

# EDA and Commission to work closely together on research

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The European Defence Agency aims to establish a European Framework Cooperation for Security and Defence Research, together with the European Commission. This new Framework will provide the overarching structure for maximising complementarity and synergy between defence and civilian security-related research activities.

European Ministers of Defence, meeting in EDA's Steering Board on 18 May 2009, have tasked the EDA to develop concrete proposals, working in close coordination with the Commission. Decisions on the European Framework Cooperation, including on the content of a coordinated Programme, will be taken by Defence Ministers in November. The likely candidate of this Programme is 'situational awareness', from sensing to command and control of networked assets.

"Coordination on investment in research between the Agency and the Commission will save the European taxpayer money, as our actions will be concerted", said Head of the Agency Javier Solana, who chaired the meeting.

EDA and the European Commission are already synergising their research in specific projects, such as Software Defined Radio and for the insertion of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles into regulated airspace. The European Framework Cooperation for Security and Defence has the purpose to systematically ensure complementarity and synergy of Defence R&T investment by the Agency with research investment of the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme for civilian security.

"Our existing cooperation with the Commission will be brought to a more intensive level. There will be no joint funding and the management responsibilities in both frameworks will remain unchanged. The aim is to synchronise research and allow for mutual use of results, as technologies are increasingly of a dual-use nature for military and civilian operators", said Alexander Weis, EDA's Chief Executive.

The Ministerial Steering Board also discussed the ongoing activities on the European Air Transport Fleet (EATF), based on the Declaration of Intent signed by twelve Ministers in November last year. The concept has been widened from an initially envisaged fleet into a framework for military air transport related aspects with modular participation. Signature of a Letter on Intent is foreseen for November 2009.

Ministers took stock of the progress made with Increasing Helicopters' Availability:

- Training: the Agency's work is on track. Lessons learned have been drawn from a multinational helicopter training exercise in the French Alps in March and from an EDA study on high end tactical synthetic training – during which 20 Czech helicopter crews have been trained in preparation for their deployment to Afghanistan later this year. The Helicopter Tactics Training Programme will be launched in 2010. Upgrades: the Agency has presented upgrade packages for the Mi-17 helicopters. Under EDA coordination Member States concerned will now address cooperation models, with the aim of launching upgrade projects before the end of the year.
- Future Transport Helicopter: the German-French initiative for this helicopter has now become an EDA project, open to participation by other Member States. The aim of the FTH-project is to provide a solution for intra-theatre heavy lift capability in the years 2020+. "The Agency's helicopters activities have already started to produce results through training. Upgrading proposals will offer additional opportunities and the Future Transport Helicopter is a very important project to find a common European solution in the longer term, perhaps even together with the United States", said Javier Solana.

The Multinational Space-based Imaging System for Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Observation (MUSIS) programme has been accepted as an EDA project in early March. Defence Ministers noted the progress made. The Agency's involvement will focus on three elements, namely to support: (i) the extension of the programme to other Member States, in addition to the existing six MUSIS countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain); (ii) the definition of an EU requirement for space imagery, working together with the Council General Secretariat (including the EUMS); and (iii) creating synergies between MUSIS and related projects, such as the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES).

The Steering Board approved a project on force protection against biological agents. This Biological Detection Identification Monitoring Equipment Development and Enhancement Programme (BIO-EDEP) is addressing an important shortfall in the CBRN Defence area, one of the 12 priorities stemming from the Capability Development Plan. Five Member States (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands and Spain) have launched the BIO-EDEP project and other Member States have expressed their intention to join. The aim of the project is to conduct a Preparation Phase, leading to a demonstrator programme and procurement of identified equipment.