

# 8 THE NATO-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



## ■ KEY INFORMATION

---

NATO and the EU share common strategic interests. In a spirit of complementarity, both organisations consult and work together to prevent and resolve crises and armed conflicts.

The decision to cooperate on security issues goes back to 24 January 2001 when the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency exchanged letters defining the scope of cooperation and the modalities of consultation between the two organisations. Cooperation has accelerated ever since, in particular with:

- the signing of the landmark "NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP" (European Security and Defence Policy), which paved the way for the "Berlin Plus" arrangements;
- the adoption of the "Berlin Plus" arrangements, which form the basis for practical work in crisis management between the two organisations.

**The "NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP"**, agreed on 16 December 2002, not only reaffirmed the EU assured access to NATO's planning capabilities for its own military operations, but also reiterated the following political principles of the strategic partnership:

- effective mutual consultation;
- equality and due regard for the decision-making autonomy of the EU and NATO;
- respect for the interests of the EU and NATO members states;
- respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

- coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the military capability requirements common to the two organisations.

Following the political decision of December 2002, **the "Berlin Plus" arrangements**, adopted on 17 March 2003, provide the basis for NATO-EU cooperation in crisis management by allowing EU access to NATO's collective assets and capabilities for EU-led operations. In effect, they allow the Alliance to support EU-led operations in which NATO as a whole is not engaged. They consist of the following major elements:

- a NATO-EU Security Agreement (covers the exchange of classified information under reciprocal security protection rules);
- assured EU access to NATO's planning capabilities for actual use in the military planning of EU-led crisis management operations;
- availability of NATO capabilities and common assets, such as communication units and headquarters for EU-led crisis management operations;
- procedures for release, monitoring, return and recall of NATO assets and capabilities;
- Terms of Reference for NATO's Deputy SACEUR - who in principle will be the operation commander of an EU-led operation under the "Berlin Plus" arrangements (and who is always a European) - and European Command Options for NATO;
- NATO-EU consultation arrangements in the context of an EU-led crisis management operation making use of NATO assets and capabilities;

- incorporation within NATO's long-established defence planning system, of the military needs and capabilities that may be required for EU-led military operations, thereby ensuring the availability of well-equipped forces trained for either NATO-led or EU-led operations.

## **WORKING TOGETHER IN THE FIELD UNDER "BERLIN PLUS" ARRANGEMENTS**

On 31 March 2003, **the EU-led Operation *Concordia*** took over the responsibilities of the NATO-led mission, Operation *Allied Harmony*, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*. *Concordia* was terminated on 15 December 2003 and replaced by *Proxima*, an EU-led police mission.

In line with the "Berlin-Plus" arrangements, NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) was appointed as Operation Commander of this first ever EU-led military peacekeeping mission.

NATO supported the EU on strategic, operational and tactical planning. An EU-Operation Headquarters (OHQ) was set-up at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, to assist the Operation Commander. In addition, an 'EU Command Element' (EUCE) was established at AFSOUTH in Naples, Italy (which is the NATO Joint Force command for Balkan operations). The Chief of Staff of AFSOUTH also became Chief of Staff of the new EU Command Element, assisted by an EU Director for Operations.

These dual NATO-EU posts guaranteed the linkage between the EU's and NATO's operational chain of command during

*Concordia*. This mission was the first in which NATO assets had been made available to the EU.

A few months later, in July 2003, the EU and NATO published a "Concerted Approach for the Western Balkans", which outlines core areas of cooperation and emphasises the common vision and determination both organisations share to bring stability to the region.

The EU is also willing to lead a military operation under "Berlin Plus" arrangements in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** following the termination of SFOR. However, NATO's long-term political commitment to the country remains unchanged. A new NATO Military Liaison and Advisory Mission (NATO HQ Sarajevo) will be established and will have specific military tasks, such as assistance with defence reform and for the country's potential future Partnership for Peace membership.

## **OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION**

EU and NATO foreign ministers have reaffirmed their willingness to develop closer cooperation to **combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**. The institutions have already exchanged information on their activities in the field of protection of civilian populations against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks. NATO and the EU also consult on other issues of common interest, such as the situation in Moldova and Afghanistan.

**Concerted planning of capabilities development** and mutual reinforcement between NATO's Prague Capability Commitment (PCC) and the EU's European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) have also become part of the NATO-EU agenda.

The EU's earlier ECAP comprised a catalogue of forces and capabilities for the EU Headline Goal (to be able to deploy up to 60 000 troops by the end of 2003 for humanitarian and rescue missions, as well as peacekeeping and peacemaking). NATO experts provided military and technical advice starting from the preparations to the implementation of the ECAP. NATO and EU capabilities planning and mutual reinforcement between the Prague Capability Commitment (PCC) and the ECAP are being addressed in the NATO-EU Capability Group, established in May 2003.

