

EU MILITARY FORUM



EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY COMMITTEE – EUMC #2/2023



**At a turn of history.
Making 27 voices a
single one**

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**Moving forward in
time of crisis - Why
EU defence is more
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear colleagues and friends,

I am delighted to introduce you to this new and improved edition of the EU Military Forum.

First and foremost, I'd like to express my appreciation for the ardent support received from our distinguished contributors. Our publication relies on our collaborators, who, from diverse perspectives, contribute to the development and consolidation of a genuine European defense culture.

Associations with partnerships. During the first four months of 2023, numerous discussions and reflections have focused on these specific topics. As one of the priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the Council, as well as the primary theme at the Schuman Forum in Brussels, the necessity of partnership has been analysed from a variety of angles.

Especially considering the European Union's growing ambitions as a Security provider and partner. We continued this discussion during our EU Military Committee Away Days in Stockholm in mid-April, and we will continue at our Military Committee meeting at CHOD level in early May, when this publication will be distributed.

During the Schuman Security and Defence Forum, in particular, many Ministers from the 27 European Union Member States and more than 50 partners from around the world gathered in the heart of EU institutions to discuss fundamental questions, such as the one why we need partners, raised by the High Representative, Mr. Borrell. Alternatively, what can the European Union offer our partners? What can we accomplish together?

Apart from the spontaneous unity of support demonstrated by the EU and its partners towards Ukraine, one concept stood out and was confirmed very clearly: no one, no country, no organization can act alone in addressing the multidimensional, multifaceted, trans-frontier threats and challenges that affect the global order, the international rule of law, our standards of living, and the security and health of the world in which we live. To name only a few...

I believe no one would dispute that we are stronger when we are united.

Why is it then necessary to continue debating the need to invest in partnerships?

Because partnerships are complex and influenced by cultural context, geo-strategic balance, and personal beliefs, among others. In a sense, when we discuss partnership – pardon the oxymoron – the subject can be divisive!

I have never been an admirer of strict definitions, but we can say that a partnership, as we understand it, is an agreement in which two or more individuals agree to work together to achieve their shared objectives. Partnerships can be formed by individuals, businesses, interest-based organizations, institutions, governments, and combinations thereof. Collaboration between organizations can increase their chances of achieving their respective objectives and expand their influence.

Certainly something that mankind has known since the advent of time. But for the EU, which is currently implementing a historic security and defense policy for the first time since its inception, partnerships take on a distinct flavour.



General Robert Brieger
Chairman of EU Military Committee



If we examine the countries and organizations that are requesting or willing to enhance their cooperation with the EU, we can observe an increasing demand for more initiative on our part. This can be related to the fact that the EU has recently demonstrated, through an integrated approach comprised of all instruments of power, a level of effectiveness that can hardly be matched by any other global actor.

When it comes to partnerships, however, we face a competition or, more precisely, a battle of narratives. Other self-proclaimed security providers exist in the world and offer their “services” to countries and organizations in need. True, but at what price?

Let me astonish you: we do have something in common with our adversaries (I use this term instead of competitors because competition connotes an usually-fair playground, which is not the case in current geostrategic and security scenarios)! According to an ancient Latin proverb, “Do ut des,” we all give in order to receive.

Yes, let’s be pragmatic: we assist others, because we recognize that promoting security and well-being will benefit the global community, of which we, as Europeans, are an integral part. Herein lies the crucial distinction between us and our adversaries, whose objectives go often beyond this mutually beneficial purposes.

Consequently, what the EU has to offer is, in a word, distinctive. Without concealed or secondary objectives. Especially when viewed in a very long, sustainable, transparent, and long-lasting perspective.

Recalling the words of Mr. Borrell, we can accomplish this with our collaborators in a number of pragmatic ways.

First, by increasing the efficacy and efficiency of our civilian and military missions and operations in support of our partners.

Second, by taking a comprehensive view on security and placing greater emphasis on prevention.

Third, by maximizing the European Peace Facility’s potential, which has proven to be a true game-changer for our missions and operations, as well as our partnerships.

Fourth, by helping our partners build their own resilience.

Fifth, by training and exercising with our partners, beginning with the maritime domain this year.

Finally, by launching defense initiatives to pave the way for enhanced cooperation.

Let me therefore ask once more: why is it necessary to bring up the debate about partnerships again?

I believe there are several explanations. The recent pandemic, the international economic crisis, and the rise of hybrid challenges necessitate a concerted effort by all stakeholders, who must pool their resources and invest (not just monetarily) more and better collectively.

