constantly improving its crisis management capabilities. Headline Goals, both
civilian as well as military, have been defined and adapted to match the changing security environment.

The "Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy" presented by former HR/VP Mogherini in June 2016 laid the foundation to develop CSDP further. A comprehensive package of measures in the areas of security and defence was defined at the end of 2016. It consists of three major pillars: new political goals and ambitions for Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security and defence; new financial tools to help Member States and the European defence industry to develop defence capabilities ("European Defence Action Plan") and a set of concrete actions as follow up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration which identified areas of cooperation. Implementation of the three elements is ongoing and will boost security of the Union and its citizens.

The Western European Union

- A Defensive alliance composed of ten Member States, founded in 1948 and modified in 1954;
- the WEU provided the framework for the creation of a European defence policy;
- Following the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, all functions of the WEU have effectively been incorporated into the EU, and the WEU was closed down in 2011.

The Western European Union (WEU) was a defensive alliance composed of ten Member States: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The primary purpose of the organisation was to offer mutual military assistance in case of external aggression and it provided a strong basis for the development of European defence cooperation.

The foundations of the WEU were laid by the Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence signed in 1948 by the UK, France, and the Benelux countries, known as the Brussels Treaty. The Treaty attempted to turn European ideals into reality, envisioning a collective self-defence effort to keep the continent safe following the devastation of the Second World War.

Following the failed attempt to create the European Defence Community (EDC), the Treaty of Brussels was modified in October 1954 to bring about the WEU. This decision created a new organisation that was able to incorporate also Italy and Germany. The core objectives of the WEU were defined as follows:

- To create a firm basis for European economic recovery in Western Europe;
- To offer mutual assistance to member countries in resisting any policy of external aggression;
- To promote unity and encourage positive integration in Europe.

In case of an armed attack on a signature state in Europe, the solidarity and military assistance clause (Article V) in the amended Brussels Treaty obliged the other signature states to ‘afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power’, ‘in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations’.

When the economic and social competencies were gradually handed over to the European Communities, the Council of Europe and other bodies, the WEU became an organisation dealing purely with defence matters, although the implementation of Art.V was de facto left to NATO, to which all WEU members belonged.
Between 1954 and 1984, the WEU was mostly used as a forum for consultation and discussion, making significant contributions to the dialogue on European security and defence. In 1984, following a joint meeting by the defence and foreign ministers of WEU states in Rome, a declaration was made that is widely perceived to represent a ‘reactivation’ of the WEU. The declaration affirms that the WEU should broaden its scope, widening the focus from internal European matters to consider the potential implications of crises in other regions for European security.

In November 1988, a Protocol of Accession was signed by the WEU Member States with Portugal and Spain. The ratification process, completed in March 1990, expanded the WEU membership to nine. With the end of the Cold War, the WEU continued to enlarge. In 1991, at Maastricht, WEU members invited EU Member States to accede to the WEU or to gain observer status. Greece became the tenth Member State in 1995 on the basis of a special understanding, with Ireland and subsequently Austria, Finland, Sweden and Denmark becoming Observers upon their accession to the EU. Simultaneously, other European members of NATO (Iceland, Norway and Turkey) were invited to become Associate Members of the WEU, which they accepted. An additional status of Associate Partner was created in Kirchberg, (Luxembourg) in May 1994, allowing the ten new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe which had signed a Europe Agreement with the European Union to participate in the activities of the WEU: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

In November 1989, the WEU Ministerial Council decided to create a WEU Institute for Security Studies in Paris, France. The primary goals of the institute were to promote and raise awareness of a European security identity through academic research and seminars. Two years later, the council decided to set up a WEU Satellite Centre in Madrid, Spain. The centre’s mission was to provide analysis of satellite images and collateral data to support decision-making.

Following the renewed determination to develop the operational capabilities of the WEU, the organisation launched operations which included:

- A minesweeping operation in the Strait of Hormuz, (Operation Cleansweep) - 1987/1988;
- A joint naval operation with NATO in the Adriatic Sea, (Operation Sharp Guard) - June 1993/ October 1996;
- A police contingent in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina - July 1994/October 1996;
- A Multinational Advisory Police Element in Albania (MAPE) - May 1997/May 2001;
- A Demining Assistance Mission to Croatia (WEUDAM) - May 1999/November 2001;

In late 2000, at the WEU Ministerial Council in Marseille (France), the Member States agreed to transfer the organisation’s capabilities and functions to the EU. Following two distinct Council Joint Actions, on 1 January 2002, the Western European Union Institute for Security Studies and the Satellite Centre became the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC) respectively. In turn, the establishment of the European Defence Agency (EDA) in 2004 built on the foundations laid by the armament organisation and group within the WEU.