Since then, the EU announced the creation of a new concept in February 2004, which would lead to the launching of rapid reaction units composed of joint battle groups. According to the "Headline Goal 2010", these units would be completely developed by 2007.

The "Headline Goal 2010", approved by the Council in May 2004, also envisages the creation of an EU Defence Agency that would focus on the development of defence capabilities, research, acquisition and armaments. In effect, the "Headline Goal" aims to translate the European Security Strategy into concrete military objectives in order to fulfil the EU's capability development in the long-term.

## **PRACTICAL WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

NATO and EU officials **meet on a regular basis** at different levels:

- at foreign ministers' level twice a year;
- at ambassadors' level (the North Atlantic Council with the EU's Political and Security Committee) a minimum of three times per semester;
- at the level of the Military Committee twice every semester;

- at the committee level on a regular basis;
- at staff level on a routine basis.

**The establishment of permanent military liaison arrangements** is being considered to facilitate cooperation at the operational level. Proposals include establishing an EU cell at SHAPE (NATO's strategic command for operations in Mons, Belgium) and NATO liaison arrangements at the EU Military Staff.

#### **RECENT SUMMIT AND MINISTERIAL DECISIONS**

- Prague, 21-22 November 2002: Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) and creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF). NATO leaders reaffirmed their readiness to give the EU access to NATO assets and capabilities for operations in which the Alliance is not engaged militarily
- Washington, 23-25 April 1999: Decision to develop the "Berlin Plus" arrangements on NATO assets and capabilities made available for future possible EU-led operations.

## ■ CHRONOLOGY

---

**2004 18 February:** France, Germany and the United Kingdom launch the idea of EU rapid reaction units composed of joint battle groups.

**2003 December:** NATO and the EU start to assess options for the possible termination of NATO's stabilisation force in Bosnia (SFOR) by the end of 2004 and its transition to a new EU mission; Adoption by the European Council of a "European Security Strategy".

**19-25 November:** First joint NATO-EU crisis management exercise (CME/CMX 03) based on the standing "Berlin Plus" arrangements.

**29 July:** Development of a common strategy for the Western Balkans.

**19 May:** First meeting of the NATO-EU capability group.

**31 March:** Transition from the NATO-led operation *Allied Harmony* to the EU-led Operation *Concordia* in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*.

**17 March:** Agreement on a set of key cooperation documents, known as the "Berlin Plus" package.

**14 March:** Entry into force of a NATO-EU security of information agreement.

**2002 16 December:** EU-NATO Declaration on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

**21-22 November:** At the Prague Summit, NATO members declare their readiness to give the EU access to NATO assets and capabilities for operations in which the Alliance is not engaged militarily.

**2001 19 November:** Creation of the European Capability Action Plan (ECAP).

**30 May:** First formal NATO-EU meeting at the level of foreign ministers in Budapest. The NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency issue a joint statement on the Western Balkans.

**24 January:** Beginning of institutionalised relations between NATO and the EU with the establishment of joint meetings, including at the level of foreign ministers and ambassadors. Exchange of letters between the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency on the scope of cooperation and modalities for consultation.

**2000 7 December:** Signature of the EU's Treaty of Nice containing amendments reflecting the operative developments of the ESDP as an independent EU policy (entry into force February 2003).

**19 September:** The North Atlantic Council and the interim Political and Security Committee of the European Union meet for the first time to take stock of the progress in NATO-EU relations.

**1999 10 December:** At the Helsinki Council meeting, EU members establish military "Headline Goals" to allow the EU, by 2003, to deploy up to 15 brigades (50 000 – 60 000 troops) for "Petersberg tasks" (these consist of humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping and peacemaking). EU members also create political and military structures including a Political and Security Committee, a Military Committee and a Military Staff. The crisis management role of the WEU is transferred to the EU. The WEU retains residual tasks.



**3-4 June:** European Council meeting in Cologne decides "to give the European Union the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities regarding a common European policy on security and defence".

**23-25 April:** At the Washington Summit, Heads of State and Government decide to develop the "Berlin Plus" arrangements.

**1998 3-4 December:** At a summit in St Malo, France and the United Kingdom make a joint statement affirming the EU's determination to establish a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

**1997 2 October:** Signature of the EU's Treaty of Amsterdam incorporating the WEU's "Petersberg tasks". The EU affirms the role of the WEU as an integral part of its development and envisages the possible integration of the WEU into the European Union.

**1996 3 June:** In Berlin, NATO foreign ministers agree for the first time to build up an ESDI within NATO, with the aim of rebalancing roles and responsibilities between Europe and North America. An essential part of this initiative was to improve European capabilities. They also decide to make Alliance assets available for WEU-led crisis management operations. These decisions lead to the introduction of the term "Berlin Plus".