In addition to these factors, I believe that emphasizing partnerships is necessary to complement the ongoing discussions on Strategic Autonomy, or Strategic Responsibility. And we must do so in a pragmatic way instead of getting stuck in ideologies.



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During the last few years, the idea of EU autonomy has raised concerns among our current and potential partners, primarily due to a misunderstanding that the EU may wish to “decouple” from traditional partnerships, like the one with NATO, in pursuing its own security and defense.

I do not think we will ever have a consolidated definition of Strategic Autonomy or Responsibility, but – to me – the concept is very clear and also entirely legitimate: the EU cannot rely solely on its partners to address all the threats and challenges that could affect its own interests and citizens.

As a consequence, we must empower ourselves with the means to intervene even on our own, should our traditional alliances be unavailable for whatever reason. I am, of course, alluding to those capacities and capabilities that are essential for acting credibly within our stated level of ambition. Acting with partners will continue to be our preferred method, but a complete, cross-domain strategic dependency is something we cannot allow or afford.

On the other hand, our becoming stronger and more independent in certain security and defense matters will make us a stronger and more reliable partner. Other security stakeholders will have more faith in us, if we can support them with more credible actions.

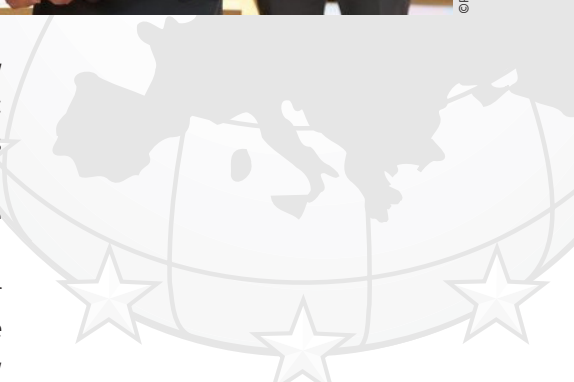
Being the clay vase among the iron ones does not align with our aspirations.

I am convinced that there is a growing need to have a broader debate on the value that the EU can bring to security and defense through enhanced partnerships and mature strategic responsibility and autonomy. These are fields that are intertwined with all other facets of our lives and deserves as much attention as other disciplines, particularly when it comes to the education of future generations.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of leaders and educators to bring this issue to the attention of our populations. We must promote a shared European culture of defense and security, and it is vital to plant this idea in the minds of the younger generations, for future harvests.

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope you enjoy the reading.

General Robert Brieger.



AT A TURN OF HISTORY: MAKING 27 VOICES A SINGLE ONE

By Amb. Delphine Pronk



Amb. Delphine Pronk

Ambassador, Chair of the Political and Security Committee of the European Union, deputy Political Director of EU External Action Service, since 2021

Challenging times in history – like the very days we live in – have the power to reshape our view of the world. It is due time for the perception of the European Union’s place in the world to change. For all too long, the EU had to prove that it was not just the strongest community of values and most advanced trading block in history, but a political power of its own too. Be it for renewed commitment to our European project or for our political imperatives, the Russian aggression to Ukraine has proven it: the EU can speak the language of power to uphold peace.

FROM DIPLOMATIC TALKS TO THE FIELD

It was a cloudy and grey day end of March when we stepped onto the training fields of EUMAM Ukraine, our EU military assistance mission for Ukraine. With all 27 Member States of the EU’s Political and Security Committee (PSC), we observed the result of one of the many decisions that are usually taken in the safe environment of a relatively sober meeting room in Brussels – usually on equally cloudy and grey days.

What we saw were the training activities of EUMAM Ukraine in action. The output of often seemingly abstract deliberations was now concretely in front of us, as in the most dynamic display of our support to Ukraine.

What we saw were European soldiers delivering professional support to the Ukrainian soldiers, from basic training to the handling of various complex weapon systems. **What we saw was, most of all, the exceptional motivation of the Ukrainian soldiers engaged in EUMAM’s training, side by side with their European counterparts, driven by their wish to return to and defend their country.**

It was to me the proof that the EU makes a difference. An impression confirmed in my talks with the Ukrainian soldiers.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

However telling, this is just an example of a much broader reality: the EU – with the PSC as the beating heart or ‘the blue collar workers’ of its common



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foreign and security policy – has gone a long way in playing a stronger role in the world. **The Russian aggression against Ukraine has played a catalytic role showing the EU's steady rise as a political and security actor.**

A former statesman once famously retorted that the EU was a political dwarf and military worm. While a long way remains ahead of us, the past 14 months have shown that neither statement is true any longer. And a former US Secretary of State put it: 'I believe the entire world benefits when Europe is strong, unified and more active on the global stage'. She was right. In an incredible display of unity, the 27 Member States have shown and continue to show their unconditional commitment to support a nation under brutal and unjustified attack, to uphold the rules-based international order, and to protect our values – unitedly and irrespective of sometimes-varying assessments.

