

EURODEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS

PRESIDENTS' MEETING

Speech by the Director General of National Defence Policy

April 13th 2007

PORTUGAL AND THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

I am very honoured and thankful for the invitation to participate in this forum.

I would like to greet the Presidents of the EURODEFENCE Associations and express once again my gratitude for the opportunity granted to me by Mr. António Figueiredo Lopes to share some ideas with you about Portugal's participation in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

I will focus naturally on issues that I consider more relevant given the impact they have or might have in the military component of National Defence.

In the current setting of unforeseeable, diffused and increasingly complex threats, and besides other relevant wider Security dimensions, Portugal lays the foundation of its security, counting to a large extent on a proactive defence policy.

This policy is based on collective solidarity in the context of Portugal's major political and military partnerships, communities and alliances.

This basic alignment in the framework of the military component of defence seeks to protect, promote and project our foreign and national defence interests and priorities in the international domain through a cooperative effort and aiming to an effective multilateralism. It encompasses very important options, some of them of special relevance:

- a strong, credible and balanced contribution and clear engagement with NATO, which continues to be the fundamental pillar for euro-Atlantic collective defence;
- a strong engagement towards the development of the European Security and Defence Policy. ESDP is paramount and, allow me to say, a consensual catalyst of European integration;
- a clear commitment to the United Nations Organization (UN) under which framework humanitarian, peace-building, peace-keeping operations, and other important international and peace security initiatives are developing;
- a clear engagement towards the consolidation and development of the Portuguese-speaking Countries Commonwealth (CPLP) in a multidimensional perspective, including Defence;
- a positive contribution in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The singular geographic position of Portugal, as the most western continental European country, in conjunction with its centrality within the Euro-Atlantic space, confers to its national territory an important role in the wider transatlantic relationship, bridging Europe, America and Africa. This natural geo-strategic location implies by itself that Portugal is an obvious player in the Euro-Atlantic area, in Europe itself, in the Euro-Africa area and, allow me to be unorthodox, in the Atlantic-Africa area. The international community can only draw benefits from this singular situation of Portugal in terms of international democratic, security, peace and economic development support and engagement.

It is no secret that Portugal has in the Atlantic Alliance a structuring pillar of its international defence. It is no secret as well that my country looks upon the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as a fundamental tool of its full European integration.

The fact that the Atlantic Alliance is the Structuring pillar of our defence system is several decades old. We are one of NATO's founding countries. We are proud of that and of what has been achieved since then. We consider that Europe and the free world in general, are natural beneficiaries of this defence system that at a large extent assured stability across Europe and beyond.

In a nutshell, our engagement in NATO does not preclude our commitment to ESDP in the EU framework, and vice-versa, being mutually reinforcing and complementary. Both Organizations perform different roles and pursue different objectives. But they also share common challenges, interests and values, working together in several countries, in such a concerted manner, EU missions complement and sometimes succeed NATO missions. In our opinion, this dynamic cooperation can only maximize international community action.

Our active participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) represents a two-way commitment. It adds to our foreign and security policy world-wide, not only in our traditional interest areas – Africa, Latin-America, Timor, the Mediterranean, inter alia – but also in other regions such as eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia and Asia itself, which assumes particular importance in the new international setting. On the other way around, Portuguese contribution brings more profound dimensions to CFSP through our special presence and expertise in the mentioned areas. The creation of the ESDP, within CFSP, contributes decisively to strengthening our security and defence architecture.

The Union's external credibility seems to be increasingly and strongly connected to ESDP, a tool designed after the Cologne European Council (June) and the Helsinki Council (December) 1999, whose goal was to endow the European Union with autonomous military capability to reinforce its objectives as far as defence and foreign policy are concerned, meaning inter alia conducting military operations as an adequate response to international crisis, with no prejudice or duplication to NATO activities.

In developing that policy, the intention is not to transform the EU into a military alliance (and I should recall that the large majority of NATO members are also members of the EU) but rather to establish necessary tools, means and capabilities (both civilian and military) that were required to perform the objectives and values contained in CFSP. With this, the EU became capable to participate in the so-called 'Petersberg' operations and thus to contribute to peace and stability in the world, in light of the UN Charter and International Law.

In this context, the EU has defined a GLOBAL OBJECTIVE of FORCES for 2010, called 'Headline Goal 2010' conferring substance to its EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY.

With the approval of the European Security Strategy in December 2003, the EU defined for the first time a set of orientations mirroring the willingness to assume its share of responsibility in the international security, establishing as strategic goals, 'the pre-emptive involvement', the construction of a neighbourhood security zone and the contribution to a more effective multilateralism.

Based upon this strategic orientation, the EU developed a variety of instruments to enhance its credibility and affirmation in the international arena, such as: civilian and military coordination, support to the security sector reform, support to natural disasters response system, the reinforcement of African Capabilities in the field of conflict prevention and management, the creation of a European Defence Agency to explore military capabilities development and instruments for rapid reaction, namely the Battle-groups (BG). These combat groups are constituted by forces of one or more countries, in the framework of a structured cooperation enabling the EU to carry out crisis response operations with a 5 to 10 days notice to move, under 30 days self sustained mode, renewable till 120 days. The final operational status of the Battle-groups have been declared last January. This seems to be a very important achievement.

