

*Speech by Mr Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
delivered by His Excellency Mr Gunnar Lund, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in France,  
representing the incoming Swedish EU Presidency,  
3 June 2009*

Thank you, Mr President, for your warm welcome. I very much appreciate it.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to be here and to speak before this distinguished audience this afternoon. As was said, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mr Carl Bildt, is unfortunately unable to be present here today. He is very sorry about that and I apologise to Mr Pangalos and others for whom I may seem a source of great disappointment, but I do represent Sweden and I will be telling you a few things about our planned presidency of the European Union – an issue of some importance, I submit.

There are only a few weeks left before the start of the Swedish Presidency, which begins on 1 July. The first time Sweden held the presidency of the EU was in 2001. Since then, we have witnessed remarkable development, both within the EU and at global level. The EU today consists of 27 member states, with a different dynamic and a strengthened role on the international scene. A number of instruments have been developed to reinforce the capacity of the Union to contribute to international peace and security.

At global level, we face a number of new or heightened challenges, as was pointed out in Javier Solana's report on Implementation of the European Security Strategy, adopted under the French Presidency. Climate change, energy security, cyber security and piracy are some of the challenges mentioned in that report. These old and new challenges call for a well-coordinated and effective response on the part of the EU.

The six-month programme of the Swedish EU Presidency will soon be published. At this point, I can say that strengthening the EU as a global actor will be one of the issues high on our agenda. In that context, the European Security and Defence Policy plays a central role. As the Assembly may be aware, Sweden has been strongly committed to the development of the ESDP since its inception. That active engagement should be seen in the light of our long tradition of contributing to international peace support operations, notably within the framework of the United Nations.

It is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Security and Defence Policy and that gives us an opportunity to look back and summarise the verdict. There have been impressive developments in capabilities and civilian and military operations. With over 20 missions and operations launched, the EU has made, and is making, an important contribution to international peace and security, often in close cooperation with the United Nations.

Looking to the future is more important. How can we further develop the ESDP to make the EU more effective and capable as a global actor? We must continue to work on the improvement of capabilities, both civilian and military, to ensure that we have the right assets available at the right time. The French Presidency contributed to a renewed impetus for the ESDP, with the Capability Declaration as part of the conclusions at the European Council in December 2008. The Capability Declaration is important for the development of civilian capabilities. The Czech Presidency has done important work in following up on these commitments and has paved the way for the continued development of civilian and military capabilities.

The Swedish Presidency will contribute to the development of civilian and military capabilities based on the work carried out by previous presidencies as well as work done by the European Defence Agency (EDA) and within the context of the Military and Civilian Headline Goals 2010. On the civilian side, the supply of personnel will be the priority in view of the continued challenge of providing operations with a sufficient number of qualified personnel. We must build on good practice in different member states, recognising that different systems may look different. The Folke Bernadotte academy in Sweden is one such example.

We must continue to work on the commitment to civilian crisis management and the supply of personnel in member states. National strategies play an important role in this regard. We must also

ensure that we build on experience and make good use of lessons learned from operations. Mission support, training and civilian-military cooperation are other important issues on the agenda.

On the military side, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the use of battlegroups, potentially a very useful tool for supporting international peace and security. Battlegroups also play an important role in the transformation of the armed forces in many countries. However, as you will be aware, the battlegroups have not yet been used. During the Swedish Presidency we would like to initiate an open discussion about the usability and flexibility of battlegroups without changing the concept. How can we encourage a more flexible view on the use of battlegroups? Could we use battlegroups as a strategic reserve? Could we use part of a battlegroup in force generation? How could we encourage cooperation and the exchange of information between different battlegroups? How do we ensure that the battlegroups have the right capabilities?

In the military field, Sweden will also look more closely into maritime surveillance. The EDA is managing a project on a recognised maritime picture, which is highly relevant in this regard. Admittedly, it is a complex domain that requires a well-coordinated approach with the involvement and support of the member states, the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and the agencies. There are obvious synergies between military and civilian maritime surveillance and a need for close cooperation in order to avoid duplication.

In addition, there is a need for continued work to promote a more competitive and innovative defence industry. Important initiatives have been taken by the EDA and the European Commission, creating the basis for the continued development of the European defence industry. Sweden supports this work and will focus on transparency and harmonisation to achieve the level playing field and a stronger European Defence and Industrial Technological Base.

Let me briefly address some of the operations that will call for our attention during the Swedish Presidency. The EU's first maritime operation, Atalanta, off the coast of Somalia – with a primary objective of enabling World Food Programme humanitarian deliveries to reach the Somali population – will be evaluated in June during the Czech Presidency. This will be an opportunity for the EU to engage in a discussion on the future of the mission, a mission that should be seen in the broader context of the situation in Somalia. During the Swedish Presidency, the EU will continue the important discussion on the future of the military operation EUFOR Althea and the police mission EUPM in Bosnia with a view to contributing, in concert, with a wide-ranging EU engagement to a peaceful and democratic development in that country.

The mandate for EUFOR Tchad/RCA was concluded this spring. The operation has played an important role in providing stability to the region. The evaluation process of the lessons learned has begun and will be concluded during the Swedish Presidency.

On civilian operations, the rule of law mission EULEX in Kosovo is a key operation for the EU. During the Swedish Presidency, continued efforts will be made in order fully to staff the mission. It is of great importance that the mission is able to show results in all areas of operation and thereby contribute to a sustainable economic and political development in Kosovo.

The EU police mission in Afghanistan, EUPOL Afghanistan, focuses on the establishment of sustainable and effective police arrangements. The mission should be seen in the broader context of the contribution of the international community to a stable and democratic development in Afghanistan where cooperation with other actors will play an important role. The mission must be provided with additional personnel to reach its full capacity, a task that will be pursued during the Swedish Presidency.

The EUMM Georgia is a good example of the EU's capacity quickly to respond to a crisis. The mission plays an important role in contribution to stability to Georgia and throughout the region. Its mandate expires in September and soon we can start discussions on its possible extension.

In order to be successful as a global actor, the EU must cooperate closely with other organisations such as the United Nations, NATO, OSCE and the African Union. It is also important to continue to strengthen cooperation with other key partners, such as the states that are candidates for accession and the non-EU European NATO members as well as with Canada, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United States and the Mediterranean partners participating in the Barcelona Process.

Furthermore, the link between security, development and human rights has become increasingly obvious. Sweden is committed to the promotion of a comprehensive EU approach to conflict prevention and crisis management in ESDP in line with ESDP guidelines and commitments, and to ensure the effect of integration of human rights aspects.

Another important task during the Swedish Presidency will be to promote women's participation in conflict prevention and peace-support operations based on a more coherent and effective implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820. Sweden also intends to take forward work to develop the EU capacity on mediation and dialogue within the broader context of CFSP and as part of the implementation of the European Security Strategy and the EU Conflict Prevention Programme.

If the Lisbon Treaty is ratified, it will make the EU more efficient, more effective and more democratic. The treaty will strengthen the EU's ability to act effectively on the global scene, which will be particularly welcome given the increasingly complex challenges in international peace and security.

10 years after the launch of the ESDP, much has been achieved. We can be proud, but we must not be complacent. We must continue to develop institutions and mechanisms to address the increasingly complex challenges in international peace and security and to strengthen the European Union as a global actor. That will be an important mission for the Swedish Presidency.

Thank you for your attention.