Two cases show our shared vision and resolve better than most. The first is the very shape of our military assistance mission to Ukraine. For weeks and months, Member States, the European External Action Service and I have worked hand in glove with our military colleagues to flesh out what form EUMAM Ukraine, EU's first Military Training Mission on EU-soil, was to take. Many questions needed answers to ensure that Ukrainian soldiers would receive the training they most urgently

need: What would be the best structure for this mission? Which trainings to deliver first? How to ensure that a maximum of Member States could contribute to the training activities? There is no shortcut to set up a complex mission across several EU Member States, but in the end, the PSC reached a political agreement, for the sake of the greater goal of supporting Ukraine.

The second example is how we used the European Peace Facility (EPF). Still in 2021, I was regularly chairing long negotiations over relatively small assistance packages to deliver non-lethal standard military equipment. However, once the Russian Armed Forces invaded Ukraine, the PSC took unprecedented leaps, within 48 hours. For the first time in the history of the EU, Member States decided to de-

liver lethal equipment to a third country, in a move that some Member States were long hesitant of. Thanks to intense, yet paced, negotiations and the decision of three Member States to constructively abstain for the lethal part of the military support, we were able to agree over seven successive packages worth 3.6 billion euros – again for the greater goal of supporting Ukraine. And it did make a difference to shore up Ukrainian capacities in the battlefield. Alas, the volume of our assistance is destined to rise in the future given Russia's continued brutal aggression.

These cases remove any doubts – especially in comparison to previous decades – on the EU's readiness to play its role as a political and security actor.



GETTING TO “YES”

The Motto of the EU (‘in varietate concordia’) puts emphasis on the strength of its diversity. In the day-to-day business and as for the diplomats working in the machine room of European diplomacy, one must recognise: it is above all much work to manage this diversity.

Forging consensus on concrete policy questions among 27 Member States – each with their own unique perspectives, needs, interests and priorities – is a challenging and complex task. Establishing a joint assessment of potential threats, challenges, and a shared commitment to concrete actions, is even more so.

Yet again, we made a strength of our pluralism. The EU has managed to agree on our Strategic Compass in spring 2022 – with the PSC as its key body in its negotiation process – after one-and-a-half years of carefully sounding out positions and calibrating policies. The Strategic Compass charts new ground in our defence cooperation both within and outside our borders. Although a document has rarely in itself changed world politics, all Member States committed to make strides toward a more coherent action in security and defence.

LOOKING AHEAD

The above shows nothing more nor less than one thing: building on our progress, the geopolitical shifts of our time pushed the EU and its Member States to reconsider how we act on the international arena, and to take certain decisions at a speed hitherto unknown. Whether we like it or not, these geopolitical shifts will stay and, with them, the need for the EU to act even more decisively, coherently and swiftly. The past year gives reason to be optimistic that we are on the right track.



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Some structural elements may facilitate our future success, which can be centred around three points:

1. Flexibility will continue to be key to react to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, especially on the use of the European Peace Facility. We need to be even more capable of applying this flexibility to react to the fast-changing battlefield realities, and the emerging needs across other fragile areas in the world. That will include adapting the focus and form of the EU’s missions and operations.
2. Finances must keep pace with international developments and, above all, with our ambition to play a role. Although we have put to test our willingness to break new ground, for instance by setting up the European Peace Facility as an off-budget

instrument, we should maintain the same ambition with the rest of our external action.

3. Lastly, the coherence of the foreign policy of the EU and Member States as a whole – ensuring that they all pull together in the same direction – will remain of the essence to make the EU’s actions greater than the sum of its parts.

Whatever the next steps: as its Chair, I will continue to work for a Political and Security Committee that will live up to its responsibility to tackle the challenges that lie ahead of us, to broker compromise and help shape a stronger, coherent and more effective EU’s external action. The past year has shown that we are indeed stronger and more effective at 27 speaking in unison. 



