

## **Keynote Address by Adam Sowa**

**Deputy Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency**

**ACT Industry Day, 5-6 October, Prague**

### Introduction

- Dear Minister Vondra
- Dear General Abrial
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- First, let me congratulate Gen. Abrial and NATO Command Transformation for organising this excellent and important event. Let me also thank Minister Vondra for providing the host nation support and all those involved to make our meeting a success.
- It is a great pleasure for me to be here and deliver a keynote address on behalf of the European Defence Agency. You can judge our commitment to this ACT Industry Day by looking at our biggest ever representation. I have with me EDA Capability Director, Research and Technology Director, Head of Planning and Policy and three high level experts, who are going to contribute actively to the debate.
- Let me explain that EDA's Chief Executive, Alexander Weis, who contributed significantly to the EDA-ACT interaction, could not be here today with us, as he has recently left the Agency. His successor is still to be appointed. The EU High Representative and Vice

President of the Commission, Baroness Ashton has decided that, until that time and in order to manage the transition, I should play the role of Acting Chief Executive. And that is why I am here.

- So after this impressive keynote by Gen. Abrial, I will follow with some messages from the EDA's perspective.
- "Better Synergy for Better Capabilities": it is exactly what we need. And we at EDA seek synergies with NATO, but also with the European Commission on civil security, with the European Space Agency, with the European procurement agency – OCCAR.
- Synergy comes from the ancient Greek word *syn-ergos*, which means 'working together'. Naturally this refers to the organisations present in this conference, representing NATO, the European Union and industry. By working together we can create synergies in order to get better capabilities. And better capabilities, mainly owned by the Member States, are needed for our security, for current and future crisis management operations, be it under the EU, NATO or any other flag.
- So, the purpose of our search for synergies is quite clear. Nobody will contest it. But why is the creation of these synergies so difficult? How do we cope with the reality of the NATO-EU relationship? How can we improve our relations?

#### Let me stress three general points

- Firstly, the situation is actually much better than many critical voices want us to believe. There is a popular view that NATO and EDA do not interact at all and live in separated worlds. According to the same school there is a lot of duplication between the two in terms of capability development.

- This picture is fundamentally wrong. From its early days EDA has set up information exchange channels with NATO counterparts, from top management to the expert levels, and from Brussels to Norfolk-Virginia.
- An early example of such fruitful information exchange is the Agency's Long Term Vision, endorsed by European Defence Ministers already in October 2006, and ACT's Multiple Futures. Those, who have read both documents, will note a great deal of similarities.
- Also, in concrete capability projects like Software Defined Radio, CBRN protection, strategic transport, Network Enabled Capability, Medical and others, experts from both sides interact to avoid duplication and ensure the added value of these activities.
- The Agency has also stimulated the use of the EU-NATO Capability Group, the formal channel between both organisations to discuss mutually-reinforcing capability development. It has brought many concrete topics to this Group, enriching its agendas and informing Member States' delegations on areas where EDA and NATO have complementary activities.
- The last example relates to the helicopter pilot training. EDA has developed the training program and live exercises that allowed for more than 360 helicopter pilots to be trained. In Spain this year, in the biggest ever European helicopter exercise, 45 pilots have undergone environmental training in harsh conditions and low visibility. Many of them were sent then to Afghanistan. EDA helped the Member States to improve their capabilities and the nations decided to use them for the NATO operation.

- So, we are doing well through our network of informal contacts and by increased use of the EU-NATO Capability Group.
- This brings me to the second point. The problem with EU-NATO relations that is, as we all know, of a highly political nature. Unfortunately, it does also affect the relations between EDA and its NATO counterparts.
- The fact is that we cannot exchange information formally. Clearly, this is hampering work on concepts, doctrine and standards where “copy and paste” should be the line to take and not reinventing the wheel. This becomes particularly a burning issue when we deal with areas like Countering IED, Network Enabled Capabilities or Medical – all of which are directly related to the safety of the troops in the field.
- The fact is that we also have limitations on attending each other’s meetings. Of course, we come up with smart solutions, like back-to-back meetings or using workshops and seminars. So, we escape into these artificial solutions instead of attending the meetings.
- But until we have a political solution to the main obstacle in the EU-NATO relationship, we will have no other choice but to use our imagination and maximise the use of the informal channels.
- My third point is related to the roles and responsibilities of the Member States.
- Too often the impression is made that the staffs of the international organisations have to arrange the division of labour and ensure that capability development is mutually reinforcing. While the staffs have responsibilities in this respect they are also limited in what can be achieved between them.