Following the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, which contains a mutual assistance clause, all functions of the WEU had effectively been incorporated into the EU. Consequently, the organisation was closed down on 30 June 2011.
The Petersberg Tasks

- Defined the type of military action that the EU can undertake in crisis management operations;
- Include humanitarian tasks, peacekeeping, and peacemaking.
- Expanded by the Treaty of Lisbon;

The Petersberg tasks formed an integral part of the then European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) - now Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) - and defined the spectrum of military actions/functions that the European Union can undertake in its crisis management operations.

The Petersberg tasks were first agreed upon at the June 1992 Western European Union (WEU) Council of Ministers near Bonn, Germany. Article II.4 of the subsequent ministerial declaration outlined the following three purposes for which military units could be deployed:

- humanitarian and rescue tasks;
- peacekeeping tasks;
- tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

The term ‘peacemaking’ was adopted as a consensual solution and as a synonym for ‘peace-enforcement’. The Petersberg tasks were subsequently incorporated into Article 17 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) through the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon (TEU Art. 42) then further expanded these tasks to include:

- humanitarian and rescue tasks;
- conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks;
- tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking;
- joint disarmament operations;
- military advice and assistance tasks;
- post-conflict stabilisation tasks.

Documents

- Amended Brussels Treaty
- 1989 WEU Decision on WEU Institute for Security Studies
- 1991 WEU Decision on WEU Satellite Centre

The Treaty of Amsterdam

- Codified new structures and tasks for the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy;
- Defined the range of military tasks which the EU could undertake (as incorporated from the WEU’s Petersberg tasks);
- Indicated the possibility of developing a future common defence policy for the EU.

The Treaty of Amsterdam was adopted by EU Member States in June 1997 and entered into force in
May 1999. The Treaty codified a number of new structures and tasks for the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and, although it did not create a common defence policy, it did increase responsibilities in the realms of peacekeeping and humanitarian work i.a. by creating closer links with the WEU.

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent conflicts in the Balkans provided the impetus for Member States to strengthen the EU’s CFSP. The Treaty of Amsterdam raised the EU’s foreign policy profile through the creation of the post of High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. The official mandate of the post was: ‘[to contribute] to the formulation, preparation and implementation of policy decisions, and, when appropriate and acting on behalf of the Council at the request of the Presidency, through conducting political dialogue with third parties.’ (TEU Art. 26). Javier Solana of Spain, until then NATO’s Secretary-General, was appointed High Representative at the Cologne Summit in 1999, and served in this capacity from 1999 to 2009. The Treaty of Lisbon expanded the post to High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and combined it with the post of Vice-President of the European Commission.

The Treaty of Amsterdam also indicated the possibility of developing a future common defence policy for the EU. The inclusion of what would eventually become the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) under the CFSP was designed to enable the Union to adopt a coherent approach when addressing security challenges. The treaty subsequently states: ‘The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions relating to the security of the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy […] which might lead to a common defence, should the European Council so decide’ (TEU Art.17).

In addition to the above, the Treaty also defined the range of military tasks – as incorporated from the WEU’s Petersberg tasks - which the EU could undertake, namely humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks and tasks involving combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking (Art. 17).

**Documents**

- Treaty of Amsterdam (Art.17, Art.26)

**The Cologne European Council**

- Member States agreed that the EU should have the military capacity to respond to international crises autonomously;
- Led to the establishment of the General Affairs Council, the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee, and the EU Military Staff
- For military operations forces can be drawn either from NATO assets or national or multinational contributions.

At the June 1999 European Council meeting in Cologne (Germany), EU heads of state and government agreed that ‘the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO.’ The agreement was preceded by a bilateral meeting between then President Jacques Chirac of France and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in Saint-Malo (France), in December 1998. The resulting declaration indicated for the first time a Franco-British consensus on the evolution of a defence component for the European Union: its wording constituted the basis for the agreement at EU level in Cologne.
In the recognition that the evolution of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was a prerequisite for the Union to play a full role on the international stage, EU Member States agreed in Cologne on the necessity to put in place institutional arrangements for the analysis, planning and conduct of military operations. This would require:

- Regular meetings of the General Affairs Council (GAC), including, when appropriate, national defence ministers;
- A permanent body in Brussels, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), consisting of representatives at ambassador level with political/military (pol/mil) expertise;
- An EU Military Committee consisting of military representatives that make recommendations to the PSC;
- An EU Military Staff including a Situation Centre;
- Other resources such as a Satellite Centre and an Institute for Security Studies.

