

Speech of the Permanent Secretary of the Cyprus Ministry of Defence
at the “Military Airworthiness 2012”
26 September, 2012, Larnaca – Cyprus

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am indeed honoured to open the “Military Airworthiness Conference 2012”, and very pleased to welcome all of you to Cyprus. I am grateful to all the distinguished representatives from governments, international organisations and the military aerospace industry from every corner of the world, who have gathered here in the City of Larnaca, driven by the common interest of assuring and ensuring military airworthiness.

This is the fourth Conference on the subject. The current Conference is jointly organised by the European Defence Agency and the Cyprus Ministry of Defence, under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union is a historical moment for Cyprus as a small and a new Member State. At the same time, it is a major challenge and a moment of great responsibility as we strive to further support and strengthen the European concept. We want to be diligent, serious, have ideas, take initiatives, and be creative.

The Cyprus Presidency aims to work “Towards a Better Europe”; meaning a European Union more closer to its citizens and to the world; a more effective Europe, contributing to sustainable growth, social cohesion and job creation through efficient and integrated policies; a European Union working on the basis of the underlying principle of solidarity, committing itself to a better future.

These priorities are now, more than ever, extremely relevant to European Defence. Effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, integration, harmonization and solidarity are terms that the European Military should reflect upon; and especially, if we consider the difficulties that Member States presently have in investing in their defence needs. As Member States, we should ensure that our military forces are capable of performing their tasks in an effective and efficient manner, in order to reduce the cost for the European tax payer. In addition, solidarity and

cooperation are becoming essential for guaranteeing the capabilities needed to support the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Any effort to promote coordination, cooperation and synergy, is therefore very relevant to the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency. The European Defence Agency's initiative on harmonisation of the European military airworthiness requirements constitutes a radiant, practical example of such effort.

In November 2008, an EU-wide Forum was established by the EDA Steering Board that rightly recognised the dire necessity for harmonisation of the military airworthiness requirements and processes of the participating Member States. Indeed, this decision constituted a breakthrough in the fragmented approach to the military airworthiness in Europe. The MAWA Forum aims to tackle effectively the grave problem of the absence of common military airworthiness codes and standards that has plagued the industry and impeded the cooperation among member states. Even though there remains a lot of work to be done, a remarkable progress has been made since the first Forum meeting.

In parallel, an annual Conference is organised bringing together all the key stakeholders, in order to share their experience and aspirations on airworthiness. So far, the results have been more than promising. I am confident that this Conference will be at least as successful as the former ones and add value to the collective efforts for the enhancement of military airworthiness.

The endeavour is certainly rigorous; however the benefits from the adoption and implementation of common codes and standards are of great importance. The current economic crisis and the budget cuts we are experiencing in the Defence sector, render the whole venture more imperative than ever. Considerable cost savings can be achieved for both joint certification programmes and joint operations, as harmonisation will lead to less workload, even closer cooperation and more efficient coordination. In addition, the sharing of resources will be vastly eased, a fact that will strengthen the pooling and sharing efforts. This will eventually result in more effective, competent and potent airpower, for the sake of improved military capabilities.

Even though a small country, Cyprus has already played a pivotal role in the formation of a new, more cooperative environment in the aviation world. We had the honour to host the 39th Special Directors General of

Civil Aviation Meeting in September 1990. An important outcome of that meeting was the signing of the “**Cyprus Arrangements**” whereby the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) was established as an associated body of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC). This was a significant development for which we shall always be proud of, as it directly relates to the name of our country.

Bearing this in mind, Cyprus has soon recognised the great significance of the EDA’s project concerning airworthiness. The Ministry of Defence actively participates in the meetings of the MAWA Forum, while the Basic Framework Document has been already signed. The initiative constitutes a real impetus for change towards the adoption of better procedures and best practices. Extensive consultation concerning the foundation of an Authority responsible for military airworthiness is in progress, while the Air Force Command works on the necessary restructuring plans to be able to implement the EMARs. Based on these, I would like to assure all of you that Cyprus pledges its constant commitment to the vision and goals of the EDA as regards airworthiness.

This European initiative towards harmonisation of military airworthiness requirements is definitely not a simple, trivial project. On the contrary, it could be characterised as a real force multiplier for the entire European Defence. It constitutes an invaluable venture that its achievement will greatly benefit all the member states and Europe as a whole. Our rapidly changing world and the current economic crisis demands a continuous commitment to build new skills, networking and keeping up with innovative ideas. Harmonization of military Airworthiness requirements is one of those ideas in the Defence Sector. It is a quite promising idea, a value added idea for which we should invest in time and in skills, in order to transform it to a successful story for the benefit of European Defence and Economy. Harmonization of Military airworthiness requirements is no longer an option – it is a necessity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given the paramount importance of harmonisation and coordination in military airworthiness, it is my sincere wish that this conference does prove to be a fruitful one.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the efforts of the officials of the EDA for successfully organising this conference in cooperation with the

staff of my Ministry. At the same time, my genuine appreciation goes once more to all of you that honour this conference with your presence.

I wish you all, every success in achieving your desired aims through the attendance of this conference and a memorable stay in Cyprus, especially at this nice coastal region at Larnaca, at East Mediterranean, where every morning the sun rays, hit and illuminate first the European Union's territory.

Thank you.

LARNACA – CYPRUS

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE