

European Capabilities Assessment Game (War Game)

Introduction

European defence forces must be prepared to handle a wide variety of possible future evolutions. The European reference which enables an objective assessment of European military capabilities and requirements is the EU Capability Development Plan (CDP). The CDP's Long Term Work aims at providing guidance when defining future military capability needs.

This is important to allow EU defence forces to respond to a number of possible challenges in a proactive way. Moreover so as timelines needed for research, acquisition, product development and not the least training have to be taken into account to be fully prepared.

The Agency together with Member States as well as related EU bodies has been working on defining possible future (2035 and beyond) trends in military capability development since 2011. Together with national scientists and military planners, a common view on the European security context for future EU military operations, defining the operational environment and the threats and challenges, was elaborated.

European Capabilities Assessment Game (ECAPAG)

In this framework, the EDA will from 4 to 6 June conduct the first European Capability Assessment Game, or war game. This exercise will bring together approximately 25 participants from EDA's participating Member States as well as from EU entities like the European Union Military Committee and the Crisis Management & Planning Directorate. The ECAPAG will be based on four generic scenarios that will cover the full spectrum of possible futures. These scenarios are not aimed at predicting the most probable future, nor to engage in a discussion about political developments. In any kind of military war gaming it is necessary to establish a set of scenarios covering the range from best case to worst case (in the ECAPAG they are called Scenario Ensembles) and try to derive conclusions for European capability requirements in the future facing these multiple challenges.

The Scenario Ensembles for the ECAPAG will be:

- A – The Classic Case

The global balance of today remains unchanged in a positive and stable way.

“A more shared view of the strategic context would be essential to steer day-to-day choices and help to shape decisions with a long-term impact...[This] should...not be an academic exercise but be geared toward operational conclusion and results.”

Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council,
2013 Annual Conference of the European Defence Agency

- B – Aggressive Multi-Polarism

Several more or less equally strong powers compete for power, influence and resources – also by military means.

- C – Failing States

An increased number of states are not able to cope with the challenges of globalisation, competition for resources, climate change and other factors.

- D – Unconventional Conflicts

Open military clashes are rare. Power blocks (states) try to undermine each other's security by supporting for example terrorist or radical opposition groups.

The overall objectives of ECAPAG are to:

- “stress test” existing and planned military capabilities by crosschecking them with probable future threats and challenges,
- gain experiences of different alternative futures in order to identify decisive points, including measures to take,
- most importantly in the realm of the CDP, identify EU's long-term capability needs in order to timely make the necessary decisions on capability development.

The final results will be presented to Member States in autumn 2013. With ECAPAG EDA attempts to put the long term work in a realistic framework and derive concrete conclusions for developing capabilities for the future.