Portugal has integrated a BG in the 1st semester 2006 jointly with Spain, Italy and Greece, which will be available again in the 1st semester 2009. In the 1st semester 2008 Portugal will join another BG with Spain, France and Germany. Let me remind you that this represents a major effort for our country considering not only the strong and unprecedented budgetary constraints but also our wide participation in UN, NATO and national missions abroad.

In the framework of the Headline Goal 2010 process, the EU has further developed its mechanism of military capabilities. The fact that the contribution of the member states depends on a voluntary basis and on complementarity between EU and NATO policies stands out. In this context, Portugal has also offered to contribute with forces and capabilities for the development of that mechanism which will culminate with the Progress Catalogue to be presented by year's end.

However, in spite of all the efforts deployed by the Union, the latter still presents some limitations in terms of capabilities, so it has established permanent agreements with NATO which allow the Union to resort to means and capabilities of the Alliance, increasing its operational capacity and reinforcing its strategic partnership between the two organizations in the management of crisis by the so- called 'Berlin Plus' agreements

Regarding the ESDP, the EU has conducted operations and missions ever since 2003. It has led operation Concordia in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), operation ARTEMIS, operation EUFOR RD Congo, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), a police mission in FYROM (PROXIMA), the Rule of Law Mission in Georgia (Eujust Themis) and the Aceh Monitoring Mission, in Indonesia.

All these operations and missions can be considered "success stories" so far. The EU has demonstrated readiness, flexibility and firmness. It has demonstrated as well its willingness and capacity to work in very complex and tense scenarios, in a cooperative manner, either with national and local authorities, as well as with other international organizations, such as the United Nations and NATO, among others.

More recently, EUFOR DRC was also a success story. It was truly instrumental to hold elections in a stable and secured environment and to initiate structural reforms in Defence and Security. But there were also important lessons to be drawn for future engagements.

Portugal has participated (7 elements, namely the force commander) in operation CONCORDIA, in operation ARTEMIS (two officers in the staff force) and in PROXIMA Mission (one police officer).

Currently, the EU is running eight operations/ missions and Portugal participates in six of them:

- In the ALTHEA operation in B- H, Portugal is participating with 14 elements. Before the phased troop reduction, we have had 250 elements, and altogether, our participation in Bosnia represented the deployment of the largest Portuguese contingent in a European theatre after the first World War;
- Providing assistance to the AMIS II Mission of the African Union (AU) in Darfur/Sudan; Portugal has an officer at the African Union.
- In the police mission in B-H (EUPM) Portugal participates with 5 police officers and a civilian, having had in the past a participation of eight civilian police elements;
- In the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Passage Post (EUBAM RAFAH; Portugal has three paramilitary police elements);
- In the EU Police Mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL Kinshasa); Portugal has an officer as Head of Mission and four elements in the security forces (2 paramilitaries and 2 civilian police officers).
- In the EU Mission for the Security Sector reform in DRC (EUSECDR Congo); Portugal has 2 mid level ranking officers (1 Cor. and 1 LtCol.). Both EUPOL and EUSEC are performing important tasks in preserving the success achieved so far.

The EU is planning an ESDP mission in Kosovo in the areas of Police and Rule of Law, which will be launched predictably this year (2007). Currently, it has a Planning Team on the field (SUPT) and we will be looking forward to their findings and assessment. Naturally, the Kosovo ESDP mission is dependent on the Final Status and the pertinent UN Security Council Resolution.

The EU is also on the process of launching a mission in Afghanistan in the area of law and order in connection with the vast domain of the Rule of Law.

Portugal is still assessing its participation in these two missions.

The EU has also created a European Security and Defence College, as a corollary of the importance it pays to the training policy in the ESDP area. This College is based upon a network of European institutes and academies of the Security and Defence field, and the Portuguese National Defence Institute is actively engaged in its work.

This academic year 2007/2008 Portugal will ensure Module 2 of the 'High Level Course' on 'Crisis Management Capabilities', which will take place this October.

But I should stress that ESDP is not only about missions, operations or capabilities development (an area where EDA plays a very important role). It encompasses as well very important regional structured dialogue and cooperation, such as with the Mediterranean and Africa. It will fastidiously enumerate the reasons why this dialogue and cooperation does have a strategic dimension and impact to European security.

Mindful that Minister Nuno Severiano Teixeira will be sharing with you later today some headlines and key messages of our future presidency of EU Council in the Defence area, I will conclude this short presentation with a brief summing up of our participation in ESDP so far.

Firstly, our participation in the ESDP missions – that are in increased demand – was a very serious challenge to our armed forces, in terms of adapting to new requirements, new planning, new force generation processes, new structuring and command chains, new deployments, sometimes to theatres located far beyond our borders and traditional areas of interest also presenting very complex and risky environments.

Secondly, new considerations and new dimensions to our Defence Policy and Strategy had to be duly incorporated.

Thirdly, this positive burden of tasks, missions and structures, together with NATO ongoing reforms, brought in very important transformational effects to our Armed Forces, in terms of modernization and updated standards and procedures. Pooling of resources, means and capacities is always difficult and expensive, but is, after all, very rewarding in terms of internal adaptation to the new challenges and threats, ultimately reinforcing, in an exponential way, our national defence.

As a matter of fact, in the global era we are all living in, the threats to our national security are increasingly emerging farther away from our borders, and a proactive national defence in a multilateral and concerted environment seems to be the right way to go.

Thank you very much for your attention.