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EU AND UN PEACEKEEPING PARTNERSHIP: ADDRESSING MUTUAL CHALLENGES

By Gen. Birame Diop

UN peacekeeping missions play very crucial role in fostering stability and protection of civilians in some of the most complex and dangerous situations across the world¹. The complexity and sheer scale of the peacekeeping operations necessitate UN to engage in active partnership with Member State, international and regional organizations and agencies. **The United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) have historically shared common commitment to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and providing effective response to global and transregional threats to peace and security.** This commitment and collective aspiration have led to a series of cooperation initiatives in peacekeeping, crisis management and post-conflict peacebuilding around the world. Currently,

13 out of the 21 EU missions/ operations are deployed in parallel with UN missions under an ad hoc arrangement. The beneficial burden-sharing effect of joint UN-EU peacekeeping partnerships elicited the need to develop a coordinated and institutional mechanism to deepen UN-EU peacekeeping partnership². The efforts culminated in the signing of the Framework Agreement on 29 September 2020 and subsequently the renewed Strategic Partnerships on Peace Operations and Crisis Management Priorities for the period 2022-2024 in December 2021. The Strategic Compass adopted in March 2022 reiterated the need for a reinforced UN-EU strategic partnership based on a new set of priorities.

Effective peace operations partnerships depend on coherent and strategically structured relations. Consequently, the differences in organizational cultures, agenda and approaches need to be sys-



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1 Extract from the Statement of H.E. Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, at the Special Committee on Peacekeeping, Operations (C-34): General Debate, 21 February 2023.

2 The EU Defence Fact Sheet, September 2020.





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tematically integrated to strengthen UN-EU cooperation and develop a collective response to address the growing scale and complexity of challenges to international peace and security. Despite some progress, significant challenges persist in designing, maintaining and improving inter-organizational schemes for peace operations³. This paper will provide an overview of UN-EU Peacekeeping partnership and discuss mutual challenges being faced. The paper would also discuss strategies to enhance strategic peacekeeping partnerships between the EU and UN.

UN-EU PEACEKEEPING PARTNERSHIP – AN OVERVIEW

The UN Charter of 1945 acknowledges the positive role of regional organisations in supporting international peace and security. Chapter VIII on Regional Arrangements (Articles 52-54) provides the basis for cooperation between the UN and regional organisations in the maintenance of international peace and security, in line with the principles of the UN Charter. **Pragmatic and strategic peacekeeping engagements between the UN and the EU has significantly contributed to the effectiveness of**

3 EU Institute for Studies, Meeting Brief.

global peace and security efforts.

Some of the most remarkable achievements of UN-EU peacekeeping partnership have been in the areas of information sharing and training is to build capacity to deal with contemporary threats; IEDs, terrorism and implementation of Protection of Civilian mandates. The most noticeable support of EU has provided overtime has been to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, particularly in Mali (MINUSMA). The institutionalisation of the UN-EU partnerships assisted UN in the development of conflict management policies/strategies derived from lessons learnt and best practices.

Cooperation between both organisations has allowed to leverage the comparative advantages and niche of each institution emanating from their resources, capabilities, capacities, competencies and legitimacy. **It has also induced a growing sense of awareness that ‘no single organization can effectively address the increasingly complex, multifaceted peace and security challenges on its own’⁴.** To illustrate the support of the EU to the UN in the conflict management/ resolution, the example of Somalia is worth mentioning. Coming out from a civil war and the rise of religious extremism; Somalia’s weak security condition is exacerbated by complicat-

4 Partnering for peace: moving towards partnership peacekeeping /report of the UN SG, S/2015/229, 1 April 2015

ed and complex electoral process with deep-rooted tensions between political stakeholders and the imminent threat posed by Al Shabab⁵. The EU has been one of the main financiers of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), which is equally supported by the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia and UN Support Office in Somalia. Furthermore, the EU Training Mission (EUTM) has partnered the UN Security Sector Reform efforts to improve the capacity building efforts of the Somalia security forces.

More recently, despite the growing deficit in multilateralism and the rise in political power competition, the EU continues to partner with the UN in providing the needed support to Ukraine to navigate and mitigate the humanitarian challenges posed by the ongoing war⁶.

CHALLENGES OF ONGOING PARTNERSHIP

Even though the UN and EU have signed a number of strategic partnership agreements/policies, its implementation has been plagued by administrative challenges. A case in point is the ‘Reinforcing the UN-EU Strategic Partnership

5 EU External Action official website: [The Diplomatic Service of the European Union](#).

6 UN/Meeting Coverage and Press Releases, 16 June 2022.

on Peace Operations and Crisis Management Priorities (2019-2021) and UN-EU Framework Agreement for Provision of Mutual Support (2020)⁷. Whereas the goal is to see to the strengthening of cooperation and mutual support with the EU to further deepen understanding of mission support approaches to conflicts and crises, the tenets of those agreements are yet to see fruition. The issue has been exacerbated by the spread of COVID-19 and resultant economic challenges, which gravely affected countries and international organisations including the EU and UN.

