

CEUMC Visit to EUTM-Mali

Meeting with EUTM Personnel

13 Dec 15

Men and Women of EUTM Mali,

I am proud to be among you today, and address you on behalf of the Chiefs of Defence of the 28 member-States and of the High Representative of the European Union.

My visit here serves one goal. That is, to demonstrate and to highlight the importance we, in the Military Committee place on your work here, and to portray the interest of the higher elements of the European Union instances in it.

You are here to serve a noble cause: to train Malian Armed and Security Forces in a professional way, making them capable to perform their job in an effective way. And their job is identical to yours: to defend their country against any threat. To sustain the freedom of the Malian people to make their own choices about their future. To reinstate a secure environment for the Malian people and for the wider region.

In doing so, you also serve the European and your respective countries interests. Because, to establish a stable and secure neighbourhood is in our best interests. Building state capacities to take care of their own is in our best interests. In this way, people will not be afraid. People will not have to become refugees to find shelter, security or freedom.

And you are the proof of a Europe that takes responsibility of its neighbourhood. Of a Europe that cares. Of a Europe that is willing and that has the capabilities to assist and share its best practises with those who seek assistance. Of a Europe that is looked up to, because of its values.

This should fill you with pride. You are representing **that** Europe at your daily interactions.

Make no mistake: Although far away from home, the world watches you. The United Nations, Europe, Africa, they all watch you. Because Mali is an important country. The multitude of foreign missions (International, Governmental, NGO) is a concrete proof of that fact. Your very presence here is a concrete proof of that fact.

You are the military element of the European Comprehensive Approach to the crisis in the Sahel region. A Comprehensive Approach that has become the trademark of the European Union. You and the staff of the civilian mission "EUCAP Sahel Niger", you set the foundations of a secure environment, so that all the financial resources allocated to development projects in the region will have a lasting result.

For your hard work and your tireless efforts, I express to you my gratitude and that of the Chiefs of Defence of the 28 Member States, as well as of the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Thank you.