



# EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

Brussels, 13 November 2006

PRESS RELEASE

## **EU DEFENCE MINISTERS CLUB TOGETHER TO RESEARCH BETTER PROTECTION FOR ARMED FORCES (BRUSSELS, 13 NOVEMBER 2006)**

European Union Defence Ministers agreed today to launch a [new joint research programme](#) into technologies for protecting their armed forces against threats such as snipers, booby traps and improvised bombs, establishing a ground-breaking mechanism for collaborative action to help boost Europe's efforts in Defence Research and Technology.

A ministerial meeting of the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency, which will coordinate the new scheme, formally approved a three-year Joint Investment Programme (JIP) worth € 54.23 million and involving 19 European governments<sup>1</sup>.

“If Europe is to maintain an effective defence technological and industrial base and develop the military capabilities we will need in the future, we simply have to spend more on R&T and do much more together,” said Javier Solana, the Head of the Agency, who chaired the meeting.

“Today's decision represents a major step in that direction and demonstrates the creativity and the political will of EU governments. As I reported to the Council of Ministers, the Agency has now begun to deliver substantial results – and this is prominent among them,” he added.

Unlike previous collaborations on defence R&T, which involved governments negotiating financial and industrial shares for each individual project, the JIP sets up a common budget to fund the whole programme with a management committee representing the contributors to oversee the selection

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<sup>1</sup>Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and EDA non-member Norway

and financing of individual projects. The votes of the contributors are weighted according to the size of their contributions, though decisions will be taken by consensus wherever possible.

The programme will focus on a limited number of specific R&T priorities driven by agreed capability requirements for future operations: collective survivability, individual protection, data analysis, secure wireless communication and mission planning and training.

In a further boost to collaborative action, the Steering Board also welcomed new initiatives for joint work on [Software Defined Radio \(SDR\)](#), a technology for secure communications with important potential applications for civilian and military use.

Five countries – Finland, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden – announced an ad-hoc joint research project (ESSOR) under the EDA umbrella worth an estimated 100 million Euros aimed at enhancing interoperability (in Europe and with the U.S. and NATO) of medium-term national SDR projects and at promoting a European technological and industrial capacity of strategic importance. A related EDA study focuses on specific military SDR requirements for the longer-term.

Both of these initiatives complement the WINTSEC project announced in October by European Commission Vice President Günter Verheugen, who is also a member of the Steering Board. The project will study wireless interoperability for civil security purposes.

The role of the Agency will be to coordinate its study on longer-term military specifications and the medium-term ESSOR ad hoc project and ensure that these efforts are complementary to the civil technology work strand of the Commission Security Research Programme.

“This is an excellent example of how we can maximise the return from our investments thanks to governments, the EDA and the Commission working closely together,” Solana said.

The Steering Board, the decision-making body for the EDA, also approved the Agency’s Work Programme for 2007. Its major directions are related to the Long-Term Vision report which was presented to the Steering Board in October.

Major initiatives for 2007 include establishing an ESDP Capability Development Plan; developing a European Defence R&T Strategy to identify at the European level key defence technologies to be developed and preserved in Europe; elaborating the characteristics of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base of the future and the way to achieve it; and identifying practical

opportunities for collaboration by exploiting a “cooperative armaments process”, starting with the Armoured Fighting Vehicles and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Soldier areas.

“Today’s meeting is probably the most productive we have yet had. It is great to feel that the Agency is picking up momentum and starting to show some really substantial results,” said EDA Chief Executive Nick Witney.

ENDS

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## - Background information -

The European Defence Agency (EDA) was established by the Council on 12 July 2004. It is designed "to support the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the ESDP as it stands now and develops in the future". More specifically, the Agency is ascribed four functions, relating to:

- a) defence capabilities development;
- b) armaments cooperation;
- c) the European defence technological and industrial base and defence equipment market;
- d) research and technology.

These functions all relate to improving Europe's defence performance, by promoting coherence in place of fragmentation.

The EDA is an Agency of the European Union. High Representative Solana is Head of the Agency, chairman of the Steering Board, which acts under the Council's authority and within the framework of guidelines issued by the Council.

The Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP establishing the EDA states that the Agency "shall enhance the effectiveness of European defence R&T". Article 5 para 3.4. of the JA (Annex 2) describes the main functions and tasks of the Agency in the field of R&T to achieve that objective. Furthermore, according to the EDA 2005 work programme, the Agency has to establish comprehensive and systematic business management processes for the establishment of R&T priorities at European level.

The major aims of the Agency R&T activity may be summarised as:

- to catalyse more European R&T collaborations, focussed on improving defence capabilities;
- to develop policies and strategies to strengthen defence technology in Europe.