Both the UN Department for Peace Operations (DPO) and the EU Crisis Management/ Foreign Policy structures are undergoing collaborations in key conflict and crisis management strategies. The Russo-Ukraine war has also put lots of stress on the EU to effectively implement some of its key commitments. Similarly, the inter-organizational awareness is still hampered by lack of resources and lack of mechanisms for monitoring and considering the agenda and developments in the partner organization. Even though the UN DPO Liaison Office in Brussels is an important step forward in facilitating exchange, such mechanisms need to be strengthened.

Finally, the UN and the EU peacekeeping operations are hindered by weak political support from its member states, difficulty in embedding operations within a broader political/ strategic framework, the faltering consent of the host state and local actors. The difficulty to operate and produce an impact in highly volatile environments exacerbated by activities of non-state actors, threats of IEDs and aggressive hostile mis- and disinformation further added to the challenges.

WAY FORWARD

It is important that peace operations are seen as part of a broader political solution, premised on mediation, negotiation and long-term engagement to

address the structural drivers of conflict. **Consequently, the emphasis of strategic partnerships should be on conflict prevention as the central component of an integrated approach to conflict management in the global context.** Therefore, an enhanced cooperation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be aimed at deepening collaboration in mediation support, joint initiatives on women and peace and security as well as youth, peace and security agenda⁷.

The existing level of collaboration between the EU Military Staff and the UN Office of Military Affairs at the Department of Peace Operations needs to be sustained and rejuvenated for the mutual optimum benefit of both organizations in the areas of security sector reform and women peace and security advancement.

Similarly, UN-EU should develop measures to facilitate EU Member States' contributions and support to UN peace operations and the UN Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Initiative⁸. In the context of the current situation in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic and Mali, there is an enhanced need to deepen the trilateral cooperation between the UN, EU and African Union (AU) on crisis management, conflict prevention and peace operations in order to improve the security landscape in the African region⁹.

Although EU supports UN field Missions on numerous capacity building and logistic support, more partnership is required to ensure increased exchanges in assets-sharing, coherence and continuity¹⁰.The EU can enhance

7 UN-EU Cooperation in Peace and Security: The need for more coherence and coordination, Faith Mabera (2020).

8 UN Department of Peace Operations, official website, 2023.

9 UN Department of Peace Operations, official website, 2023.

10 UN Department of Peace Operations, official website, 2023.



©Photo: Article Author

its support to the UN in professional development of peacekeepers. To this end, there is the need to commit more resources for training and capacity building, including regular joint field exercises. The involvement of the UN during EU's annual Military Exercises (MILEX) on crisis management continue to be a significant avenue to strengthening the strategic partnership between the two key organizations. It is important that the training/ capacitation measures are jointly designed to prepare peacekeepers to effectively handle contemporary emerging and evolving threats including terrorism in the peacekeeping theatres.

CONCLUSION

The increase in violent extremism coupled with the complex conflicts around the globe has necessitated the dire need for an effective strategic peacekeeping partnership between the EU and UN. The benefits of effective collaboration between these organizations would substantially improve the conflict resolution mechanisms of the UN in addressing the numerous insecurity challenges confronting humanity. Though both organizations are already involved in some partnerships, pragmatic and innovative strategies are required to effectively address the mutual challenges confronting both organizations in fulfilling their roles as leading actors in global peace and security. ❌

MOVING FORWARD IN TIME OF CRISIS - WHY EU DEFENCE IS MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER

By Amb. Charles Fries



Amb. Charles Fries

Deputy Secretary General for Common Security and Defense Policy and Crisis Response of the European External Action Service, since 2020.

Europe moves forward when it faces crises. It is often in dramatic circumstances that the European Union makes real progress in terms of its integration. We saw this, for example, during the financial crisis of 2008 or, more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic when, in 2020, for the first time, the 27 Member States agreed to pool their debts to revive their economies.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine provides a new tragic illustration of this pattern. The return of war to the European continent has already changed Europe: by showing how urgent it was to reduce our vulnerabilities; by making the model of expeditionary interventions obsolete and bringing back to the forefront a conventional high-intensity conflict between states, combined with hybrid threats; and by pushing Europeans to defend, more than ever before, the rules based international order, against powers nostalgic of their imperial past, or revisionist by force.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine highlighted how lucid High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the Commission Josep Borrell was, when he was calling on Europe to face the world as it really is, and to speak the "language of power" to survive.

