

OBSERVATORY ON **IAI** EUROPEAN DEFENCE

MARCH 2014

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

MARCH 28

The North Atlantic Council has decided to appoint Mr. Jens Stoltenberg as the next NATO Secretary General. The former Norway's Prime Minister will assume his functions from 1 October 2014, as the current Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen steps down, once his mandate expires, after 5 years and 2 months at the lead of NATO. Mr. Stoltenberg, leader of the Norwegian Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet, AP), was Prime Minister of Norway from 2000 to 2001 and again from 2005 to 2013.

MARCH 5

THE EU COUNCIL AUTHORISES MEMBER STATES TO RATIFY THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

In adopting this decision the Council is completing the EU's internal procedures for the adoption of the Treaty, following the approval of the European Parliament on 5 February 2014. Given that the Arms Trade Treaty covers some areas of EU exclusive competence, authorization by the Council was a necessary condition for the ratification by the EU member states. The Treaty was adopted by the UN General Assembly in April 2013 and will enter into force upon the 50th ratification.

MARCH 5

NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL MEETING

"Russia's actions have consequences". This is how the NATO Secretary General sets out the position of the Atlantic Alliance about Ukraine. During the Press Conference held following the NATO-Russia Council Meeting, Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated also that the entire range of NATO-Russian cooperation is under review. NATO Foreign Ministers will take decisions on this in early April.

Furthermore, the Secretary General delineated a number of immediate steps that NATO is willing to take in response to the continuous Russian violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russian participation to operations for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons is suspended and no staff-level civilian or military meetings with Russia will take place for now. Despite the pause in military relations, Rasmussen acknowledged there is a "door open for political dialogue".

7 MARCH

NEW EUROPEAN ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

Following the invitation issued by the Independent Election Commission and the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union has launched a new electoral observation mission. Through the creation of the EU Election Assessment Team (EU EAT), the EU evaluates the Presidential and Provincial Councils elections scheduled on 5 April 2014.

MARCH 14

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FIRST GERMAN-NETHERLANDS CORPS (GNC)

The new Agreement builds on the cooperation which began on 9 September 2013 by Germany and Netherland and succeeded, through its signature, in connecting the first GNC and the NCI Agency in a Strategic Partnership. The multiyear project will provide the GNC with a mission network, fully loaded with core and functional services, including the implementation of Land Command & Control Information Systems (LC2IS). This Strategic Partnership takes advantage of the ISAF experience and aims to improve land force interoperability.

MARCH 17

EU STRATEGY ON THE GULF OF GUINEA

Recognizing the importance of EU relations with West and Central Africa, the Council has adopted an EU strategy on the Gulf of Guinea to support the efforts of the region and its coastal states to tackle the challenges of maritime insecurity and organized crime. This strategy can be considered as part of the wider European comprehensive approach to the region, having the scope of overcoming poverty and attaining lasting security and prosperity. The EU Strategy builds upon the momentum, created by the Heads of State of the region at their Summit in Yaoundé, June 2013, and seeks to provide support the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC).

MARCH 20

EU LAUNCHES AN ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

Upon invitation by the National Election Commission, the European Union has launched an Election Observation Mission to supervise the Presidential and Legislative Elections in Guinea-Bissau on 13 April 2014.

MARCH 20

EU COUNCIL STRENGTHENS SANCTIONS AGAINST MOSCOW

In line with the decisions endorsed by the EU Heads of State or Government on 5 March, the Council supports the decision of the European Members of the G8 and the EU institutions to suspend their participation in G8 Summit scheduled in Sochi in June 2014, and expresses its support to the organization of the G7 summit in Aja. Furthermore, the Council has agreed to expand the list of individuals responsible for actions which undermine or threaten the respect of human rights, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine as well as persons and entities associated with them. The sanctions entered into force with the adoption of the Council Decision 2014/119/CFSP target these persons with a travel ban and a freeze of their assets within the EU. The Council also support the suspension of negotiations over Russia's joining the OECD and IEA.

MARCH 21

NEW HEAD OF MISSION FOR THE EUTM MALI

General Marc Rudkiewicz has been appointed new Mission Commander for the EU training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), which supports the restructuration and the reorganization of the Malian Armed Forces through training and advice. An extension of the mission's mandate beyond May 2014 has also been announced.

MARCH 31

FIRST EUROPEAN AIR-TO-AIR REFUELING TRAINING

Between 31 March and 11 April, aircraft and crews from Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands will participate to the first European Air-to-Air Refuelling training mission. The training will take place at the Eindhoven Air Base, in Netherlands. The exercise has been developed by the European Defence Agency (EDA) in close cooperation with the European Air Transport Command (EATC) and the Dutch armed forces.