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Policy document

A more Ambitious and Expanded Framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue

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1. NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue was initiated in 1994 with the broad objectives of contributing to regional security and stability, achieving better mutual understanding and dispelling any misconceptions between NATO and its Mediterranean partners. Since then, the Dialogue has evolved at a steady pace in accordance with its progressive character. The number of participating countries has increased from the original five to today's seven while the Dialogue's political and practical dimensions have been regularly enhanced.



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2. In the current security environment, and taking into consideration the need to tackle successfully today's challenges and threats including terrorism, there are greater opportunities for effective cooperation with Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) partners. Consequently, at their December 2003 meeting in Brussels NATO Foreign Ministers looked for additional progress beyond that achieved since the Prague Summit in upgrading the MD. They directed the Council Permanent Session to consider ways to further enhance NATO's relations with all MD partners by generating, in consultation with them and by the time of the Istanbul Summit, options for establishing a more ambitious and expanded framework for the MD.

Principles, objectives and priority areas

3. In this process, the following principles should be taken into account:

- the mutually beneficial nature of the relationship;
 - the need to take forward the process in close consultation with countries;
 - the importance of being responsive to MD countries' interests and needs;
 - the possibility of self-differentiation, while preserving the unity of the MD and its non-discriminatory character;
 - the need to focus on practical cooperation in areas where NATO can add value;
 - the need to ensure complementarity of this effort with the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, as well as with other international efforts, especially those of the EU, OSCE and the G-8 as appropriate;
 - the possibility of expanding the MD to other interested countries in the Mediterranean region on a case-by-case basis;

4. Based on these principles, NATO offers to elevate the MD to a genuine partnership whose overall aim will be to contribute towards regional security, stability and complement other international efforts through enhanced practical cooperation, and whose objectives would include:

- enhancing the existing political dialogue;
- achieving interoperability;
- developing defence reform;
- contributing to the fight against terrorism.

5. The above-mentioned objectives could be achieved through enhanced cooperation in the following priority areas:

- putting into action a joint effort aimed at better explaining NATO transformation and cooperative efforts;
- promoting military-to-military cooperation to achieve interoperability through active participation in selected military exercises and related education and training activities that could improve the ability of Mediterranean partners' forces to operate with those of the Alliance contributing to NATO-led operations consistent with the UN Charter. These could include non-Article 5 crisis response operations such as disaster relief, humanitarian relief, search and rescue, peace support operations, and others as may subsequently be decided;
- promoting democratic control of armed forces and facilitating transparency in national defence planning and defence budgeting in support of defence reform;
- combating terrorism including effective intelligence sharing and major cooperation including in the framework of Operation Active Endeavour;
- contributing to the work of the Alliance on threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery;
- promoting cooperation as appropriate and where NATO can add value in the field of border security, particularly in connection with terrorism, arms & light weapons, and the fight against illegal trafficking;
- enhancing cooperation in the area of civil emergency planning including the possibility for Mediterranean partners to request assistance from the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).

A more ambitious and expanded framework for the MD

6. Based on the above-mentioned principles, objectives and priority areas, a more ambitious and expanded framework for the MD should be developed by building upon the current MD programme including the inventory of possible areas of practical cooperation established at the Prague Summit, and by making extensive use of lessons learned and, as appropriate, tools from PfP with special emphasis on enhanced practical cooperation.

7. In addition to consultations at working and Ambassadorial levels in the 26+1 and 26+7, the political dimension should be further enhanced through inclusion of ad-hoc ministerial/HOSG meetings. Furthermore, at the earliest appropriate time, a joint political declaration with all MD countries could be developed in support of practical cooperation in the above-mentioned priority areas.

areas.

8. The practical dimension should be further enhanced through greater emphasis on practical cooperation. In addition to existing MD tools such as the annual Work Programme, the possibility of support through NATO Trust Funds in accordance with the NATO/PfP Trust Fund policy and participation in countries like the NATO School and the NATO Defence College, a number of PfP and PfP-like tools could apply to the new initiative. These could include:

- action plans covering a wide range of issues that would form the basic practical, issue-specific and result-oriented cooperation available to Mediterranean partners;
- individual cooperation programmes allowing for self-differentiation;
- the use of existing PfP activities and tools to improve the ability of Alliance and Mediterranean partners' forces to operate together in future NATO-led operations, including in the areas of capabilities, education, training, and exercise activities;
- enhanced participation, on a case-by-case basis, in appropriate PfP exercises;
- the use of existing PfP programmes and instruments aimed at cooperation in all the priority areas listed in para. 5 as well as in the area of science and the environment.

9. This should be complemented by the intensification of practical cooperation areas currently open to EAPC/PfP countries, with special emphasis on interoperability, defence reform, the fight against terrorism, and other activities aimed at ensuring effective partners' participation in NATO-led operations.

Other considerations

10. Appropriate legal arrangements may be needed to facilitate full and effective participation of Mediterranean partners. Security agreements may also be needed.

11. Consideration should be given to the possible setting up of appropriate liaison at NATO HQ and the Partnership Coordination Cell (PCC) at Mons in order to enhance coordination of activities, especially in the military field.

12. Regarding the possible expansion of the MD to other interested countries in the region, the progressive character of the MD makes it possible to add new members on a case-by-case basis, as has been the case with Jordan (1995) and Algeria (2000).

1. Interoperability requirements constitute firm prerequisites for contributing nations such as the need to communicate with each other, to operate together, to support each other, and to train together.

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