In reaction to the invasion, some individual EU Member States took decisions that were inconceivable before 24 February 2022: Sweden and Finland's applied for NATO membership, Denmark joined the Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (after 30 years of

"opt-out"), Germany announced a EUR 100 billion increase in defence spending. And collectively, a united European Union responded forcefully: we broke our energy dependence on Moscow; we adopted ten unprecedented packages of sanctions; we have been providing massive humanitarian, economic and financial support for Ukraine.

But it is through its military support that the Union has been most innovative. For the first time, the Council decided to use the European Peace Facility (EPF) to finance massive delivery of arms and ammunition to a third country. To date, EUR 5.6 billion were allocated to this effort.

This includes a EUR 2 billion package adopted in March to finance the urgent provision of artillery ammunition and missiles from existing stocks or pending orders on the one hand, and jointly procure artillery rounds on the other. Those actions will be complemented by the Commission's efforts to increase the production capacities of the European defence industry, to replenish national stocks and sustain our support for Ukraine.

This example illustrates the importance of the EPF in the range of instruments available to the Union to tackle a crisis. **The EPF is undoubtedly a "game changer" in the way the European Union can cooperate with third countries in the defence sector, not just by advising or training armed forces, but also by supplying equipment – lethal when needed.**



©Photo: EFAS

In addition to financing the supply of arms to Ukraine via the EPF, the EU launched a military assistance mission (EUMAM) in November 2022 to help Ukraine regenerate its troops over the long term. Here too, the European Union was quick and creative. Operating on EU soil, the Mission aims at training 30,000 Ukrainian soldiers by the end of 2023. It enjoys contributions in personnel and training modules from almost all EU Member States. Once again, by pooling our resources and instructors, by expanding and synchronizing our training offers, and by coordinating closely with our main partners (United States, United Kingdom and Canada) who are themselves involved in such programmes, the EU is bringing a concrete added value.

Europe's response to the Ukrainian crisis is part of a more global approach: in March 2022, few weeks only after the invasion, the 27 EU Member States adopted a Strategic Compass on Security and Defence. This document is not

only an analysis, shared by the 27, of the threats, risks and challenges facing the Union: it is a guide for action, with a list of some 80 concrete objectives with precise deadlines spread over the rest of the decade, to make the EU defence stronger and more effective. High Representative Borrell is the guarantor of its successful implementation. In March 2023, on the first anniversary of the Compass, the 27 Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers took stock of the progress achieved so

far and discussed areas where we should speed up our efforts.

In the past 12 months, we have strengthened our security support to other partners around the world – from the Gulf of Guinea to the North West Indian Ocean, from the Western Balkans to South Caucasus. With the launch of new missions in Niger and Armenia, we have demonstrated our commitment to engage in other theatres where the EU can make a difference. We have advanced

