

**MY LETTER TO DR SOLANA, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON
FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
ON 13 DECEMBER 2002**

Thank you for your letter of 13 December 2002. The NAC has today approved the following decisions.

NAC DECISION SHEET

1. The Council wishes to continue a close and transparent relationship between NATO and the EU, and stands ready to support EU-led operations in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily in accordance with the decisions taken at the Washington Summit and subsequent Ministerial meetings. All Allies reiterate their commitment to ESDI and the strengthening of the European pillar of the Alliance. We welcome and look forward to the full implementation of the document "ESDP: Implementation of the Nice Provisions on the involvement of the non-EU European Allies" agreed by the EU which thus resolves the participation issue to the satisfaction of all Allies. On that basis, the Council undertakes fully to facilitate and support the continuing development of the EU's ESDP in a manner that strengthens the Alliance as well.
2. The Council is determined speedily to conclude the detailed arrangements for implementing each of the elements of Berlin Plus, as well as of all other outstanding issues concerning NATO-EU relations, in accordance with NATO's Washington Summit decisions and taking account of relevant conclusions of the Nice European Council. We look forward to achieving a comprehensive settlement of the relations between the two organisations. As agreed by our Foreign Ministers in Brussels on 15 December 2000, we look forward to the compilation of the results of this multi-faceted work in a framework agreement to be formalised with the EU, without prejudice to the decisions mentioned below.

3. We are now in a position to give the EU ready access to the collective assets and capabilities of the Alliance for operations in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily. To that end, we have today taken the following decisions:
- NATO-EU strategic cooperation and the implementation of Berlin Plus arrangements will be confined to NATO members and those non-NATO EU members that have subscribed to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Framework Document, thus becoming a party to the PfP, and that have concluded bilateral security agreements with NATO.
 - EU access to NATO planning capabilities able to contribute to military planning for EU-led operations is now assured, effective immediately. Hence, no case-by-case authorisation is required. The NATO Military Authorities are hereby tasked to implement this decision immediately, on the basis of the work that they have undertaken. The EU can rely on the planning capabilities of NATO's military command structure on a permanent and continuous basis. This access covers all forms of operational planning, without exception. Experts from EU Member States wishing to participate will be able to be involved in NATO activities in support of EU planning.
 - NATO capabilities and common assets for use in EU-led operations will rapidly be pre-identified and will be presumed to be available to the EU. NATO and the EU experts will now develop as a matter of urgency, the necessary arrangements for the identification, release, monitoring, return and recall of these capabilities and assets. Decisions for the release of these assets and capabilities will be taken by the NAC and, throughout these EU-led operations, the NAC will be kept informed of their use.
 - Within NATO we shall identify a range of command options for EU-led operations, including further developing the role of DSACEUR to enable him to meet his European responsibilities fully and effectively. Arrangements for doing this will be concluded as a matter of urgency.
 - Work on the further adaptation of NATO's defence planning system to incorporate more comprehensively the availability of forces for EU-led operations shall be expedited. Our aim, together with that of the EU, is to develop the military capabilities required for carrying out the missions envisaged by both organisations in the necessary transparent, open, coherent and cooperative manner.

To that end, we will expedite, in close cooperation with the EU, the finalisation of the arrangements regarding NATO-EU cooperation in capability development and hereby task the International Staff to implement these in close cooperation with the EU. NATO will continue to provide its expertise to the EU in the framework of the Headline Goal Task

Force Plus with the participation of the national experts of those Allies who so wish.

The EU is invited to clarify quickly how the force contributions of non-EU European Allies would be treated in the EU planning process and in EU-led operations.

4. Arrangements for all other outstanding elements of NATO-EU relations will be concluded in parallel as a matter of priority. In particular, we will immediately launch negotiations with the EU to conclude a permanent NATO-EU Security Agreement with a view to its full implementation by 1 March 2003.

Furthermore, our Heads of State and Government agreed at the Prague Summit to plan for a joint exercise with the EU in 2003. In adopting this Decision Sheet, we confirm our view that this joint exercise should take place in November 2003.

5. We undertake to put in place the detailed arrangements necessary for these decisions, both internally and between NATO and the EU, by 1 March 2003. In addition to the agreed meetings between groups of the two organisations, NATO staffs will continue to develop the closest possible contacts with EU staffs in order to facilitate the implementation of these arrangements.