Furthermore, European heads of state and government envisaged the need to develop military forces and headquarters particularly suited for crisis management operations. The deployable forces would be drawn either from NATO assets [see Berlin Plus] or from a pool of national or multinational contributions by EU Member States. At the Cologne meeting, five principles were also outlined that were deemed essential for the successful creation of the CSDP:

- The possibility of all EU Member States, including non-allied members, to participate fully and on an equal footing in EU operations;
- Satisfactory arrangements for European NATO members who are not EU Member States to ensure their fullest possible involvement in EU-led operations, building on existing consultation arrangements within the Western European Union (WEU);
- Arrangements to ensure that all participants in an EU-led operation will have equal rights in respect of the conduct of that operation, without prejudice to the principle of the EU’s decision-making autonomy, notably the right of the Council to discuss and decide matters of principle and policy;
- The need to ensure the development of effective mutual consultation, cooperation and transparency between NATO and the EU;
- The consideration of ways to ensure the possibility for WEU Associate Partners to be involved.

The European Council also anticipated the incorporation of the functions of the WEU into the EU. The Council declaration states that in the event of the EU fulfilling its responsibility in the area of the Petersberg tasks, ‘the WEU as an organisation would have completed its purpose’. At the Cologne meeting, Member States also appointed Javier Solana, from Spain, as High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), a post that had been created by the Treaty of Amsterdam.

Documents

- Annex III from Cologne ‘European Council Declaration on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence’
- The Joint Declaration Issued at the British-French Summit, Saint-Malo, France, 3-4 December 1998

The Berlin Plus agreement

- Package of arrangements that allow the EU to make use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-
led crisis management operations;
- Improves the working partnership between the EU and NATO, ensuring effective consultation, cooperation and transparency in crisis management and peace-building operations;

The Berlin Plus agreement refers to a comprehensive package of arrangements finalised in early 2003 between the EU and the NATO that allows the EU to make use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations.

The creation in 1999 of what would later become the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) reinforced the need to establish a formal agreement between the EU and NATO, building on the previous arrangements between the Western European Union (WEU) and the Alliance inaugurated in Berlin in 1996. Overlapping memberships and concerns over the duplication of assets and capabilities required both partners to agree on modalities for crisis management operations. Improving the working partnership between the two institutions remains vital to ensure effective consultation, cooperation and transparency in crisis management and peace-building operations.

This framework for EU-NATO permanent relations was concluded in March 2003, building on the conclusions of NATO’s Washington Summit in 1999, the European Council in Nice in December 2000 and the EU-NATO joint declaration of 16 December 2002.

The formal elements of the Berlin Plus agreement (details of which are classified) include:

- A NATO-EU Security Agreement that covers the exchange of classified information under reciprocal security protection rules;
- Assured access to NATO planning capabilities for EU-led operations;
- Availability of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led civil-military operations;
- Procedures for release, monitoring, return and recall of NATO assets and capabilities;
- Terms of reference for using NATO’s DSACEUR (Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe) for commanding EU-led operations;
- EU-NATO consultation arrangements in the context of an EU-led operations making use of NATO assets and capabilities;
- Arrangements for coherent and mutually reinforcing capability requirements, in particular the incorporation within NATO's defence planning of the military needs and capabilities that may be required for EU-led military operations.

The conclusion of the Berlin Plus agreement facilitated the launch of the EU’s first-ever military operation, Operation Concordia, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in December 2003. EUFOR Althea, the military operation launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2004, was the second military CSDP operation carried out within the wider framework of Berlin Plus.

**Documents:**

- **EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP**
- **Document on EU-NATO Consultation, Planning and Operations (European Council, December 2003)**
- **Background on EU-NATO permanent arrangements (Berlin +)**
- **Remarks by HR Solana following the agreement on the establishment of EU-NATO permanent arrangements + Joint EU-NATO Declaration (16 December 2002)**
- **NATO Summit, Washington, April 1999**
European Security Strategy

- Comprehensive document which analyses and defines the EU’s security environment, identifying key security challenges and subsequent political implications for the EU;
- Singles out five key threats: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, organised crime;
- Review in 2008 confirmed the validity of the ESS and the need to be ‘more capable, more coherent and more active’ in order for the EU to reach its full potential.

The European Security Strategy (ESS), adopted by the European Council on 12-13 December 2003, provides the conceptual framework for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including what would later become the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The split between EU Member States over the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 highlighted the need for a common strategic vision to enhance internal cohesion at EU level. Member states thus tasked the then High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, to draft such a strategy.

