Preparations for the deployment of the EU military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA)

In response to the violent security and humanitarian crisis that has erupted in the Central African Republic (CAR), the European Union is establishing a new military operation. EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) has announced the EU’s intention to launch a new operation with the aim of increasing its support to both the State and people of the CAR.

The EUFOR RCA military force will thereby contribute, within its area of operations, to international and regional efforts to protect the populations most at risk and will contribute to the free movement of civilians. The United Nations Security Council has welcomed the strong engagement of the EU, and unanimously adopted Resolution 2134 (2014), which authorises the deployment of a European Union force to the Central African Republic.

The Council has assigned the EU Operational Headquarters (OHQ) in Larissa (Greece) and approved the appointment of French Major-General Philippe Pontiès as commander of the EUFOR RCA operation and the designated Force Commander is French Brigadier General Thierry Lion. The Force Headquarters and the troops will be in Bangui (CAR).

At present operational planning continues on an accelerated basis in order to enable the operation to be deployed early March. Next steps before launching the mission will include preparation of the Operation Plan (OPLAN) and the assignment of the budget.

European Union Training Mission Somalia

On 10 April 2010, the European Union launched a Military Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) in order to contribute to strengthening the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the institutions of Somalia. Its aim is to help stabilise the country and to respond to the priority needs of the Somali people.

Among the features in this issue:

1. The cover story takes us to the new operation in Central African Republic.
2. The newsletter also presents one of our military missions focusing on EUTM SOMALIA.
3. The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) described in the light of the recent planning process for the EU response to the Central African crisis.
COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY STRUCTURES:
THE EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY STAFF

In this issue we will provide a full insight of the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) and interview its Director General, Lieutenant General Wolfgang WOSOLSOBE, with a specific insight in the planning process related to the newly established EU military operation in the Central African Republic EUFOR RCA.

The EUMS - working under the direction of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and under the authority of the High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) - is the source of collective (multi-disciplinary) military expertise within the European External Action Service (EEAS). As an integral component of the EEAS’s Comprehensive Approach, the EUMS coordinates the military instrument, with particular focus on operations/missions and the creation of military capability. Enabling activity in support of this output includes: early warning (via the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity - SIAC), situation assessment, strategic planning, Communications and Information Systems, concept development, training and education, and support of partnerships through military-military relationships.

Lieutenant General Wolfgang WOSOLSOBE assumed the responsibilities of Director General of the EU Military Staff, Brussels, on Tuesday the 28 May 2013.

What is the justification for this intervention?
The European Union (EU) is deeply concerned by the extreme insecurity and instability in the Central African Republic (CAR), which caused heavy civilian casualties, massive displacements of populations, several serious human rights violations and a dramatic worsening of the humanitarian situation. Therefore, the EU military force should contribute to international efforts to protect the populations most at risk and should contribute to freedom of movement, including of humanitarian aid. By taking responsibility of an area in Bangui the EU Force directly contributes to the effectiveness of other international actors.

What is the mission?
The operation, within its area of operations, will provide temporary support, for a period of up to six months, to help to achieve a secure environment in the Bangui area, with a view to handing over to the African Union (AU). This objective takes full account of UN Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013), and in particular of the possibility of International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) being transformed into a UN peacekeeping operation, and UN Security Council Resolution 2134 (2014).

What was the EU Military Staff contribution to the planning process?
The road to launching EUFOR RCA can be seen as a fine example of how we, in the EUMS, meet the EU Terms of Reference stating that “the EUMS operational mission is to perform early warning and situation assessment and to participate in strategic planning”.

Since early 2013, with our EEAS colleagues from Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), Geographical desks and the EU Commission, my staff has monitored the Central African Republic (CAR) crisis and provided military assessments for the EEAS to consider.

The dramatic events of early December in Bangui triggered the next phase culminating in the direction by the December European Council to examine the use of relevant instruments to contribute towards the efforts under way to stabilise the country.

Based on the advance work, the Council, within two weeks, facilitated an expeditious delivery and processing of a Crisis Management Concept (a common effort of CMPD supported by the EUMS, Geographical desks and Commission). On the same day, 17 January, EUMS assisted the EUMC in presenting the Military Advice on the Crisis Management Concept (CMC) and then the Initiating Military Directive (IMD) for the future Operation Commander. All this was possible due to the commitment of all EUMS Directorates, teamwork within the EEAS, and the timely delivery of effective planning products through the EUMS activated “CAR Crisis Planning Team” (CPT), our core crisis planning tool in such circumstances.

Additionally, we have passed the staffing baton to the Operational Headquarters (OHQ); the continued engagement of EUMS Officers in Brussels, Larissa (Greece) and Bangui (CAR) in the delivery of the draft OPLAN and key logistic plans permitted the OpCdr to maintain momentum in creating appropriate conditions for EUFOR RCA.

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not represent the official position of the European Union Military Committee or the single Member States’ Chiefs of Defence.

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