Membership Action Plan (MAP) – On the road toward NATO

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Decisions taken by NATO leaders during the Washington Summit will have significant impact on the development of the European and transatlantic security architecture in the next millennium. The NATO Summit confirmed and developed further principles of inclusive and co-operative security policy, which had already started in 1994 with the launch of the PfP programme and had shown its political and also very practical values, especially during peace operations conducted together by allies and partners.

In Washington, NATO’s “open door” policy was solidly confirmed and nine possible candidates for future enlargement, among them Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were named. For the aspirant countries, the launch of the Membership Action Plan, a new and an important initiative in the NATO enlargement process, was certainly one of the most important results of the Washington Summit.

The acceptance of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic into the Alliance has ultimately redefined the European security landscape. Simultaneously, we are witnessing the growing importance of NATO in guaranteeing stability in the entire transatlantic security area. It has been and will continue to be Estonia’s aim to enhance European security and stability through co-operation, integration and taking equal responsibility.

Accession to NATO is Estonia’s main security and defence policy priority. Estonia welcomes the new dimensions of extensive co-operation with NATO, as expressed in the Membership Action Plan. The MAP is the next and logical step in developing the co-operation and integration process between allies and partners. Estonia highly appreciates the possibility given to the aspirant countries to decide, on the basis of self-differentiation, the scope of their individual participation in MAP for themselves. Estonia considers the Membership Action Plan as a kind of roadmap into NATO. At the same time, Estonia recognizes that further NATO enlargement will be based on a political decision.
It is obvious that increasing the resources allocated to national defence is the first step to further develop the defence system and take advantage of new co-operation mechanisms opened to aspirants through MAP. Therefore, the Estonian government decided to gradually increase defence expenditures up to 2% of the GDP by 2002. Such an increase will enable Estonia to effectively realize its medium-term plan for the defence forces and, simultaneously, fully participate the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process. The Estonian government’s NATO integration policy has broad political support. All major political parties have agreed to achieve the readiness for Alliance membership by the year 2002.

Estonia’s First Steps After the Launch of MAP

In an effort to successfully take part in the MAP process and improve inter-institutional NATO integration co-operation, NATO Integration Commissions have been established by the Estonian government. It is a two-level co-ordination mechanism, which consists of a Government Commission (chaired by the Prime Minister) at the political level and an Experts Commission which had an initial and immediate task of preparing the ANP, at the inter-institutional level. Designing the ANP was a new initiative, and thus, it was largely up to the participating countries to create a format for the document. Estonia has set pragmatism and clarity of stated plans and goals as the guiding principles for the composition of the ANP document.

On September 27, 1999, Estonia submitted its first Annual National Programme (ANP) to NATO. The Estonian ANP was drawn up according to the framework suggested within the Membership Action Plan. Although this plan bares the title ‘annual’ (this title comes directly from the MAP basic document), it encompasses much more. The ANP is the most extensive and comprehensive defence related planning document approved by the Estonian government so far. The ANP will serve as one of the main guiding and planning documents for the next few years and will form a guiding framework for the preparation of Estonian defence structures for NATO membership. Due to the document’s content and structure, it closely relates security and foreign policy goals, development of defence structures, allocation of resources, security and legal issues, all under the same umbrella.

MAP gave an impetus to review our plans in the entire field of security and defence. The new initiatives of the Washington Summit — the New Strategic Concept, the Defence Capabilities Initiative and the Enhanced and More Operational PfP — had to be considered within the limited time frame.

Joining the MAP process has already created some very positive developments for Estonia’s national defence. Finding solutions to many questions that had arisen, as well as surfacing questions previously not addressed, was one of the benefits of drafting the ANP. Yet another positive experience has been effective co-operation among the various governmental departments involved.
Future Developments

The implementation of the national programme will remain our priority for the next few years. The ANP established many goals and targets in various areas. Thereby, working out concrete implementation plans covered by human, material and financial resources and establishing tasks and duties for relevant institutions are in the focus today. The objectives described in the ANP vary. Not every goal needs huge material resources at first – in some cases, especially tasks related to the second chapter of the ANP, primarily need intellectual efforts. In some fields conceptual questions should be answered first, then practical implementation will follow in 2001. In order to guarantee a continuous and transparent implementation process, special review procedures at the governmental level have been established.

The next activity within the MAP framework is the composition of the tailored Individual Partnership Programme (IPP), which will be based on plans and goals stated in this year’s ANP. A strong connection between the goals stated in the ANP and activities of the IPP, as well as Partnership Goals established by the Planning and Review Process (PARP), is unavoidable. While preparing the implementation of goals set in the ANP, we enjoyed support from NATO and non-NATO nations in the form of bilateral co-operation and shared experiences.

