

Working Group VIII

Working document 1

WORKING GROUP VIII « DEFENCE »

Subject : Introductory note by the Secretariat on the military capabilities which could be available to the European Union

With a view to the meeting of the Group on 23 September, members will find attached an introductory note by the Secretariat on the military capabilities which could be available to the European Union.

**Introductory note on the military capabilities
which could be available to the European Union**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. One of the crucial factors in the credibility of the European Union's external action is its ability to conduct a military crisis management operation. This entails the European Union having credible, available and effective military forces.

The European approach as regards capabilities is original, insofar as it is based on voluntary action by the Member States. This characteristic of the European approach might however also lead to a structural weakness of the Union, given that each Member State fixes its contribution in relation to its own constraints, and that there is no obligation at all, in either qualitative or quantitative terms, to participate in an operation decided upon by the Fifteen.

2. Also, the European Union only has national resources available to it. This applies to the deployment of forces as well as the chain of command and intelligence. Although this constitutes an advantage in terms of a relatively light structure, nonetheless as a result it imposes a commitment on the Member States as regards their availability and coordination amongst themselves.

II. THE ONGOING PROCESS

3. At the Cologne European Council (3 to 4 June 1999) the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the European Union took the decision to provide the Union with 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.
4. At the Helsinki European Council, the Member States translated the political objective set at Cologne into concrete decisions on the military front, with the objective of creating European forces which are credible, available and effective. Under this objective (known henceforward as the Helsinki headline goal), the Member States undertook to be able by 2003, cooperating together voluntarily, to deploy rapidly (within 60 days), and then sustain (for at least one year) military forces capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks as set out in the Amsterdam Treaty, including those which would require significant forces of up to corps level (up to 15 brigades, or 50 000 to 60 000 persons). At the same time, the Member States should be able to deploy smaller rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness. These forces should be self-sustaining with the necessary command, control and intelligence capabilities, logistics, other combat support services and additionally, as appropriate, air and naval elements.

For those Member States which are also members of the Atlantic Alliance, their military capabilities must at the same time allow them to play a full role in NATO operations and in operations directed by NATO.

5. Furthermore, since Cologne, and based on the declaration at the NATO summit in Washington in 1999, it is envisaged that the Union should be able to conduct operations with recourse to the resources and capabilities of NATO. To implement this sort of operation the arrangements would have to be agreed with NATO.

6. Following the definition of the Helsinki headline goal, during the second quarter of 2000 the Union carried out an analysis of the military capabilities necessary to achieve this headline goal. A catalogue of capabilities needed by the Union (the HHC – Helsinki Headline goal catalogue) was therefore drawn up. Subsequently, the Member States were asked to state the forces which they would be able to make available to the Union when the time came (the HFC – Helsinki Force catalogue).
7. In November 2000, a Capabilities Commitment Conference was held in Brussels. The Conference made it possible to bring together the concrete national commitments corresponding to the Helsinki objectives. These commitments were collected in a Headline Force Catalogue¹. Analysing this catalogue, participants at the Conference were able to affirm that by 2003 the European Union would be capable of conducting the full range of Petersberg tasks, but that certain capabilities had to be improved to optimise the capabilities available to the Union. At the same time, it was possible to identify certain deficiencies in areas which would require additional efforts in terms of levelling up resources, investment or development and coordination. These were principally shortcomings as regards availability, deployability, sustainability and the interoperability of forces. The Brussels Conference also took stock of some shortcomings in specific areas such as military equipment including arms and munitions, and support services including those in the medical and forces protection areas.
8. The subsequent Capability Improvement Conference was held in Brussels in the autumn of 2001 during the Belgian Presidency. This provided an opportunity to re-evaluate progress regarding military capabilities as laid down in the Helsinki headline goal. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers for Defence, meeting together, affirmed their commitment to achieve the Helsinki headline goal. They noted significant progress, both qualitative and quantitative, since their previous meeting in November 2000. Although they were certain that

¹ Member States' contributions contained in the catalogue comprise, inter alia, 100 000 men and around 400 combat aircraft and 100 ships.

