

Council statement following the Police Capabilities Commitment Conference (Brussels, 19 November 2001)

Caption: On 19 November 2001, following its meeting attended by the Ministers responsible for police matters, the General Affairs Council approves a declaration on the quantitative and qualitative commitments made by the Member States at the Ministerial Conference with regard to the objective of building up the European Union police capacity for crisis-management operations.

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General Affairs Council attended by the European Union Ministers responsible for police (Brussels, 19 November 2001)

Police Capabilities Commitment Conference Statement

1. Successive European Councils have reaffirmed their commitment to developing the civil and military resources and capabilities required to enable the Union to take and implement decisions on the full range of conflict prevention and crisis management missions defined in the Treaty on European Union, the so-called « Petersberg tasks ». The Union will thus be able to make a greater contribution to international security in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. The Union recognises the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

2. In the field of civilian capabilities, the European Council at Feira identified four priority areas of work: police, strengthening the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection. Recognising the central role of police in international crisis management operations, and the increasing need for police officers for such operations, EU Member States, cooperating voluntarily have set themselves concrete targets on overall EU capabilities, rapid deployment capability and raising standards for international police missions. In particular, Member States agreed that by 2003 they should, as a final objective, be able to provide up to 5,000 police officers for international missions across the range of crisis prevention and crisis management operations, and in response to specific needs at the different stages of these operations. Within this target for overall EU capabilities, Member States also undertook to be able to identify and deploy up to 1,000 police officers within 30 days.

3. The police capabilities the EU is developing will increase and improve the effectiveness of the Union's capacity to respond to crises. This will enable the EU to provide support to UN and OSCE-led police operations as well as conduct EU-led autonomous operations. The European Union will ensure that its own efforts and those of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe are consistent and mutually reinforcing, without any unnecessary duplication.

4. A Police Capabilities Commitment Conference at Ministerial level took place in Brussels on 19 November 2001 in order to draw together the national commitments to meet the police capabilities goals set by the Feira European Council. The Conference also considered current and future work on the implementation of the Police Action Plan adopted at the European Council in Göteborg, as a follow-up to the Presidency Conference of National Police Commissioners which took place on 10 May 2001.

5. At the Conference, Member States on a voluntary basis have made the following quantitative and qualitative commitments to build up the EU police capacity for crisis management operations. In doing so, they contribute to the creation of a new and essential capacity for crisis management, capable of covering the full range of police missions identified by the European Councils of Nice and Göteborg, i.e. from training, advisory and monitoring missions to executive missions. The targets set at Feira have therefore been met.

(a) Quantitative aspects

With regard to the overall objective, Member States have undertaken to provide 5,000 police officers by 2003.

With regard to the objective of deploying police officers within thirty days, Member States have undertaken to provide up to 1,400 police officers by 2003.

As part of their commitments, some Member States have undertaken to provide rapidly deployable, integrated and interoperable police units.

(b) Qualitative aspects

With regard to the qualitative aspects, the two types of mission – strengthening of, and substituting for local police forces – draw on all specialist policing functions available in Member States. The capabilities are committed on the basis of individual police officers or integrated police units. The latter can constitute an efficient asset in the early stages of complex situations as identified at the Nice European Council.

The police capabilities committed comprise both police forces with civil status and police forces with military status of gendarmerie type. This diversity is a qualitative asset for the European Union. In the case of an operation involving military and police components, the EU's action on Petersberg-tasks requires a strong synergy between the police and the military components of such an operation. On the ground, this will be ensured by close coordination between the two components, taking into account the constraints on the deployment of Member States police forces.

The Union will thus be able to achieve or provide the full range of police missions, at various stages of crisis management and conflict prevention. These missions, in close conjunction with missions aimed at strengthening the rule of law, can contribute positively to the securing of a democratic society, respectful of human rights and liberties.

6. Member States, on the basis of the work of the Police Unit in the Council Secretariat, have taken forward implementation of the Police Action Plan, adopted at the European Council of Göteborg. The Commitment Conference welcomed the considerable progress made so far on qualitative requirements on training and selection criteria, as well as on guidelines for command and control and for interoperability, and looked forward to further work in these areas.

The Commitment Conference stressed the importance of providing adequate resources to the Police Unit, in particular to ensure rapid implementation of the Police Action Plan. The Police Unit was established to give the EU the ability to plan and conduct police operations (including through integrated planning and coordination, situation assessment, preparation of exercises and preparation of legal frameworks and rules).

At the European Council in Nice it was agreed that the contribution of non-EU Member States to the EU's crisis management operations, in particular in EU police missions, will be given favourable consideration, in accordance with procedures to be determined.

The European Council in Göteborg then adopted guiding principles and modalities for contributions of non-EU states to EU police missions.

Therefore, the interest shown by non-EU States in the area of EU crisis management operations with civilian means, and the contributions they might be willing to offer are warmly welcomed. The meeting on 20 November with non-EU European NATO members and other countries which are candidates for accession to the EU will present an opportunity to inform these countries of progress made in the area of police, to learn about their own efforts in this regard, and for those who wish to do so, to indicate their readiness to make supplementary contributions to police missions carried out by the EU.