- Both in the Alliance and in the EU, with a few exceptions, capabilities are owned and deployed by the Member States.
- Equally, investing in capability development is done through national defence budgets, based on sovereign national decisions.
- Therefore we are in the hands of the Member States of both organisations and we depend on their willingness to cooperate in order to ensure that EDA and NATO reinforce each other.
- And, of course, capability improvement projects – either at NATO or in EDA – will only deliver when Member States engage and commit themselves.
- Therefore, any initiative to increase the coordination between both organisations has to be supported by commitments of Member States to carry out the projects and programmes resulting from the NATO-EDA interaction.
- One might say: “of course, this is taken for granted”. But the reality we face is that there is less commitment to real projects than to declarations and non-papers.
- So, an interaction between all those involved in coordination at the level of the Member States is vital to the success as well.
- Against the background of these three points – using the informal channels, recognising the political constraints and involving the Member States – what can we do to create even better synergies in order to realise better capabilities?
- This year General Abrial and Alexander Weis have stepped up the EDA-NATO coordination. Five areas have been initially identified as topics of common interest between ACT and EDA:

- Countering IEDs
  - Network Enabled Capabilities
  - Joint Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance
  - Medical
  - Protection against CRBN threats.
- 
- A joint report was sent to both the NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative in March; the first time ever such a common document was produced. The report was very well received by European Defence Ministers when they met in the EDA Steering Board on 26 April.
  - The report mentions several examples where both organisations can practically work together, in particular in the areas of concepts, doctrine, solution analysis and combined training.
  - In the area of training a first joint course was organised in June this year: the CBRN Intelligence Analyst's Course, hosted by Germany. We believe that training is an area where a lot more can be done in terms of combined courses, exercises and other activities using NATO infrastructure or national Centres of Excellence.
  - At their recent meeting Gen. Abrial and Alexander Weis took stock of the progress made and agreed on the way ahead in the five areas. In concrete areas like C-IED, CRBN & Medical more joint activities are likely to be planned, including courses. In the CBRN area, the idea has been launched to develop together a Training Package. For Medical capability development, casualty tracking and tracing seems to be an excellent area to synchronise efforts.

- Even in more conceptual areas, like NEC and Joint ISR, there is scope for detailed coordination through for example exchanging roadmaps and exploration of synergies in the interaction with industry. Some of these areas, like NEC and Medical, will be discussed in more detail later today and EDA will contribute actively to this discussion.
- It is also worth noting that the EU Military Staff is now involved in the EDA-ACT meetings, which is important as they are leading in the EU on concepts and doctrine development. The NATO Headquarters is represented by the Defence Planning & Policy and Defence Investment Divisions.
- So, we seem to have found a formula to work pragmatically together. Communities of experts have been established. First joint activities have taken place. New ideas and proposals for practical cooperation have been launched and will be implemented. From the EDA side we strongly believe that this is the way forward in the current situation with its formal constraints.
- So far, I have spoken about the EDA-ACT relationship. But there is a very important third contributor to capability development. This is the defence industry.
- The Agency has from the start underlined the importance of involving industry early in the planning process. Clearly, if industry has to be capability-driven such early involvement is a pre-requisite.
- In many of our projects the cooperation with industry has been very fruitful, in particular in Joint Investment Programmes, such as on Force Protection where industry has added additional research money to the programme budget of the contributing Members.

- But also in our so called Category B projects, with participation of a limited number of Member States, industry plays a key role in developing technologies. Some of them are unique on a world scale like in the area of sense and avoid for Unmanned Aerial Systems (the MIDAir Collision Avoidance System-MIDCAS project).
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises – SMEs – are often breeding factories of new technologies. For this reason alone it is worth to pay particular attention to them. This is why they are an important part of the Agency's industrial work strands.
- Of course I could not end this address without mentioning the importance of strengthening the European Defence Industrial Base.
- The economic crisis is now seriously affecting defence budgets, with reduction percentages varying from a few percent to double figures. In some countries the cuts are even bigger than after the end of the Cold War.
- Due to reduced defence investment, defence industries are likely to face less orders or delays of orders, affecting their R&D and production lines.
- In these circumstances governments will tend to cooperate more in order to maintain and modernize their capabilities. And also the industrial base will have to adapt as increasingly it cannot be sustained on national basis.
- Crises create problems but they also offer opportunities. Let us use the opportunities to further adapt the industrial base to the capability needs of the future. That will also help to create better synergies for better capabilities.



- Thank you for your kind attention.