Beat: News

Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Meeting EU Member's, Defence Ministers

Prague, 02.09.2022, 15:20 Time

USPA NEWS - Informal meeting of the EU Member States' Defence Ministers took place in Prague.

On August 29-30, 2022, Prague was the venue to an informal meeting of Defence Ministers of the European Union Member States. Czech Defence Minister Jana ?ernochová started the meeting in the Prague Castle on Monday August 29, and the discussion day took place in the Prague Congress Centre on Tuesday August 30.

The Ministers primarily entertained Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the negative effects of Russia's policy on the stability of other parts of the world including the Balkans and Africa. In this regard, the Defence Ministers focused both on further practical support to the defending Ukraine by European countries and on the EU's military engagement outside Europe. Ministers also debated new instruments with the potential for strengthening the EU Member States' defence capabilities in a fast and coordinated fashion.

The meeting was chaired by High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell. Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry Breton attended the meeting and Chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence Nathalie Loiseau, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General Jörg See and UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix participated in some sessions too. Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov joined the working lunch on further assistance to Ukraine by videoconference.

"We are meeting in turbulent times while we face many security challenges. As a result of the Russian aggression and Moscow's activities in Africa and in other places, the world is more dangerous," Czech Defence Minister Jana ?ernochová said in the introduction and added: "That is why I regard our meeting today very important and I am pleased to welcome representatives of NATO, UN and the European Parliament. Cooperation of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is absolutely key for ensuring European defence and security. I therefore trust the new EU-NATO joint declaration will be signed during the Czech Presidency, thanks to which the practical cooperation between the two organisations will further deepen."

Russia's aggressive policy was the underlying subject in all discussions of the Prague meeting. Ukrainian Minister Reznikov summarised the current situation on the battlefield for the meeting participants and briefed them on the most urgent needs and priorities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. "As the war in the East of Europe continues, we need to respond to those needs. We have unanimously agreed that the European Union is united on the issue of supporting Ukraine. The Member States continue to stand ready to provide support as long as needed," said Josep Borrell, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The EU Defence Ministers therefore concurred with the idea to establish a European Union Military Assistance Mission for Ukraine, which should build on the existing bilateral activities and should work at least tentatively in the territory of an EU Member State. Ministers noted with concern the situation in the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and underscored it was essential for Russian occupiers to enable access to International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors. At the same time, the Ministers agreed it is essential to start preparations for post-war reconstruction of Ukraine in the domain of security and defence. The global food crisis was also highlighted as one of the effects of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which impacts the world's most vulnerable regions. The Ministers highly valued the crucial role the UN has played in reaching agreement on partial relaxation of the blockade in the Black Sea.

The Ministers discussed not only the war in Ukraine but also steps Moscow is taking in other parts of the world. The security situation in the Western Balkans and in Africa, where Russia's action is increasingly aggressive, was also on the agenda. Playing a key role in providing security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUFOR Operation Althea was also one of the topics of the agenda. Ministers therefore clearly expressed their continuing commitment to the contributions into the operation and performance of the assigned tasks.

The meeting also intensively discussed the situation in Mali, where EU as well as UN have engaged on a sustained basis. The Czech Republic is currently in command of the European Union Training Mission Mali. The MINUSMA mission in Mali is one of the largest UN peace missions. The Malian transition government that came out of the military coup is however under a growing pressure from

Russia and both missions are faced with increasingly difficult conditions. The Ministers agreed it is the Europe's security interest to continue its engagement in the Sahel region. It is nevertheless essential to reflect the changes of the political environment in Mali and adjust the European engagement to the new situation.

Another subject on the agenda were the planned steps designed to redress shortfalls in European countries' defence capabilities. As a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, many states have come to realise that peace cannot be taken for granted and they have started to rapidly increase what had long been insufficient defence spending. The goal for everybody now should be to spend those resources most effectively. Therefore, the Ministers started the discussion on how to increasingly invest into strengthening military capabilities jointly. Moreover, that endeavour should prevent further fragmentation of the European defence market and furnish new opportunities for the development of defence industry in the Member States.

The informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers again confirmed that the political unity of the West is now greatest from the Cold War and that we will not be intimidated by the Russia's aggressive steps, which threaten security a stability on multiple continents. The agenda items were discussed in factual and constructive fashion and the Defence Ministers will resume in Brussels on 15 November 2022.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21533/czech-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Daren Frankish - Council of the European Union

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Daren Frankish - Council of the European Union

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619