Titled ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’, the ESS is a brief but comprehensive document which analyses and defines for the first time the EU’s security environment, identifying key security challenges and subsequent political implications for the EU.

In this framework, the ESS singles out five key threats:

- Terrorism
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)
- Regional conflicts
- State failure
- Organised crime.

The ESS also calls for preventive engagement to avoid new conflicts/crises. Building security in the EU's neighbourhood (Balkans, Southern Caucasus, and the Mediterranean) is prioritised as is the goal of strengthening the international rules-based order through effective multilateralism. Furthermore, the ESS explicitly acknowledges the interdependence of various global security challenges, i.a. by linking security and development issues and highlighting the possible interplay between key threats.

Finally, the ESS addresses the political implications of the new security environment. It states that the EU needs to be more active, more coherent and more capable. The importance of international cooperation and EU partnerships is also emphasised by claiming that none of the threats can be tackled by the Union alone. The conclusion reaffirms that these challenges also pose opportunities for the EU to become more active and more capable in the pursuit of a safer, more unified world.

Four years after the adoption of the ESS, Member States tasked the High Representative at the December 2007 European Council ‘to examine the implementation of the Strategy with a view to proposing elements on how to improve the implementation and, as appropriate, elements to complement it’. The resulting document, the 2008 ‘Report of the Implementation of the European Security Strategy: Providing Security in a Changing World’, effectively confirmed the enduring validity of the 2003 ESS and the need to be ‘more capable, more coherent and more active’ in order for the EU to reach its full potential.
The Treaty of Lisbon

- Signed in October 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009;
- Amends and modifies the TEU and TFEU;
- Contains important provisions related to the CSDP: a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause, the expansion of the Petersberg tasks, and the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission.


The Treaty also contains a number of important new provisions related to the CSDP, including a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause, the creation of a framework for Permanent Structured Cooperation, the expansion of the Petersberg tasks, and the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The High Representative has additional roles as a Vice President of the European Commission (HR/VP) and chair of the Foreign Affairs Council.
The Treaty introduces solidarity and mutual assistance clauses. The former states that ‘the Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if an EU Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster’ (TFEU Art. 222). The mutual assistance clause, inspired by Article V of the WEU Treaty, states that ‘if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 [the right to self-defence] of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States’ (TEU Art. 42.7). The clause, however, includes a caveat that ‘commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation’.

Moreover, the Treaty extends the scope and range of the Petersberg tasks to include ‘joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories.’ (TEU Art. 43.1)

For its part, Permanent Structured Cooperation is an agreement for ‘Member States whose military capabilities fulfil higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions’ (TEU Art. 42.6). It is designed to contribute to a new stage in the development of the CSDP and a more assertive role for the EU in the realm of security and defence. To achieve these objectives, Member States are encouraged to: cooperate to reach objectives concerning expenditure on equipment, harmonise defence apparatuses, when appropriate pool and specialise resources, and coordinate logistics and training. There is no minimum number of states required for cooperation to take place at this level, as opposed to the Treaty provisions on ‘enhanced cooperation’ (Art. 20). The decision to set it up is taken by the European Council. Notably, this is one of the few areas in the CSDP where decisions are not made by unanimity but instead by qualified majority voting (QMV). In addition, the Treaty stipulates that the European Defence Agency (EDA) shall contribute to a regular assessment of the contributions of Member States.

**Civilian Headline Goals**

- Identify civilian crisis management priority areas for the EU;
- Latest revision: Civilian Headline Goal 2010 placed greater emphasis on civil-military cooperation in addition to a continued focus on improving readiness and deployability

Civilian crisis management, an area where the EU has been at the forefront of international efforts, forms a key part of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and is guided by the Civilian Headline Goals.

The first Civilian Headline Goal was set in 2000 at the meeting of the European Council in Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal. It identified policing, the rule of law, civil administration and civil protection as four priority areas for the EU. In the area of policing, the 2000 Feira Council set concrete targets whereby EU Member States could collectively provide up to 5,000 police officers for crisis management operations, with 1,000 officers on high readiness (able to be deployed within 30 days). EU Member States also identified a number of key tasks for civilian policing which included: monitoring, advising and training local police, preventing or mitigating internal crises and conflicts, restoring law and order in immediate post-conflict situations, and supporting local police in safeguarding human rights.
The 2001 Gothenburg Council subsequently set concrete goals for the other three priority areas. By 2003, the EU set out to be able to: have 200 judges and prosecutors prepared for crisis management operations in the field of rule of law that could be deployed within 30 days, establish a pool of experts in the area of civilian administration (including general administrative, social and infrastructure functions) and provide civil protection teams of up to 2,000 people, all deployable at very short notice. These teams included 2-3 assessment/coordination teams consisting of 10 experts that could be dispatched within 3-7 hours.

