

Chairman's Newsletter

EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY COMMITTEE



Gen. Claudio Graziano

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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

Technological developments have radically changed the way humans use and interact with machines. The Finnish Presidency has chosen the "Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the development of EU defence" as a key element of its priority to "protect the security of citizens comprehensively". The Presidency has promoted the issue as the topic for discussion at a number of events, such as the informal Defence Minister's meeting in Helsinki in August, the working lunch at EUMC in July, and a dedicated Seminar, recently held in Helsinki in the framework of the EUMC Away Days.

The widely accepted definition for digitalisation is the "Integration of digital technologies into everyday life, by digitization of everything that can be digitized", whereas AI is defined as the "theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition and decision-making."

An examination of these two concepts presents a huge array of opportunities, but also deep challenges. The application of Digitalization and AI to Defence may prove to be decisive for the future of the EU. The Military stand to benefit greatly from these technologies, for example reducing the risk from exposure to the enemy. Digitalisation and AI enable power and speed in elaborating data, well beyond the capabilities of the human brain, thus allowing Commanders to make quicker and better informed decisions. They may even offer the possibility of anticipating and thereby avoiding crises, benefiting all nations. However, the opportunities that these concepts bring for our CSDP Missions and Operations and for our military toolbox, also present us with some serious challenges. Challenges, that are both moral and legal in nature. Delegating life-or-death decisions to nonhuman agents or, from a legal perspective, defining a clear chain of accountability when a machine takes a "decision", remain matters of concern. There are also potential vulnerabilities in this domain, security is as a key concern and control may be compromised by the risk of hacking.

I personally believe the application of AI tools still requires human intervention and judgement, especially when it comes to making critical "decisions". I am also convinced that in a number of areas the role of humans remains irreplaceable, such as areas where a Commander's sixth sense, intuition and vision are crucial.

This prompts a number of questions: to what extent do we want these systems enhancing or even replacing the human brain processes? Will we be able to keep defending the position of humans as the "centre of gravity" in the Armed Forces? And, are our competitors considering ethics when applying AI to their tools? These questions currently cannot be fully answered and call for a continuous evaluation of these aspects, as we develop these high performance systems. We should aim, therefore, at exploiting these technologies with an elevated sense of responsibility and, together with our Allies, ensure that their implementation fully reflects the values and interests of free and democratic societies. The EU Military Committee plays a leading role in this regard and will keep on providing its unfettered contribution to the EU political decision-making. Effectively cooperating with all relevant stakeholders, the Committee will support the exploitation of these new technologies, sustaining the CSDP Military Level of Ambition with a common sense of responsibility. For this purpose, this extremely important topic will be in the agenda of the next EU CHoD meeting.

LATEST EVENTS



CEUMC attends in Brussels the 2019 EU Ambassadors Conference (2 September)



CEUMC pays an Official Visit to Finland (12 September)



CEUMC attends the EUOMARFOR Change of Command Ceremony (19 September)

“EU NAVFOR Somalia—Operation Atalanta”

by Major General Antonio Planells Palau, Operation Commander

As part of its Integrated Approach to Somalia, the European Union (EU) launched the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Somalia Operation ATALANTA in December 2008 to counter Somali-based piracy and armed robbery in the Western Indian Ocean. The mandate was developed within the framework of the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) and International Law.

In co-operation with various counter-piracy partners, Operation ATALANTA has become highly effective in deterring, preventing and repressing acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. At the height of Somali piracy in 2011, Somali pirates held as many as 736 people and 32 ships hostage. This year, there has been just one piracy incident. On 23 April, pirates captured a Yemeni vessel off the coast of Somalia and held 23 passengers hostage. With the support of the PAST and EU NAVFOR's various active assets in the region—including the frigate ESPS NAVARRA and MPRAs German JESTER and Spanish CISNE—Operation ATALANTA was able to control the situation and prevent any further imminent attacks.

In addition to deterring piracy, Operation ATALANTA fulfils complementary, mandated tasks, including monitoring fishing activity off the coast of Somalia, protecting vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and supporting EU missions and international organisations working to strengthen

maritime security and capacity in the region.

The Council of the EU extended Operation ATALANTA's mandate in July 2018, this time until December 31st, 2020. This mandate extension coincided with the United Kingdom's planned departure from the EU and therefore provoked many changes. The Operation Headquarters (OHQ) was transferred from Northwood, England to Rota Naval Base in Cádiz, Spain; there was a change of command and dozens of particular handovers for integral, internal positions; the joint Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHoA) was relocated to Brest, France, and remains an integral component of the Rota OHQ.

The impact of these changes ultimately proved minimal thanks to a seamless transition from former Operation Commander Major General Charlie Stickland (U.K. Marine Corps) to Rear Admiral Antonio Martorell (Spanish Navy). The operation maintained continuity and successfully deterred a piracy attack within the first month of activity in its new OHQ.

Today, Operation ATALANTA remains a stable, exemplary Common Defense and Security Policy (CDSP) operation. Nevertheless, as EU NAVFOR Somalia approaches the final year of Operation ATALANTA's current mandate, there



EU NAVFOR Somalia—Operation Atalanta

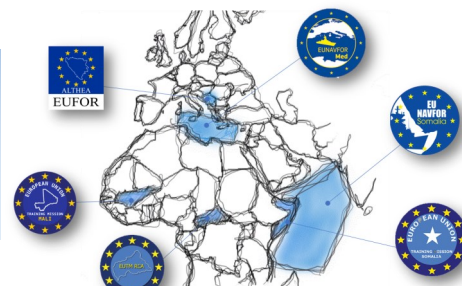
are new factors to consider. The situation in the Area of Operations continues to evolve. Piracy and other threats such as regional conflict and the trafficking of narcotics, charcoal, arms and humans are still fears in Somali basin.

EU NAVFOR Somalia continues to value and depend on cooperation from contributing countries and organisations to effectively combat piracy. The Cooperation Concept for ATALANTA (COCOA) is a mechanism that EU NAVFOR Somalia developed to increase synergies with regional states and military actors present in the region. As the context of maritime security in the region evolves, this new concept aims to help EU NAVFOR Somalia and its partners complement each other's efforts in a pragmatic and flexible, but predictable way.



WFP escort by EU NAVFOR vessel

News from our Operations & Missions



EUFOR ALTHEA

On 23rd September, the recently appointed Commander of EUFOR, Major General Reinhard Trischak, held his first meeting with the new EU Special Representative and Head of EU Delegation, Ambassador Johann Sattler, in the EU Office in Sarajevo. During an open and productive Office Call, General Trischak informed the EUSR on current activities of EUFOR and both the officials took the opportunity to discuss the current political and security situation in BiH and in the Region.



EU NAVFOR Atalanta

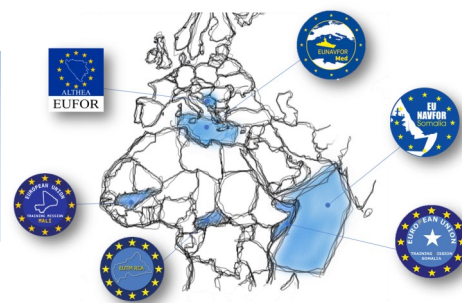
On 24th September, the EU NAVFOR Somalia Operation ATALANTA Operation Commander, R. Adm. Antonio Martorell, met with European Union sister missions, European Union Capacity Building (EU CAP) Somalia and European Union Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia. The European Union (EU) plays a significant role in supporting Somalia's efforts to become a peaceful, stable and democratic country by taking progressive ownership over its own national security. EU NAVFOR Somalia is one of the three EU security and defence missions that the EU is contributing to capacity building, within the Somali Security Sector.



EU NAVFORMED Sophia

On 25th and 26th September, the 8th edition of Shared Awareness and De-confliction for the Mediterranean Sea (SHADE MED) was held in Rome (Italy). The forum was opened by Vice Admiral Enrico Credendino, Operation SOPHIA Commander, who welcomed an outstanding participation of 200 attendees, from 30 different countries and 100 organizations. SHADE MED is a forum where military and civilian representatives from nations and organizations interested in or impacted by the migratory phenomenon in the Mediterranean sea can meet to discuss and share knowledge and de-conflict to coordinate their activities, to achieve the maximum efficiency and effectiveness in managing objectives related to the migratory phenomenon at sea.

News from our Operations & Missions



EUTM Mali

From 9th to 27th September, three EUTM MALI officers have participated, as instructors, in the pre-deployment course for the next relay of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, held in Nouakchott (Mauritania). The course was aimed at training 36 officers from the five countries of the Sahel region (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) who will occupy, from November onwards, the most important positions of this Force. For the first time such training has been carried out in Mauritania, taking advantage from the modern facilities of the G5 Sahel Defence College, as well as aiming at encouraging the autonomy of this coalition to take charge, step by step, of its own training. It is also the first time that all the relevant organisations and forces present in the Region are involved: the European Union, the Force "Barkhane", the United Nations and others that collaborate and contribute to the effectiveness of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.



EUTM Somalia

On 3rd September the recently appointed EUTM Commander, Brigadier General Antonello De Sio, met in Villa Gashandiga with the new Chief of Defence Forces, Brigadier General Odowaa Yuusuf Raage. The two Officers discussed about the daily activities of advising, mentoring and training that are carried out by the European Union mission, in support of the Somali Army. At the end of the visit, the CDF gave his thanks and appreciation to the Mission Force Commander and to all EUTM-S personnel for the effort provided to the local Armed Forces.



EUTM RCA

On 6th September, Brigadier General Peltier, EUTM RCA Commander, received Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The two officials had the opportunity to discuss cooperation between the EU and UN mission in support of RCA.

News from the Committee



ASIAPAC Regional Sessions

On 5th September, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), General Claudio Graziano, addressed the ASIAPAC Regional Sessions in the framework of the EU Ambassador's Conference 2019. The Chairman provided the audience with the military point of view on the challenges and opportunities for increased cooperation between EU and ASIA on security matters. "Asian countries are demonstrating serious interest in working with the EU. Therefore, the opportunities are there, and with the current favourable ground, we must seize them!" General Graziano underlined.

EUMC Away Days

From 9th to 11th September, the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) had an informal meeting organised in Helsinki (FI), under the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The meeting paved the way for fruitful discussions amongst EU Military Representatives, and thanks to a thematic Seminar organized by the Defence Command Finland, it also provided a great opportunity "to shed light on the trends of Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence as well as the possibilities they open for developing European defence capabilities."



2nd EU-India Maritime Security Workshop

On 18th September, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), General Claudio Graziano, addressed the 2nd EU-India Maritime Security Workshop "Securing the Maritime Commons: India, the European Union and Indian Ocean Maritime Security". Relevant topics, such as "EU and Indian perspectives on Strategic developments in Indian Ocean maritime security", as well as "addressing traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges in the Western and Southern Indian Ocean", "Building maritime domain awareness" and "advancing cooperative humanitarian assistance and disaster relief", were the bases for a fruitful and constructive discussion.



Farewell to the CY MILREP

In September, the Chairman, General Claudio Graziano, bid farewell to Lieutenant Colonel Neophytos Pachoulides, CY Milrep, on the occasion of his last participation in the EU Military Committee. "Thanks for your commitment! You participated to the maximum possible extent in PESCO and were very supportive of EU Global Strategy", General Graziano underlined.