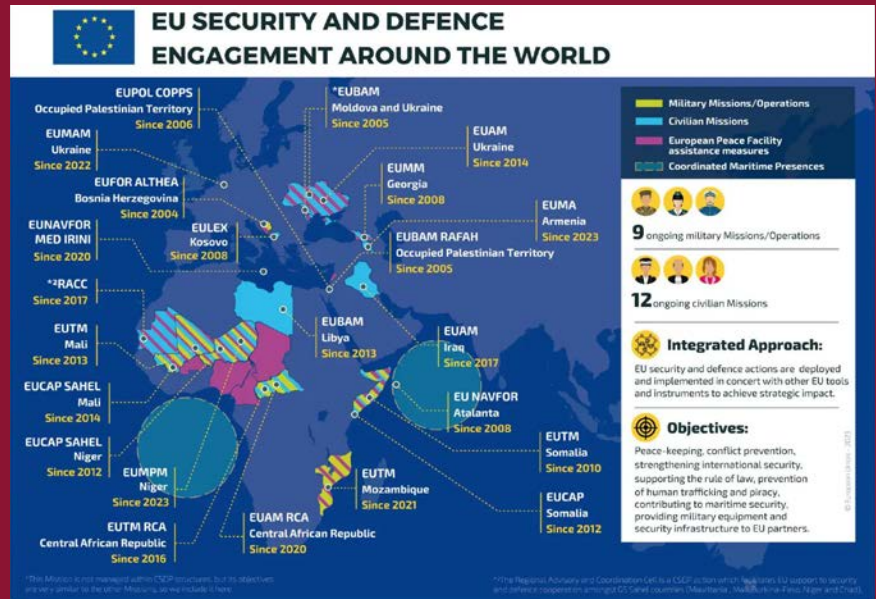


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with the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to increase our ability to respond quickly and decisively to imminent crisis situations outside the Union, for instance for rescue and evacuation or for acting in the initial phase of stabilisation. We have designed new tools to anticipate and counter hybrid threats, strengthen our cyber defence, and fight disinformation campaigns and foreign interference. We have also upgraded our approach to maritime security and advanced our understanding about the security and defence implications stemming from space. Russia's war against Ukraine was a wake-up call that prompted Member States to significantly increase their defence budgets. EU Member States have announced increases in defence spending, for up to EUR 70 billion by 2025.

Defence expenditures are at the heart of a serious and credible European defence policy. We now have to stay the course, translate these commitments into real investments and learn from past mistakes by not only spending more but also better by spending together. For instance, in 2021, joint procurement of defence equipment amounted to merely 18% of total spending. This number is growing but it is still far below the 35% agreed benchmark. Through coordination and cooperation, we need to ensure short-term acquisitions are consistent with our long-term commitments: consolidating the EU defence industry and strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

The project of the European Defence Agency to procure jointly ammunition for Ukraine and Member States is a case in point as it brings together 24 Member States and Norway. By procuring together, the aim is to achieve economies of scale and to have better prices. The upcoming proposals from the European Commission to ramp up the production capacity of the European defence industries in the long run will complement



these efforts. It will help to address bottlenecks, secure supply chains, including where appropriate mobilising EU budget.

All these efforts to make the European Union stronger, with enhanced military capabilities, will only make NATO stronger. And because working with partners lies at the heart of the EU's vision as a security and defence actor, our global network of partners starts feeling the dividends of this new EU security and defence agenda. At the recent Schuman Security and Defence Forum, more than 50 partners joined High Representative Borrell to discuss the full

range of international security threats and how we can best work together to address them.

Faced with rising geopolitical tensions, the European Union has understood the urgent need to demonstrate "strategic responsibility" to uphold its international responsibilities and better defend its security interests. Of course, there is still a long way to go, but the European Union can continue to use its Compass, that sets the right direction of travel.



COOPERATION IF POSSIBLE, CONFRONTATION WHEN NECESSARY

By Mr. Lukas Mandl

The European Commission does not dispose of a portfolio for security and defence, and there is no commissioner for relations with African countries. As part of my parliamentary work, I had recommended both of these for the composition of the Commission with a Commissioner for each of these areas at the beginning of the current legislative period. Today, these issues might be seen in a different light, due to the geopolitical changes.

The vast majority of the members of the College of the European Commission deal with internal affairs: regulatory issues of various kinds. But for many years already, the EU has been in need of substantially more external strength instead of internal regulation. Domestically, the EU needs much more freedom, meaning a reducing of bureaucratic burdens.

Today, after Putin-Russia has launched a full-blown war against

Ukraine - and with hybrid means and measures against the entire free world - many more decision-makers at EU level have concluded that the risks for Europe, but also the opportunities, lie in external relations, in international trade, in cooperation wherever possible and in readiness for confrontation where necessary.

What is called a shift of paradigms on a larger scale, what is called “Zeitenwende” by the German Chancellor, has its roots in fundamental insights that many of us in the Security and Defence Committee of the European Parliament have been following since long before the war. At the same time, the structural deficits in the European administration already mentioned correspond with similar deficiencies in the parliamentary structure. For instance, the Security and Defence Committee is still formally only a sub-committee. This, as well as the structure of the Committee against For-



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eign Interference as a temporary special committee, will have to be changed in the next term after 2024 in order to better serve the Europeans of this and future generations when it comes to security.

The Security and Defence Subcommittee already during the current mandate made major steps to become

- a vibrant body of analysis of the military and civilian missions under the umbrella of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the practical conduct in other areas of European defence, such as the European Defence Agency (EDA), the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and especially the European Defence Fund (EDF), as well as everything planned under the EU's Strategic Compass, such as the Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC);
- an important source of in-depth analysis and policy recommendations for the Commission and the European Council of Member States governments, with a more visionary and long-term approach than is usually found in the documents of administrations at European and Member State level; as well as

- a bridge builder between the citizens of the European Union on the one side, represented by the Members of the European Parliament, and civilian and military institutions on the EU-level as well as in the Member States on the other side, to holistically discuss and mediate the decisions that have and will become urgent since Putin-Russia has started this war.

