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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations  
Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the **European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE)**, Brussels, 20 March 2012

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The meeting was chaired by Mr Danjean (EPP, FR).

**I. Exchange of views with Alexander Rondos, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa and Rear Admiral Duncan L. Potts, Operation Commander**

Rear Admiral Potts provided Members with an update of the Atalanta operation and shared some thoughts for future. He stressed that during the second half of 2011 the number of vessels attacked by pirates was significantly lower than during the first half. He explained these figures by the increasing recourse by industry to best management practices and private security companies as well as growing Somali government/local action. As a consequence of this, he said that pirates were cash-rich but asset-poor. In his view, the strategic context had changed, though the potential for piracy was still there. Rear Admiral Potts concluded that it was about time to tighten pressure on pirates (targeting their business model particularly) and to work closely with the Somali State in view of the root causes.

EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa Rondos added some political elements to the Rear Admiral's presentation. He recalled the important results of the London conference and underlined the numerous developments on the ground (three main vectors: improving the security situation, local politicians willing to move forward (establishing the administrative structures and the constitutional process) and the humanitarian situation, which was of deep concern. Regarding the latter, Mr Rondos considered that it was time for a mapping exercise for deliverables to the local population. According to him, this would need to be implemented in the framework of a stabilisation package guaranteeing real and visible changes on the ground and thereby creating new incentives, notably for the younger generation. Regarding the constitutional process, he signalled that the final constitution would most likely not be perfect. He hoped however that some benchmarks would be met (federal organisation, degree of autonomy/independence and religious dimension). He concluded by affirming that this year would be decisive.

In response to the presentation by Rear Admiral Potts, some Members (in particular Mr Zemke (S&D, PL) and Ms Cronberg (Greens/EFA, FI)) explicitly welcomed the success of operation Atalanta. Yet the issue of available capabilities raised concerns among many Members. In addition, a number of them asked questions about the extension of the operation's mandate and its extension to land. Other Members (in particular Ms Nicolai (ALDE, RO), Mr Gahler (EPP, DE) and Mr Zemke) put questions on cooperation with non-EU countries and private security companies. The questions put to EU Special Representative Rondos concerned a wide range of fields (e.g. perception of African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), the Transitional Federal Institutions mandate, piracy/terrorism, peace negotiations, etc.)

In reply to the comments and questions, Admiral Potts stressed that food protection was still needed and remained the priority. In this context, he underlined that cooperation with Member States on capabilities was crucial in peak time periods of piracy (operating opportunely). In general, he felt that the capabilities available corresponded to the minimum necessary. Regarding cooperation, he underlined that it was unprecedented, with an excellent exchange of information with Member States leading to very good operational cooperation. As regards Russia and China more specifically, he explained that these countries were more 'flag state organised', which was fundamentally different from the Atalanta operation spirit. He added that cooperation with other third countries had also been enhanced. On cooperation with private security companies, Rear Admiral Potts reported that Atalanta was usually not involved and he recognised that such companies had been shown to be effective, though his standpoint was that this industry needed to be properly regulated.

On the extension of the mandate to land, he once again stressed that the aim should be to disrupt the piracy business model and impunity. He therefore wanted more action (by air) against piracy logistics where these were concentrated; but considered that any such action would need to be fully synchronised with other actions/operations relating to other fields and would have to be screened by the Somali authorities. He added that tolerance for piracy was diminishing among the Somali community and that operation Atalanta was receiving increasing support from Somalia. He refrained from commenting on any question of a political nature, leaving them to Special Representative Rondos. The latter considered that AMISOM was fully aware of the risks of its presence in Somalia and that it had to adapt constantly to the situation on the ground. He expressed the hope that in the future normal politics without arms would be the rule. In this context, the Special Representative said that the end of the Transitional Institutions in August was a target date, although he recognised that by this time there would not be a perfect democracy in place. He added that an agreement on the political framework, including the institutional capacity, should be aimed at for August, as one stage of the consolidation process. He considered that meanwhile it was important to make use of the funds committed, which he qualified as sufficient for the economic and social development of Somalia, although some of these funds might need to be reallocated. As regards piracy, he reported that there were obvious links between piracy and organised crime and that often children had to pay an awful price for their involvement. He added that, even if the issue was to damage piracy at the high level, prisons were still necessary as they were part of the judicial system and the rule of law. He also reported that investigations on piracy money flows were ongoing. Regarding Al Shabaab, he said that there were indications of a growing number of members wishing to leave the organisation but the core was still there. Special Representative Rondos took the view that there should be talks with anyone willing to renounce violence.

## **II. Libya: lessons learned for European military capabilities - Exchange of views with Major General Marcel Druart, Director of Operations**

Major General Druart made a presentation, which highlighted notes taken by NATO regarding operation Unified Protector (OUP), which he considered had been very successful (flexible timely response, consensus among NATO members and security of civilian population). In this context, he also considered that the OUP was an encouragement for NATO to continue its cooperation with other actors. He stressed the importance of the comprehensive approach and Intelligence /Security/ Recognition (ISR) and targeting tools. In this context, he stressed that NATO was making efficient use of the capabilities, but they were not however equally shared out among the partners.

Major General Druart also stressed that the OUP had inflicted minimum collateral damage. He considered that the new NATO command structure would contribute to even better functioning of NATO operations in the future. He wrapped up its presentation by stating that lessons still had to be learnt from the OUP.

In general, Members explicitly welcomed the conduct of the OUP and its results. Questions put to Major General Druart related mainly to capabilities (EU/US, ownership and availability) and burden sharing. Other questions concerned the OUP command chain, the assessment of collateral damage, the relationship with the press during the operation, reparation for victims of air strikes, etc.

In reply to the comments and questions, Major General Druart reported that the EU side was short of drones; consequently they were provided in large numbers by the US, and the same applied to ISR platforms and targeting tools. He was however not concerned about future NATO capabilities. He supported the concept of 'pooling and sharing', which would nevertheless require a certain level of trust between the partners. As regards the command chain, he was of the view that a distinction had to be made between the politico-military level and the purely military operational side. He admitted that at the beginning of the OUP the command chain might have been a bit slow, but at operational level there was hardly any difference in terms of pace with a purely national operation. On the issue of collateral damage, he explained that it was based on very restrictive procedures and also depended on pilots' training. These parameters had produced very limited collateral damage according to different sources. He also pointed out that NATO could not rely on personnel on the ground to evaluate the damage caused.

As regards the situation in Libya after the OUP, he said that it was largely the responsibility of the international community and the Libyans. He explained that compensation for victims of air strikes was a political affair and the issue was currently being dealt with by the Libyan authorities. On the press relationship, he explained that at the beginning of the operation it was difficult to get staff prepared to liaise with the press.

### **III. Date and place of the next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 25 April (p.m.) and 26 April 2012 (a.m.) in Brussels.