

6th Congress on European Defence Panel VIII

- Introductory remarks by the Chairman, Rear Admiral ret. Jörk Reschke-

The congress has in several statements since yesterday morning reflected the very important fact of security network. Non Governmental Organisations, NGOs, are part of this security network. The overall objective of the security network is to maintain or regain stability and built peace, to manage crisis, to support nation building and to help on natural and human disasters. The main tools are political, military and civilian engagements.

Our panel today deals with the contribution which NGOs can give to the European Security and Defence Policy, the ESDP.

This topic is actually of greatest importance, because NGOs represent a wide spectrum of capabilities, which come to bear in crisis management-, Peace Keeping-, Nation Building- and disaster relief operations of the European Union, NATO and the United Nations.

The members of this panel represent three NGOs and they will give their special views on the topic.

I welcome Prof. Dr. Horst Wilms, the medical director of the Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe in Germany. Prof. Wilms is a very experienced representative in many international engagements for his organisation.

I welcome Dr. Antonio Lopes from Portugal. He is a former minister of internal affairs and minister of defence, and he is today representing EuroDefense Portugal.

I welcome Ullrich Kleppmann, he is the head of office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Skopje and will certainly present to us the contribution of his organisation to the peace process in the Balkan Region.

And last but not least I welcome General Jean Rannou. He is the former Chief of the French Airforce, now president of EuroDefense France and very much engaged to bring the EuroDefense objectives to bear in the actual European policy arena.

Let me very briefly explain, what EuroDefense is about. It is a NGO, and has been founded on a French and German initiative in 1995 in France. Today EuroDefense represented in 13 Countries of the EU. The national organisations are independent, but they work together on the European level through intensive networking. The main objective of EuroDefense is to support a constructive ESDP through recommendations to the political authorities in Brussels and in the capitals. EuroDefense organizes symposiums on ESDP matters and every two years holds a Young Europeans Conference, where young interested citizens become familiar with the complex field of European Security and Defence Policy.