

## RECOMMENDATION 762

### *on network-centric operations: European capabilities*

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering that the evolution of European defence is closely linked to development and enhancement of the national capabilities of the European states that are WEU, NATO and EU members;
- (ii) Stressing the reforms and efforts to adapt undertaken by those states since the end of the cold war so as to be in a position to respond to the new security and defence challenges in Europe and worldwide;
- (iii) Noting the progress achieved in the area of the EU's European Security and Defence Policy since the decisions taken by the European Council in Cologne and Helsinki in 1999, and welcoming in particular:
  - the setting up of structures for political and military decision-making and for the conduct of operations;
  - the achievement of the 1999 Headline Goal and the fact that a start has been made on the implementation of the Headline Goal 2010;
  - the launch and revision of the European Capability Action Plan (ECAP);
  - the creation of the European Defence Agency (EDA);
  - the formation of battlegroups;
  - the European Union operations in Africa (Artemis) in 2003 and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Althea) in 2004;
- (iv) Noting the reforms undertaken by NATO since 1990 the better to respond to post-cold war crises and conflicts and strengthen transatlantic ties;
- (v) Concerned by the growing gulf between the military doctrines and defence-related technologies of Europe and the United States;
- (vi) Stressing the need for European forces to maintain and increase their level of interoperability with US forces, necessary for NATO or coalition operations;
- (vii) Emphasising the important role, in this context, of new information and communications technology (ICT) as applied to defence;
- (viii) Considering that the concept of network-centric operations arising out of this development presents the defence capabilities of European nations with both an opportunity and a major challenge, at national level as in multinational institutional frameworks or in coalitions of the willing;
- (ix) Taking the view that setting up national network-centric capabilities is a first essential step in that development process and in the transformation of the armed forces;
- (x) Considering that European nations must work together on developing and implementing a common concept to increase their interoperability and the effectiveness of action taken under the ESDP or in NATO;
- (xi) Considering that any European network-centric capability must be based from the outset on a process of identifying operational need and on the current state of play in European countries of RT&D (research, technology and development) in the relevant field;
- (xii) Highlighting the significant contribution, past and present, made by WEAG (the Western European Armaments Group) and WEAO (the Western European Armaments Organisation) to the success of that process;

- (xiii) Expecting the European Defence Agency, having inherited WEAG *acquis*, to be in a position to give more active encouragement to work on network-centric concepts in relation to operational command and control (C2) procedures and on associated communications and UAV technology;
- (xiv) Taking the view that the gap, in terms of technology, doctrine and above all assets, between European and American forces is not conducive to the transposition of the US model to Europe;
- (xv) Stressing the need to maintain a sufficient degree of European autonomy in network-centric capabilities to avoid increasing Europe's dependence on US concepts and technology, while at the same time seeking to reinforce the degree of transatlantic interoperability in that sphere;
- (xvi) Considering that a substantial financial investment must be made in developing the technologies essential to the provision of national and European C4ISTAR<sup>1</sup> capabilities;
- (xvii) Considering that resources must also be allocated proportionately to recruitment, training and to retaining within the armed forces the staff who operate, make use of and depend on those systems in the theatre of operations;
- (xviii) Taking the view that the development of network-centric capabilities in Europe also depends on the general level of education, research and technological development in European societies, an area that falls within the field of action and responsibility of national parliaments,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL INVITE THE WEU MEMBER STATES AS MEMBERS OF THE EU TO:

1. Maintain and as far as possible increase defence RT&D investment, in particular in C4ISTAR technology;
2. Deepen the regular exchange of information and experience, bilaterally, in NATO and in the EU, and also through WEAO, on the state of play and technological development in regard to national projects on network-centric capabilities;
3. Cooperate with a view to developing and implementing concepts for shared or interoperable network-centric operations and capabilities, so as to maintain operational cohesion and coherency in multinational or coalition-based operations;
4. Seek, as a matter of priority, European solutions, technologies and products, so as to strengthen the defence industrial and technology base, both national and European, without which there will not be European autonomy in this sphere;
5. Cooperate with the United States at bilateral and multilateral levels in regard to network-centric capabilities and operations, so as to benefit from its experience and technology with a view to maintaining and strengthening transatlantic ties;
6. Seek, within the framework of transatlantic cooperation, to maintain a balance between the need for interoperability and the political requirement of strategic and operational autonomy that is the hallmark of the ESDP;
7. Engage more actively in the Alliance framework and in the EU, in particular through ECAP and EDA project groups, with the armed forces transformation process, leading to a shared European vision of the goals to be attained and the stages to be completed towards them;
8. Make the European Defence Agency (EDA) the framework for the definition of European network-centric technology required for ESDP missions and for interoperability with NATO, and provide the Agency with adequate funds to launch R&T programmes in that area;

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<sup>1</sup> Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

9. Support armed forces transformation with adequate spending at both national and multilateral level, paying particular attention to human resource management;
10. Keep the Assembly better informed about WEAO R&T work on C4ISTAR capabilities and activities undertaken by the EDA in conjunction with the Research Cell or based on work done by the latter.