The EU and G5 Sahel: key partners to secure stability in the region and beyond

EU High Representative Mogherini’s visit to the Sahel region this week reaffirms the EU’s key partnership with G5 Sahel to tackle the security challenges that the Sahel countries are facing. With three European civilian and military crisis management missions on the ground and an ongoing regionalisation process, the EU is a key security partner for the G5 Sahel and its member countries – fostering stability in the region, providing security at home.

“Five years ago we could have maybe thought of Sahel as a region neighbouring our neighbours. Today - especially given the current situation in Libya - Sahel and the European Union are direct neighbours. For us, investing in Sahel’s security, stability and prosperity also means investing in our own stability and security”, Federica Mogherini said recently, reaffirming the importance of the EU’s
role as a security partner in the Sahel region. EU High Representative Mogherini has visited the region this week and participated in the 5th Ministerial Meeting between the EU High Representative and the G5 Sahel Foreign Affairs Ministers.

The Sahel region faces a number of pressing challenges such as extreme poverty, increasing insecurity stemming from conflict, terrorism and violent extremism, as well as irregular migration and related crimes such as human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

In 2014, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger set up the G5 Sahel group of countries to foster close cooperation in the region and tackle the security and development challenges that they face, including by establishing a permanent secretariat in Nouakchott. The five countries also established the G5 Sahel Joint Force – a military and security partnership for the region.

The EU supports these initiatives in several ways and is a key partner for the G5 Sahel on multiple fronts, including security. Three EU civilian and military crisis management missions are currently deployed in the region. Their aim is to strengthen our partner countries' capabilities and enable them to provide for their own security. A stable neighbourhood is not only in the interest of local populations – it is also a direct contribution to Europe’s security.

To achieve this, the EU’s civilian mission EUCAP Sahel Niger assists Niger authorities in the fight against terrorism, organised crime, irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling. In 2018, the mission trained 2,557 women and men and handed over equipment worth a total amount of EUR 4.9
Similarly, **EUCAP Sahel Mali** is an EU civilian mission currently supporting Malian authorities with strategic advice, training and equipment to support the reform of Malian Internal Security Forces. Last year alone, it provided nearly 100 training events that included counter-terrorism and the fight against organised crime and document fraud.

**EUTM Mali** is an EU military training mission that contributes to improving the capacities of the Malian Armed Forces, making them better able to face local security challenges. Close to 4,000 personnel from the Malian Armed Forces have been trained by EUTM Mali last year.

In addition to this security presence, the EU has set in motion a regionalisation process aimed at making its action more effective across G5 Sahel countries’ borders. A network of security and defence experts has been deployed in EU delegations in the region and a Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell is now set up in Nouakchott, Mauritania, where the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat is based. This will help coordinate capacity-building activities in all five countries of the G5 Sahel, support the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and facilitate synergies with EU-funded programmes.

Just two weeks ago, the EU’s civilian mission in Niger has delivered the first training outside of Niger’s borders: EUCAP Sahel Niger has trained Burkina Faso security forces to act more effectively in the fight against terrorism and organised crime, preserve crime scenes, collect evidence and testimony. This is a direct result of the regionalisation process launched by the EU, which has also extended the mandate of EUCAP Sahel Niger to neighbouring G5 Sahel countries.

“**It’s the responsibility of the states and institutions of the region to tackle the current security situation, but it is our responsibility, our will, to support them further and more efficiently**”, EU High Representative Mogherini has said upon her visit in Ouagadougou.

**See also**

Factsheet: The European Union’s partnership with the G5 Sahel countries
Factsheet: EUCAP Sahel Niger
Factsheet: EUCAP Sahel Mali
Factsheet: EUTM Mali
Factsheet: The EU’s global engagement to counter human smuggling and trafficking networks
Joint Statement 5th Ministerial Meeting between the EU High Representative and the G5 Sahel Foreign Affairs Ministers
Press remarks by HRVP Mogherini following the Ministerial Meeting with G5 Sahel
Press release: Tournée de la Haute représentante/vice-présidente Federica Mogherini dans la région du Sahel
Press remarks by HRVP Mogherini at the press conference with Tiébilé Dramé, Foreign Affairs Minister of Mali
EU Security and Defence
www.eeas.europa.eu

**Source URL:**