**1994 January:** At the Brussels Summit, NATO endorses the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces, which provides for separable but not separate deployable headquarters that could be used for European-led operations and is the conceptual basis for future operations involving NATO and other non-NATO countries.

**11 January:** NATO Heads of State and Government agree to make collective assets of the Alliance available on the basis of consultations in the North Atlantic Council, for WEU operations undertaken by the European Allies in pursuit of their Common Foreign and Security Policy.

**1992 19 June:** In Oslo, NATO foreign ministers support the objective of developing the WEU as a means of strengthening the European pillar of the Alliance and as the defence component of the EU, that would also cover the "Petersberg tasks".

**February:** the EU adopts the Maastricht Treaty, which envisages an intergovernmental Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and "the eventual framing of a common defence policy" (ESDP). The WEU is considered as the EU's defence component; close cooperation between NATO and the WEU.





## ■ OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND BACKGROUND READING

---

*Go to the electronic version of the press kit for clickable links  
([www.nato.int/istanbul2004/presskit.htm](http://www.nato.int/istanbul2004/presskit.htm))*

Joint press statement by the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency, 4 December 2003, summarising progress made in NATO-EU cooperation since the Madrid meeting, 3 June 2003  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p03-153e.htm>

NATO-EU Concerted Approach for the Western Balkans drawn up on 29 July 2003 ("Framework for an enhanced NATO-EU dialogue and a concerted approach on security and stability in the Western Balkans")  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p03-089e.htm>

Joint press statement by the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency, 3 June 2003, summarising progress made in NATO-EU cooperation since the joint Declaration of 16 December 2002  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p03-056e.htm>

Council Decision on the release of information under the NATO-EU Security of Information Agreement, 24 March 2003  
<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/st07/st07588en03.pdf>

EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy), 16 December 2002  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-142e.htm>

EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/cfsp/intro/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cfsp/intro/index.htm)

Reference to the Prague Capabilities Commitment in the Prague Summit Declaration, November 2002 (paragraph 4)

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>

Statement on Capabilities by NATO Defence Ministers,  
6 June 2002

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-074e.htm>

Joint press statement by the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency, 14 May 2002, summarising progress made in NATO-EU cooperation since the Brussels meeting, 6 December 2001

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-060e.htm>

Joint press statement by the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency, 6 December 2001 on NATO-EU cooperation

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-167e.htm>

First Joint press statement to be issued by the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency, 30 May 2001. The statement is on the Western Balkans

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-080e.htm>

EU Headline Goal - Helsinki European Council,  
11 December 1999 (Presidency Conclusions, 11/12/1999,  
Nr 00300/1/99, Chapter II)

[http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm)

NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative, Washington Summit,  
25 April 1999

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99s069e.htm>



An Alliance for the 21st century, Washington Summit communiqué, 24 April 1999, outlining the "Berlin Plus" arrangements (paragraphs ;8-10)

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm>

Joint Declaration issued at the Franco-British Summit, St Malo, France, 3-4 December 1998

<http://www.iss-eu.org/chailot/chai47e.html>

The Amsterdam Treaty – Final Act (3) – Declaration relating to the WEU, 10 November 1997

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/amsterdam.html#0125030020>

The Amsterdam Treaty – A Comprehensive Guide: Common Foreign and Security Policy, November 1997

<http://www.europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/a19000.htm>

NATO-EU relations and ESDI - Ministerial Communiqué, Berlin, 3 June 1996 (paragraphs 2; 7; 8 and 20)

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-063e.htm>

Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), 29 July 1992 (reference to CFSP and ESDP) – Declaration on WEU

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU\\_treaty.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html)

About the NATO-EU strategic partnership. Issue page containing key information on the theme

<http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-eu/index.html>

Evolution of NATO's European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) and historical perspective on NATO-EU relations (pp. 97-103 of the NATO Handbook 2001)

<http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/pdf/handbook.pdf>

## ■ A FEW FACTS AND FIGURES

---

### **NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES (26)**

Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

### **EU MEMBER COUNTRIES (25)**

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus\*, Czech Republic\*, Denmark, Estonia\*, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary\*, Ireland, Italy, Latvia\*, Lithuania\*, Luxembourg, Malta\*, the Netherlands, Poland\*, Portugal, Slovakia\*, Slovenia\*, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom.

\* *Members since May 2004*

### **OPERATION *CONCORDIA***

Operation *Concordia* replaced the NATO-led Operation *Allied Harmony*. It was set up to protect OSCE and EU observers/monitors. Some 400 military personnel from 14 non-EU countries and 13 EU member states were engaged in this operation. It was terminated on 15 December 2003 and succeeded by an EU Police Mission called *Proxima*.