The first high-level meetings discussing political-economical issues within the MAP framework have already occurred. Intense dialogue with NATO will continue at various political and working levels. The entire process provides the necessary feedback on the progress achieved and establishes the basis for regular review of the ANP.

Participation in the MAP process and implementation of the ANP objectives is a priority for the Estonian Defence Forces, as well as for the Republic of Estonia. This position includes not only ANP but also other NATO-Estonia co-operation frameworks, such as PfP, PARP, IPP and bilateral co-operation.
aspirations and its ability to assume, upon accession to NATO, all membership commitments and obligations. In fulfilling these commitments and providing all necessary practical steps with the appropriate resources, the Estonian Government has decided to raise the defence expenditures to 2% of the GDP by the year 2002.

Accession to NATO is Estonia’s main security and defence policy priority. Estonia’s security policy, in accordance with its goals, principles and the existing security environment, follows a policy of integration and co-operation with European and transatlantic security, political and economic structures (NATO, the European Union, the WEU). It includes the continuation and further development of good-neighbourly relations and co-operation with all states in the European and transatlantic region; the development of a national defence system; the strengthening of the rule of law and a liberal market economy; and the strengthening of internal security.

Relations with neighbours are based on the development of co-operation and friendship. Estonia actively co-operates with its neighbours in order to secure stability and prosperity throughout the entire Baltic Sea region. Defence-related Baltic co-operation with Latvia and Lithuania is aimed at enhancing self-defence capabilities and contributes to the NATO integration process. Baltic defence-related co-operation is based on defence co-operation agreements and a set of joint defence co-operation projects. In addition, the three countries participate actively in the Baltic Security Assistance (BALTSEA) framework together with many NATO, EU and other countries. Estonia has good and intensive relations with the Nordic countries, who have all promoted economic development and helped strengthen Estonia’s defence capability.

There have been remarkable positive developments in relations with the Russian Federation. In recent years, they have reached a new level of maturity and stability and can be characterised as normal working relations. The current focus of these relations is on solving practical issues and negotiating concrete agreements.

Estonia has participated in the “Partnership for Peace” (PfP) programme since 1994, and considers the continuation of its participation in the programme of crucial importance. At the beginning of 1995, Estonia joined the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP).

Participation in humanitarian and peace support operations is an inseparable part of Estonia’s security policy. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Estonian units have participated in the NATO-led peace operation IFOR and currently participate in the SFOR operation. Estonia also participates in the KFOR mission in Kosovo.

Estonia has provided troops for the UN peacekeeping missions UNPROFOR and UNIFIL and participates in the UNTSO observer mission. In the year 2000, Estonia will participate in SFOR and KFOR and in the UNTSO mission.

Membership in the OSCE has provided Estonia with opportunities to participate in the wider European co-operative security framework. Estonia participates in a variety of OSCE missions, including election supervision and monitoring missions.
Estonia has adhered to all major human rights conventions of the Council of Europe and the United Nations. Since the restoration of independence, one of the important tasks of the Estonian authorities has been to establish a legislative framework for integrating non-citizens, which defines their legal status and preserves their human rights. The cornerstone of Estonia’s integration policy is the development and implementation of the National Integration Programme.

The principles of democratic control of the armed forces are defined in the Estonian Constitution and other legal acts concerning National Defence. These principles are guaranteed through defining the rights, duties and responsibilities of the Parliament, the President and the Government of the Republic in the organisation of National Defence.

The remarkably successful macroeconomic and structural reform in Estonia was recognized when the decision was made to include Estonia in the first group of countries to be invited to start EU membership negotiations in 1997. Estonia’s successful economic development has been a result of a set of firm economic policy principles and actions. Estonia exercises a very liberal and open external economic policy, a firm monetary policy, and a fast and open privatisation policy.

The transatlantic link is important to European security. Estonia considers the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) an important aspect in the preservation and strengthening of this relationship.

Within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) co-operation framework, Estonia is considering the possibility of sharing its reform experiences with other EAPC countries.

The basic principles of Estonia’s defence policy are deterrence, territorial defence, the strengthening of security and stability in the region, co-operation with and integration into the European and transatlantic institutions. These principles are in concert with the Alliance’s Strategic Concept.

