EU works with partners in Sahel to fight terrorism and trafficking

The G5 Sahel countries - Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad - face increasing threats by terrorists and organized crime involving trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings. This has also an impact on the Mediterranean region and EU Member States. To help address the situation, the EU has joined forces with its G5 partners and launched a range of support measures. Amongst other things, the EU has helped to mobilise commitments of more than €400 million to help set up a Joint Force of the countries concerned and has deployed, under the EU flag, two civilian capacity building missions and one military training mission to Niger and Mali.

On 18 June 2018 EU High Representative Federica Mogherini hosted the annual EU-G5 Sahel meeting
at ministerial level to further strengthen dialogue and cooperation. Mogherini highlighted the common interest and need to move forward: "It is very clear that we share common problems that call for common answers. That was the starting point for our discussions today. We have decided to work together more effectively, more actively, and to progress from action plans - which we have adopted - to real action."

To address the complex issues on the ground, the EU’s support and interventions are designed in close cooperation with its partners to provide a package of relevant national and regional support – an integrated, multi-faceted response.

**The EU's integrated approach**

Today's security challenges cannot be tackled with just one instrument alone, e.g. by military means. Therefore the EU deploys a unique mix of tools in the context of its "integrated approach" that seeks to tackle the complex issues simultaneously from various angles, flexible adjustments over time where needed and in close cooperation with all relevant partners. Thus the two civilian missions and one military mission work closely with EU Delegations, Member States' representations and national, regional or international partners also present on the ground.

Since the issues of terrorism and organized crime are regional in nature, the EU has supported the establishment of a G5 regional Joint Force. This helps more effective action including across borders. The EU has provided a contribution of €100 million to the Force's total budget of more than €400 million Euro. The EU also provides professional military advice and expertise to this African-led initiative.

In addition, the EU is substantially engaged in the Sahel through a wide range of instruments such as diplomatic actions, long-term development assistance, humanitarian aid.

**Why did the EU deploy civilian and military missions in the Sahel?**

Security is a top priority for Europe and its citizens. Instability in our neighbourhood has an impact on the EU and its Member States. This also applies to the Sahel region where instability can provide fertile ground for the development of terrorist groups and criminal networks.
1. EUCAP Sahel Niger is a civilian capacity building mission. It supports the Internal Security Forces in Niger (Police, Gendarmerie and National Guard). It helps strengthening capacities to fight terrorism, organised crime and irregular migration, through advice, training and delivery of equipment. The Mission also provides support to the operationalisation of the police component of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

2. EUCAP Sahel Mali is also a civilian mission providing strategic advice, training and equipment to the Malian Police, Gendarmerie and National Guard, as well as the relevant ministries. The objective is to support the restructuring of the Malian Internal Security Forces and reform in the security sector.

3. EUTM Mali is a military training mission providing advice to the Malian authorities in the restructuring of the Malian Armed Forces, through the training of battalions. Eight battalions have already been trained between 2013 and 2017.

**What is the G5 Joint Force and how does the EU support it?**

The G5 Joint Force is mandated to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime and human trafficking in the G5 Sahel area. Its first operation took place in November 2017. At full operating capacity, it comprises 5,000 troops (seven battalions spread over three zones: West, Center and East). It covers a strip of 50 km on each side of the countries’ borders.

The EU supports the G5 Sahel Joint Force not only through substantial financial contributions but also by providing advice and training. Furthermore, the EU has set up a Coordination Hub for international
support to the Force. Funding covers the necessary infrastructure, equipment or the integration of a police component but, importantly, also the establishment of a human rights compliance framework.

The EU-G5 Sahel: a lasting partnership for the future

The EU has an interest in continuous engagement with the G5 to coordinate and support action in key areas such as border management and cross-border development, migration or prevention of radicalisation.

See also

The European Union's partnership with the G5 Sahel countries
Statement by HR/VP Mogherini following her meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the Sahel G5
Military and civilian missions and operations
www.eeas.europa.eu

Source URL: