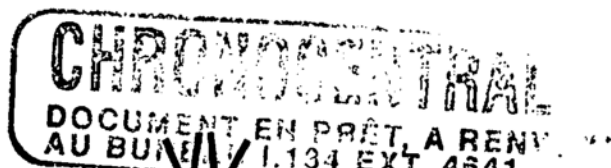


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EAPC

Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council



CPEA

Conseil de Partenariat Euro-Atlantique

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**CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE EURO-ATLANTIC
PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL IN DEFENCE MINISTERS SESSION**

BRUSSELS, 2 DECEMBER 2003

1. Defence Ministers and Representatives of the member countries of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) met in Brussels today. Ministers discussed the Partnership's continuing adaptation in general and took stock of the progress achieved of the Prague Summit decisions on a set of measures to invigorate and adapt the Partnership.
2. Ministers agreed that the implementation was well on track. They emphasised that the Istanbul Summit would be an important milestone for the further development and consolidation of the ongoing adaptations to the Partnership. Ministers noted with satisfaction that in taking forward the transformation of the Alliance's procedures and structures, measures would be taken to ensure that Partnership issues are dealt with as an integral part of NATO's core business.
3. Ministers had a comprehensive exchange of views about Partner needs and ways to assist them in taking forward their internal reform processes. They assessed how Partnership instruments, including the newly introduced Individual Partnership Action Plans, could contribute to assist interested Partners, in particular in Central Asia and the Caucasus, in their efforts to reform their overall defence and security structures.
4. Ministers appreciated the important contributions by Partner countries to the current NATO-led operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. Ministers also shared lessons learned and their expectations on the use of Partnership tools to meet current security challenges such as terrorism. They deliberated on how the Partnership could be re-focused with a view to the wider interoperability requirements emanating from such challenges. In this context, Ministers noted the progress made so far with the implementation of the Prague decisions in general and on the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism in particular. With a view of further enhancing interoperability and increasing Partners' association with NATO structures and decision-making, Ministers welcomed ongoing considerations on offering increased opportunities for Partner personnel in NATO civilian and military structures.
5. Ministers had a substantial exchange of views on NATO's evolving role in Afghanistan and how Partnership could contribute to the overarching aim of ensuring security in the context of the Bonn process for promoting stability in Afghanistan. They re-affirmed the commitments made already to ISAF and considered implications for a progressively wider mandate beyond Kabul.

6. In addition to the full report on the implementation of the Prague decisions on the adaptation of the EAPC and PfP, Ministers considered a number of reports on various aspects of cooperation in the EAPC/PfP framework.

7. Looking ahead, Ministers emphasised that the ongoing adaptation of the Partnership should be mainly focused on the two aims of:

- contributing to international stability by providing interested Partners with advice on, and assistance in, the defence and security-related aspects of their domestic reform process; and,
- preparing interested Partners for, and engaging in, NATO-led operations and activities, including those related to the response to terrorism.

Ministers pledged their continuing full support for the further development and full implementation of the Partnership measures agreed at Prague and underlined their readiness to contribute in this respect to the preparations for the Istanbul Summit.