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FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAPC

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), set up in 1997 to succeed the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, brings together the 19 Allies and 25 Partners¹ in a forum providing for regular consultation and cooperation.

EAPC activities are based on a two-year action plan which focuses on consultation and cooperation on a range of political and security-related matters, including regional issues, arms control, international terrorism, peacekeeping, defence economic issues, civil emergency planning, and scientific and environmental issues.

It meets periodically at the level of Ambassadors and Foreign and Defence Ministers. Heads of State and Government of the 44 members can also meet, when appropriate, as they will do in Washington on April 25.

Almost all of the non-NATO EAPC members have established diplomatic missions accredited to NATO, expanding contacts between NATO and Partners and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of cooperation.

The EAPC has played a valuable role as a forum for consultation on the crisis in Kosovo. A series of extraordinary meetings has been held to keep Partners informed of the status of NATO planning and preparations for possible military options in Kosovo and to exchange views with Partners on developments.

The EAPC helps to foster practical regional security cooperation through the inclusion of topical seminars in the action plan. The first such regional cooperation seminar was hosted by Georgia in October 1998. Since then similar events have been held in Lithuania and Slovakia. Two further seminars are scheduled this year in Bulgaria and Uzbekistan.

An important achievement of the EAPC was the establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) at NATO headquarters following a proposal by the Russian Federation.

¹ Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan.

* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

The Centre was inaugurated in June 1998 and immediately was called upon to support the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in relief efforts in Albania for refugees fleeing from Kosovo. Coordinated humanitarian assistance from NATO and Partner countries has been stepped up in response to the escalating refugee crisis in the region since the end of March 1999. The EADRCC also played a significant role in coordinating humanitarian relief for flood-hit parts of western Ukraine late last year.

The EAPC Summit in Washington will provide an opportunity for open discussions among the leaders of the 44 member countries on security-related cooperation within the EAPC in the 21st century.

The leaders will, in particular, consider two documents relating to further development of the Partnership for Peace. In preparing for the Summit, Partners have been particularly involved in developing a Political-Military Framework for NATO-led PfP operations that addresses the participation of Partners in operational planning, in command arrangements and Partner involvement in political consultations and decision-making.

Partners have also been briefed on NATO's updating of the Strategic Concept.

Many ideas for further practical initiatives are being explored, including ways in which the EAPC might support global humanitarian action against mines and ways of controlling transfers of small arms.