European security strategy

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PURPOSE : to report on the results of a study into the creation of a "European Security Research Programme" ESRP.

CONTENT : in light of the changing security situation in Europe the Commission initiated the convening of a "Group of Personalities in the field of security research". The primary mission of this Group was to proposes principles and priorities of a "European Security Research Programme" ESRP. A report entitled "Research for a Secure Europe" was presented by the Group in March 2004, in which the establishment of an ESRP was recommended.

The basic thrust for the development of an ESRP is based on the assumption that emerging security threats ignore state borders and target European interests both within and outside the territory of the EU. In order to address the fluid nature of recent security threats Europe needs to harness the combined strengths of relevant industry and research groups to effectively address future security challenges. In addressing emerging security challenges, technology plays a key role. Yet, if Europe is to effectively tap into the technology potential for combating security threats, it needs to overcome current structural and functional deficiencies – most notably through reducing fragmentation and duplication of effort, by increasing co-operation and achieving standardisation and interoperability. The Commission Report suggests that a coherent security research programme at the level of the European Union could add significant value to the optimal use of a highly competent European industry. The research conducted should be capability driven, targeted at the development of inter-operable systems, products and services designed to protect European citizens, territory and critical infrastructures as well as for peacekeeping activities. Other areas covered could include security of the energy supply as well as transport.

At the same time as setting up the ESRP account must be taken of respect for human rights, privacy, social and community cohesion and the successful integration of minority communities.

In terms of the Group of Personalities findings, they make the following recommendations:

- The establishment of an ESRP from 2007 onwards. The focus of the research group should be internal security and should be funded by an annual budget of EUR 1 billion. The ESRP should be additional to the EU Research Framework Programme, national or other intergovernmental sources.

- The creation of a "European Security Research Advisory Board" to define strategic lines of action, user involvement, mechanisms for implementation and a strategic research agenda for the ESRP.

- The need for greater co-operation between the EU institutions and other stakeholders.

In summary, the Commission subscribes to the main thrust of the recommendations and orientations of the recommendations presented by the Group. Based on this conclusion the Commission will:

- Consult and co-operate with the main stakeholders through the creation of a "European Security Research Advisory Board" by Autumn 2004.

- Recommend the creation of a "European Security Research Programme" by 2007. The Commission notes that security research has been included in the Communication of the Financial Perspectives of the EU for 2007-2013. Note, the ESRP should be implemented as a specific research programme with its own set of procedures (adapted to confidentiality requirements) rules for participation, contracts and funding

arrangements. The Commission further accepts that ESRP funding should be additional to any financing ensured today by the Community Research Framework Programme, national or other inter-governmental sources.

- Ensure that the ESRP will be compatible with the EU's CFSP and ESDP as well as other relevant Commission policies associated with internal security are fully taken into account in the development of security research.

- Establish the best mechanisms to ensure the effective management of the ESRP – such as flexible contracts, participation and funding.