

European Council (12/13 December 2003)

Conclusions

Security Strategy

The European Council adopted the European security strategy and warmly congratulated SG/HR Javier Solana for the work accomplished.

The European security strategy reaffirms our common determination to face our responsibility for guaranteeing a secure Europe in a better world. It will enable the European Union to better deal with the threats and global challenges and realise the opportunities facing us. An active, capable and more coherent European Union would make an impact on a global scale. In doing so, it would contribute to an effective multilateral system leading to a fairer, safer and more united world.

In order to draw all the consequences of those strategic orientations and to mainstream them into all relevant European policies, the European Council asked the incoming Presidency and the SG/HR, in coordination with the Commission, to present, as appropriate, concrete proposals for the implementation of the European security strategy. Initial work would include effective multilateralism with the UN at its core, the fight against terrorism, a strategy towards the region of the Middle East and a comprehensive policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In this context, the European Council adopted the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which is a crucial element of the security strategy.

ESDP

The European Council also endorsed the regular report on ESDP as well as the work programme for the incoming Presidency. It welcomed the progress achieved in the development of military and civilian capabilities for crisis management. It expressed satisfaction at the positive conduct of ESDP operations undertaken so far.

The European Council confirmed the EU's readiness for an ESDP-mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including a military component based on the agreed Berlin Plus arrangements. The European Council welcomed NATO's readiness to start consultations with the EU. It invited the incoming Presidency and the SG/HR to take the matter forward in accordance with agreed procedures.

The European Council welcomed the Presidency's document entitled "European defence: NATO/EU consultation, planning and operations". The Secretary-General/High Representative is invited to propose the necessary measures for:

- improvement of the preparation of European Union operations having recourse to Nato assets and capabilities, in accordance with the guidelines contained in the reference document;
- establishment of a cell with civil/military components to meet the objectives and comply with the principles set out in that document.

These measures should enter into force as early as possible in 2004.
