

International Security Assistance Force - ISAF VI

THE EUROCORPS IN AFGHANISTAN



"Contributing to peace and stability in Afghanistan is NATO's main priority. The fact that NATO directs the International Security and Assistance Force acting under UN mandate shows that the North-Atlantic Council is ready to decide the launching of operations in order to provide our common security. NATO's aim is to help making a safe and stable Afghanistan emerge, an Afghanistan having a government without

any exclusivity, paying attention to equality of sexes, multiethnic and fully representative, integrated into the international community and co-operating with its neighbours."

These are the first sentences of the official communiqué issued by the heads of state and government who had participated in the Atlantic Council meeting, during the Istanbul summit of June 2004.



After the attacks of September 11th, 2001, the United States were bolstered by an international support expressed by both resolutions of the UN Security Council and decided to provoke the fall of the Taliban regime as well as the destruction of the training camps and terrorist centers established in this country. This is how operation "Enduring Freedom" started as early as on October 7th, 2001 and how it still is

ongoing. Simultaneously with the regime's fall in November 2001 and with the establishment of a new interim government, the international community - just a month later and via successively the Bonn Agreements and UN Resolution 1386 - expressed the will of participating in the temporary government's security and the country's stabilization by sending an International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) on the spot. This multinational force with more than 6500 personnel had the mission of helping the temporary Afghan administration reconstruct the country in all fields of public life.

ISAF VI: a determining, ambitious, difficult mandate, nevertheless crowned with success ...

In this context, the sixth mandate the Eurocorps was given indeed turned out to be determining as it triggered decisive evolutions within the process started by the Bonn Agreements. Beyond the already undertaken actions (surrender of arms, support for constituting a national police and army), it was about initiating a fundamental phase characterized by the progressive extension to the entire country of a



reconstruction that had only taken place locally up to then and, above all, by contributing to putting into place the elementary consultative bodies. This is how this mandate was able to supervise the multiplication of Provincial Reconstruction Teams placed under the responsibility of the respective Sending Nations. But above all, the presidential elections of October 2004 – the first national elections since the Taliban's fall – were successfully organized in a country broken down by thirty years of war.



Undoubtedly representing the climax of this mandate, the elections went smoothly and represented a decisive step in Afghanistan's development and evolution towards peace. Now, it is up to the elected government to develop a forward looking plan supporting national reconciliation, a lasting peace, stability and a mutual respect. The VIth mandate not only initiated this project, it was most of all a mandate of hope and of realization of the resolutions taken by the international community.

... a major stake also for the European Union.

Regrouping now twenty-five States, totalizing a population of more than 450 million citizens, providing a fourth of the world gross national product, today the European Union is able to assert itself as a solid pillar at a planetary scale. And the sixth ISAF mandate was given to a European staff, a prototype of a potential European defence. Thus the EU was implicitly entrusted, by and in the name of the United Nations, with a major responsibility within this integrating step of the reconstruction and development process of Afghanistan.