After the 2004 Civilian Capabilities Commitment Conference in Brussels declared these targets to have been met (and indeed exceeded), the formulation of the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 (CHG 2008) was shaped by the experiences the EU had gained in the field, increasing the attention paid to training, staffing procedures, and mission planning.

The CHG 2008 added two new priorities to those identified at Feira: monitoring missions and support for EU Special Representatives. The CHG 2008 also emphasised the need for the Union to conduct simultaneous missions and highlighted two further focus areas for the EU: security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR).

EU Member States then set an additional goal, the Civilian Headline Goal 2010 (CHG 2010), to continue the capability-development process and to synchronise it with the Military Headline Goal 2010. The CHG 2010 goal drew on the now extensive experience in civilian crisis management of the EU, and placed greater emphasis on civil-military cooperation in addition to a continued focus on improving readiness and deployability. It also identified other capabilities to be developed, such as making available 285 additional experts on transitional justice, dialogue, and conflict analysis. The CHG 2010 also focused on the creation of Civilian Response Teams (CRT), a 100-person strong pool of experts prepared for rapid deployment.

Documents:
- Santa Maria da Feira Conclusions
- Civilian Headline Goal 2008
- Civilian Headline Goal 2010

Military Headline Goals

- Drafted following the Cologne agreement that the EU should possess an autonomous military capacity to respond to crises;
- Include the ability of Member States to deploy forces up to corps level, capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks;
- Ensure that the EU possesses the military capabilities required to conduct the full range of missions encompassed by the Petersberg tasks.

The Military Headline Goals (HLGs) are designed to ensure that the EU possesses the military capabilities required to conduct the full range of missions encompassed by the Petersberg tasks. Following the agreement of EU heads of state and government at the Cologne Council that the EU should possess an autonomous military capacity to respond to crises, the 1999 Helsinki Headline Goal outlined the following objectives:

‘By the year 2003, cooperating together voluntarily, [EU Member States] will be able to deploy rapidly and then sustain forces capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks as set out in the Amsterdam Treaty [Petersberg-tasks], including the most demanding, in operations up to corps level (up to 15
brigades or 50,000-60,000 persons). These forces should be militarily self-sustaining with the necessary command, control and intelligence capabilities, logistics, other combat support services and additionally, as appropriate, air and naval elements. Member States should be able to deploy in full at this level within 60 days, and within this to provide smaller rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness. They must be able to sustain such a deployment for at least one year.’ (Helsinki Annex IV)

Eventually, the experience gained from the military operations EUFOR Concordia and Artemis, in addition to a changing security environment, resulted in a move away from the overwhelmingly quantitative focus of HLG 2003 to a more comprehensive and qualitative approach. The European Council in 2004 consequently set a new target for capability improvement, the Headline Goal 2010 (HLG 2010), which identified several strategic scenarios whereby the EU should:

‘Be able by 2010 to respond with rapid and decisive action applying a fully coherent approach to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty on European Union [i.e. the Petersberg-tasks] ...the EU must be able to act before a crisis occurs and preventive engagement can avoid that a situation deteriorates. The EU must retain the ability to conduct concurrent operations thus sustaining several operations simultaneously at different levels of engagement.’

The Battle Group Concept, endorsed at the informal meeting for defence ministers in Brussels in April 2004 became a central part of the Headline Goal 2010. Battle Groups are high readiness forces consisting of 1,500 personnel that can be deployed within 10 days after an EU decision to launch an operation and that can be sustained for up to 30 days (extendible to 120 days with rotation). At the 2004 Military Capability Commitment Conference, Member States made an initial commitment to the formation of 13 EU Battle Groups, with the aim of always having two Battle Groups on standby. On 1 January 2007, the EU Battle Group Concept reached full operational capacity. To date, the EU Battle Groups have yet to be deployed.

Since then, the EU has embarked on further capability enhancement, urging greater member state cooperation through the development of pooling and sharing options as well as strengthening the role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) in this area.

Documents:

- Helsinki Council Conclusions
- Headline Goal 2003
- Headline Goal 2010
- Council Conclusions on Military Capability Development 9 December 2010

See also

Financing security and defence military operations - Athena
Posts available in CSDP missions
www.eeas.europa.eu

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