the headline goal would be achieved, they nonetheless observed that extra efforts would have to be made if the Union was to be able to carry out the most complex operations as efficiently as possible and reduce any limitations in terms of the breadth of the operation and the period of deployment, as well as the level of risk (for details of the areas to be improved, see 13882/01 of the Council of the EU). Subsequently, the Laeken European Council adopted the "declaration on operational capability", which states that "the Union will be able to take on progressively more demanding operations, as the assets and capabilities at its disposal continue to develop". The Member States also insisted on the need to adopt the capability development mechanism (CDM) decided on at the Nice European Council in December 2000 and recalled in Göteborg in June 2001. This mechanism is intended to allow the monitoring and evaluation of military capabilities while taking account of NATO's defence planning process and the planning and review process of the Partnership for Peace. However, the definition of this mechanism has not yet been achieved, particularly as regards the area of cooperation with NATO.

9. Following the assessments made at the two conferences to improve military capabilities and the analysis of their results, the Member States decided to establish a European Capability Action Plan intended to reinforce European crisis management capabilities. Although the evaluations during the process have shown that the Union would be capable of fulfilling the Helsinki headline goal, there remain deficiencies which would prevent it from conducting the most demanding missions in the most effective manner. The *European Capability Action Plan* therefore attempts to fill those gaps by rationalising the defence efforts of the Member States, and increasing the synergy between their national and international projects. It has been decided to follow a bottom-up approach, consisting of commitments by the Member States on a voluntary basis and respecting national decisions. The principle of this cooperation is complete transparency and coordination between Member States, as well as cooperation with NATO in this area.

The Spanish Presidency took over the conduct of the process, creating about 17 working groups covering all the significant shortcomings identified during the evaluations. However it is too early to judge the results of their work.

10. Although considerable progress has been made in identifying gaps and filling them, it must be noted that the results are not yet satisfactory if the objectives set at Helsinki are to be obtained.

The critical gaps which require substantial action remain. These include:

- command, control and communications;
 - strategic intelligence and the surveillance and protection of troops in the field;
 - strategic transport;
 - effective engagement capacity.
11. More generally, studies carried out by NATO have shown a need for new initiatives to ensure that the capabilities required to carry out the full range of NATO tasks are available, given developments in the security environment. This means the modernisation of equipment and substantial financial resources to fill the gaps.
12. These gaps cannot be filled if the Member States do not decide to make a more consistent financial effort as regards military expenditure.

Certainly, one remedy is better utilisation of existing resources (e.g. better coordination between States as regards arms procurement, which would make it possible to realise economies of scale). However, although a more effective allocation of resources might be envisaged, there is no doubt that the majority of the shortcomings cannot be filled without an increase in Member States' budgets in this area. An analysis of the defence budgets of the Member States shows that only two of them have recently announced significant increases

in their equipment budgets. This does not make it possible to conduct the military tasks which the Union has set itself in the most effective manner.

The attached table shows that military expenditure exceeds 2% of SDP in only five of the fifteen Member States. France and the United Kingdom have, in addition, announced increases in their equipment budgets.

13. It should also be noted that arrangements with NATO for access to its assets and capabilities have not yet been concluded.

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14. The questions which the Group could examine are as follows:

1. What mechanisms would make it possible to ensure that Member States meet their commitments as regards military capabilities?
2. Would it be appropriate to plan the establishment in this area of a mechanism similar to that used for example in the case of Economic and Monetary Union (convergence criteria) to achieve the objectives which the Union has set itself?

MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EU *
AS A % OF GDP

	COUNTRY	% OF GDP
1.	GERMANY	1,5
2.	AUSTRIA	1,2
3.	BELGIUM	1,2
4.	DENMARK	1,4
5.	SPAIN	1,1
6.	FINLAND	2
7.	FRANCE	2,5
8.	GREECE	4,91
9.	IRELAND	0,75
10.	ITALY	1,7
11.	LUXEMBOURG	1
12.	NETHERLANDS	1,5
13.	PORTUGAL	2,6
14.	UNITED KINGDOM	2,7
15.	SWEDEN	2,1

EU	TOTAL IN EUR	170,754 BILLION
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BY WAY OF COMPARISON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

% OF GDP	3,2
TOTAL IN EUR	285,257 BILLION

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* The Secretariat has compiled this table on the basis of information available on internet sites. If official information differs from these figures the table will be revised.