Estonia’s defence policy has two main goals:

- The development and maintenance of an indigenous and credible national defence capable of defending the nation’s vital interests;
- The development of the EDF in a way that ensures their interoperability with the armed forces of NATO and WEU member states and their capability to participate in Peace Support Operations.

PfP has added an international dimension to the build-up of the EDF; thus, in addition to being an extremely important tool in Estonia’s quest for NATO membership, it has proven to be valuable in its own right. Specifically, it has provided experience, knowledge and information to the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF). Estonia is reaching the stage of being able to provide more to the partnership and foresees an increase of benefits from the implementation of the Enhanced and More Operational PfP.

Estonia has intensive defence-related bilateral co-operation with more than 20 countries. In the area of multilateral co-operation the Baltic defence projects have been especially successful (BALTBAT,
BALTNET, BALTRON and BALTDEF-COL). The continuation of these relations are important to the EDF.

The development of the Estonian Defence Forces, including issues connected with integration with NATO, is based on the draft five-year development plan (2000-2005) of the EDF.

National plans for the progress of the EDF for the period of 2000 to 2005 are aimed at: a) the development and maintenance of a peacetime force structure that is capable of forming and maintaining a planned wartime force structure and; b) the improvement of defence readiness through the development of combat readiness and rapid reaction capabilities.

In particular, the EDF’s development goals for the period between 2000 - 2005 are:

- An increase in the EDF wartime size to 25-30 000;
- The formation of 3 light infantry reserve brigades;
- The development of airspace surveillance capabilities;
- The further development of mine warfare capabilities;
- The development of rapid reaction capabilities;
- The standardization of education;
- The concentration of officer and NCO basic training in Estonia;
- The improvement of working conditions and social guarantees of military personnel;
- The development and reorganisation of the current mobilisation and readiness system;
- The development of the Logistic Concept of the EDF;
- The modernisation of the existing warehouse system (incl. a system for storing mobilisation supplies).

The main short-term defence policy and planning goals of Estonia are:

To develop a comprehensive national military strategy, which assesses the security environment, clarifies the military’s role in security policy and updates the missions of the EDF (this will be accomplished as the National Defence Plan (NDP) takes shape);

To integrate the defence planning and budgeting system into the overall state budgeting process aimed at increasing the defence budget to 2% of the GDP by 2002;

In order to improve the command and control structure of the EDF, the General Staff of the Estonian Defence Forces (GSEDF) will be transformed into a joint staff responsible for the strategic planning and development, C3 and general personnel matters of the EDF. Additionally, an Army Department within the GSEDF will be established.

In the coming years, the procurement of major equipment will concentrate on communication and air surveillance, air defence, anti-tank defence and naval mine warfare.

Estonia’s personnel, training and education policy will be guided by the following principles: the annual number of conscripts will not exceed 3000; the reservists will be trained as complete units, instead of individuals; and the proportion of the professional military person-
The development of Estonia’s state security system, its current safeguards and procedures to ensure the security of classified information in Estonia will be enhanced with the clear goal of achieving NATO standards. The basis for the protection of classified information is provided in the Estonian Parliament’s “State Secrets Act” (in Estonian Riigisaladuse seadus). The Estonian National Security Authority (NSA) is the Bureau of the National Security Co-ordinator at the State Chan-

cellery (in Estonian Riigikantselei Koordinatsioonibüroo). The security agreement between NATO and the Government of Estonia was signed on 29.08.1994.

A draft Security Institutions Act will be prepared; it will clearly define the legal tasks and the appropriate authorities of the different Security Institutions in Estonia. Additionally, the completion of the Information Security Act will establish the regulation of Electronic Information Security and address standardization and implementation. Estonia foresees the need to review the Government regulation Protection Procedure for State Secrets with a NATO Legal Advisor. Upon review, and if deemed necessary, the Government regulation Procedures Protection for State Secrets and Issue Procedures for State Secrets Access Permit regarding NATO standards, which deal with document control and administration, will be refined accordingly.

Concerning the legal and constitutional issues related to NATO accession, there are no constitutional barriers in the present system in regard to accession to
the North Atlantic Treaty nor for making forces available for Article 5 and Non-article 5 operations as a full Alliance member.

In order to provide an effective legal framework for national defence plans, domestic legislation, and its development in particular should be concentrated on. Mid-term goals for the next few years include: clarifying the definition of civil-military relations, developing a legal framework for rendering host nation support and participating in international peace support operations. A relevant practice for drafting and changing domestic legislation concerning the international obligations deriving from NATO membership will be introduced. Accordingly, an amended Peacetime National Defence Act and other statutory acts will be adopted.