



FROM THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

Important defence policy issues during the Presidency

One of the EU objectives is to work for global peace and security. Consequently, the EU is developing its ability to do so, including the capability to conduct comprehensive operations with both military and civilian components. The Swedish Presidency will continue to develop the EU crisis management capability.

As the presiding country, Sweden is responsible for leading the EU, and in defence policy the following areas will be given extra high priority: **usability, capability development and operations.**

Usability

The EU Battlegroups are an effective and unique instrument for rapid reaction operations. However, no EU Battlegroup has yet been used. Given this, the Swedish Presidency is now opening up for a political discussion on a more flexible view on their use.

Member States are responsible for organising Battlegroups and make them available for the EU, in rotating six month periods. There are always two Battlegroups on simultaneous standby, providing the EU with a tool for rapid crisis management. Quickly suppressing an emerging crisis or conflict, to prevent further escalation, is an important task for the EU Battlegroups. When a Battlegroup has fulfilled its task, more long-term measures can be implemented.

The Presidency would like to discuss whether one of the Battlegroups could be made available for other than rapid reaction operations. Improving cooperation between Battlegroups on standby is also an important issue to discuss in order to increase usability. A seminar on the use of EU Battlegroups will be organised by the Presidency in July 2009.

Capability development

The primary objective of the EU capability development is to identify capabilities needed to enable the EU to contribute to peace and security, for example strategic transport or medical evacuation helicopters. The EU Member States decide individually the extent of their participation in multinational capability development. The Swedish Presidency would like to boost the ongoing work. Areas to be discussed are civil-military capability development and maritime surveillance.

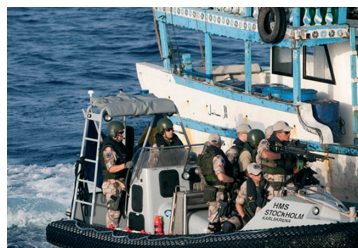
Civil-military capability development

When planning military operations and civilian missions a long-term strategy for rebuilding the country must be developed in parallel. Sustainable peace requires functioning institutions under democratic control, such as police and justice systems. When operations and missions are conducted simultaneously in an area their combined effect increases with good interaction.

The Presidency will initiate a discussion on how coordination of the EU civilian and military capabilities can be further developed. Basically this involves avoiding unnecessary duplication and finding common civil-military solutions. Examples are transport and logistics, protection and co-locating civilian and military headquarters. The Swedish Presidency will arrange a seminar on the subject during the autumn.



HMS Malmö in "Operation Atalanta" in the Gulf of Aden.



The Swedish navy during an exercise before joining "Operation Atalanta".

Relations between the EU and NATO

There is a need for closer cooperation between the EU and Nato since both organisations often operate in the same area. This need exists at all levels and stages, i.e. from planning to implementation of operations and missions. Information exchange and cooperation on capability development and armaments can also be expanded to avoid unnecessary duplication.

This issue has been pursued by previous Presidencies and the Swedish Presidency will continue to do so. Consequently, through various initiatives Sweden will stimulate dialogue that can move cooperation forward.

Maritime surveillance

Few of the current security and safety threats respect borders. Organised crime, industrial or environmental accidents, terrorism, piracy, illegal immigration, illegal fishing, pollution and consequences of long-term climate change etc, affect us all.

The common requirements of civil and military actors does not allow a strict division between civilian and military related aspects of security. Instead, it demands a well coordinated approach involving all relevant EU institutions in order to successfully protect the interests of Member States and the European Union.

The Swedish Presidency supports a close and transparent cooperation between civilian and military maritime surveillance, and will work on improving these factors. The objective is to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to improve overall efficiency.

To achieve this, Member States, the European Defence Agency and the European Commission need to work closely together, to find innovative solutions within the given legal framework. Also, in order to secure efficient development of maritime situational awareness capability we must use all the instruments at our disposal.

At EU level, work has been in progress for several years to satisfy the maritime surveillance and maritime information requirements of the various Member States. EU maritime policy addresses the need for more integrated cooperation in the area.

In this context the Swedish Presidency emphasises the importance of building as far as possible on existing systems and initiatives which are linked together, so as to achieve better situation awareness. Continued close cooperation between Member States and relevant EU institutions is consequently of great value.

The gains to be made from a more integrated maritime surveillance are:

Safer and more effective shipping, a better marine environment and a better ability to discover and act against various threats in and against the maritime environment.

Operations

One of the purposes of the European Security and Defence Policy is to enable Member States to jointly contribute to operations aimed at promoting peace and security.

The need for a common EU response to conflicts or crises became clear during the Balkan wars, when the EU was unable to take military action because it lacked the right tools. But much has happened since then and several military operations have been carried out under the EU flag, mainly in Africa.

One of these operations is the current maritime operation Atalanta, off the coast of Somalia, where one of the objectives is to protect UN food shipments from piracy. The population of Somalia is suffering badly from hunger and in many cases the UN programmes are their only lifeline.

Under the Swedish Presidency planning will take place for an extension of Atalanta, as the need for a military presence in the region is expected to continue to be great in 2010 as well. The long-standing operation ALTHEA and EU's continued military presence in Bosnia and Hercegovina, will also be discussed this autumn.

The EU also conducts civilian peace-support and security-building missions. In those cases it is a matter of promoting the development of constitutional states and police activities, providing support to the civilian administration and civil protection, or monitoring borders and peace agreements. Sweden participates for example in the EU operations in Georgia, Afghanistan, Gaza and Kosovo.

The largest civilian mission is EULEX in Kosovo, where the EU has mobilised experts to help Kosovo to build functioning judicial and customs systems. Several agencies from Sweden are contributing staff and resources to the mission. One of them is the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, which provides support in the form of logistics, administration, information and communication technologies and medical care.

The Swedish Government attaches great importance to the EU's ability to contribute to crisis management operations, which has been shown through Sweden's participation in all EU operations and missions to date, both civilian and military.



Questions about the content of this fact sheet can be addressed to the Ministry of Defence, tel: +46 8 405 10 00. Additional copies of the fact sheet can be ordered from the Ministry of Defence, tel. +46 8 405 10 00. The website of the Swedish Presidency: se2009.eu

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