The implementation of the European Security Strategy in the context of the European Security and Defence Policy ESPD

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The Council adopted the following conclusions on developments relating to ESDP:

Civilian Capabilities: The Council attaches considerable importance to the continued efforts of the civilian ESDP missions, demand for which continues to grow. As a result further support was given to the objectives set out in the "Civilian Headline Goal 2008." Further, the Council welcomed the Civilian Capabilities Improvement Conference; the Ministerial Declaration and the 2006 Progress Report.

Military capabilities: The Council noted with satisfaction progress on a qualitative approach to capability planning as set out in the "Headline Goal 2010". It also made note of the Force Catalogue 2006, which sets out the capabilities and required capabilities of the Member Stats' forces. The forces contribution of the acceding members are presented in supplement to the FC 06. A further supplement to the FC06 will include contributions from non-EU European NATO members and of other countries which are EU member candidates. In 2007, a Progress Catalogue, containing a comprehensive assessment of EU military capabilities and capacity will be finalised.

Rapid Reaction: By January 2007, the EU will be capable of undertaking two battle group size operations for the purposes of a rapid response. This will include the ability to launch two such operations simultaneously. The Council noted with satisfaction that the Member States have fulfilled the required commitments up to and including 2008 and look forward to additional offers for solving the vacant slot in the first half of 2009. On the matter of a maritime dimension to the ESDP, the Council noted the ongoing work on the EU maritime forces in ESDP missions and their use in a rapid response capacity. Beyond the framework of Rapid Response,, the Council welcomed the on-going work on the interlinked issues of mission spectrum and the future tasks of maritime forces in the context of the ESDP missions.

European Defence Agency: The Council made note of a report submitted by the Head of the Agency on its activities and welcomed the results achieved. In particular, the Council noted: the endorsement of "an initial long-term vision for European defence capabilities and capacity needs"; the inauguration of the voluntary regime on defence procurement and its successful implementation and the code of best practice in supply chain; the agreed definition of a future European Defence Technological and Industrial Base; the adoption of a Defence R & T Joint Investment Programme on Force Protection; and good progress on the Agency's management of a growing number of collaborative ad hoc projects. The Council agreed to postpone by another year the setting of the Agency's three-year financial framework and adopted, by unanimity, the Agency's budget for 2007.

Strengthening Civil-military co-ordination: The Council welcomed the on-going work to improve effective co-ordination of the civilian and military crisis management instruments. The Council remarked upon recent work on improving information sharing in support of EU crisis management operations. The objective being to achieve a high degree of common situational awareness among EU actors as this constitutes an important element in ensuring that EU crisis management efforts are coherent and effective.

Using military assets in support of EU disaster relief: The Council welcomed work on improving the EU's ability to respond to disasters quickly. Work is taking place in the context of the Hampton Court follow-up and the proposals put forward by the SG/HR in March 2006. The Council recalled that helping citizens in an emergency, crisis or disaster required rapid and effective delivery assistance.