As much as the quantity and quality of European armed forces will determine the existence of our European way of life, and indeed of our civilisation altogether, a common security and defence culture will also play a decisive role.

Since nothing less than liberal democracy itself and state structures based on the rule of law are at stake here, the aforementioned decisions on the development of our military strength and also the defence capability of our societies will be made by democratically legitimised bodies.

It is actually a confrontation between freedom and oppression, between self-determination and authoritarianism, between dictatorship and democracy.

And yet democracy has prevailed! More than the aggressor would have expected, European societies have shown resilience and the ability to adapt quickly, not only in terms of military capabilities, but also in terms of business and the economy. Here, special mention must be given to the sanctions, which constitute a bloodless defence against a bloody war attack, and which must fulfil their objectives and be maintained and adapted for as long as necessary.

Denmark joined the European cooperation on security and defence with the abolition of the Danish EU defence opt-out. As a result, Denmark can now choose to contribute to the EU's military missions and operations as well as apply for participation in PESCO in the area of security and defence and the EDA. Finland has joined NATO; Sweden will hopefully do so soon, as Hungary's opposition to this endeavour is nothing but a disgrace to Europe, and Turkey will also have to justify itself for the many missed opportunities to be on the right side; Ireland has been thinking about joining NATO; Switzerland showed interest in joining PESCO; the European Peace Facility (EPF) has been used for its intended purpose to a greater extent than ever before; and Member States in general have increased their investments in defence and security.

My home country, Austria, which I have the privilege of representing in the European Parliament, is about to rewrite its National Security and Defence Doctrine. This reads as the basic document for Austria's internal and external security policy. It defines the greatest threats to the republic, security policy guidelines and fields of action.

So far, we have achieved a lot, but this can only be the beginning. There is much more to be accomplished.

The European spending on defence equipment procurement is still well be-

low the agreed collective benchmark. The number of armed forces personnel is far below the 3.5 million from three decades ago - today it amounts to only 1.9 million. From 1999 to 2021, EU defence spending as a whole increased by just 20% - compared to 66% for the USA, 292% for Russia and 592% for China.

It remains to be proven that Europe can continue on this path to pave the way against all odds of the pre-war period and to open a new chapter in European security architecture.

The EDF will have to strengthen the European Defense Technological And Industrial Base (EDTIB). This will pay off also in terms of civil innovation, businesses, industries, job creation and opportunities.

One of the most important recent parliamentary decisions on the long-term will be the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA).


Beside these tactical undertakings, European leadership on all levels of government providing the Europeans of the present and the future with security will also need to conduct strategies at least in the following three areas:

- **Appreciation for caretakers and security taxonomy:** Military and civilian personnel who are engaged in the area of security, as well as volunteers and those who take care of civil protection, could receive more attention and public recognition since the existence of our societies as we know them depends directly on their efforts. Closely linked to this better understanding of the fundamentals of our way of life will be a European "security taxonomy" that will clearly define investment in security as essential, thereby de-blocking investment. We have to overcome the paradox that is shown, for example, by the fact that on the one hand, the EU wants to use the EDF to stimulate investments in this area,

but at the same time, it lacks action in counteracting the uneasy feeling that still arises when doing business in this field. The next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will have to be accompanied by a significant EDF-increase.

- **Geopolitical alliances and a tough approach on China:** Strategic lines to be followed include a deepened partnership with the US based on a much larger EU contributions to NATO, a stable relationship with Turkije, and the involvement of the UK and Switzerland in more security efforts. We will even have to "reach out our hand to the other Russia", as Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has stated fittingly after Putin-Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For the next generations of Europeans, we will have to do our utmost to ensure governments in the territory of today's Russia will pursue partnership rather than aggression; cooperation, not confrontation. And last but not least, we must also strengthen our cooperation with parts of the world that are not connected to us geographically, but through values

and reliability - such as South Korea, Japan with its new security strategy, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Latin America. At the same time, we need a tough approach on China and give more attention to the African continent.

- **Public deliberation and democratic legitimisation:** Everything in this visionary strategic approach largely depends on public opinion, and to be very concrete: on election results. We must not underestimate the threat that comes from hybrid means of war intended to divide our societies, which includes support for populism, "bothsidism" and "whataboutism". The abovementioned "Zeitenwende" requires leadership, courage, persistence, a long breath. European leaders of all levels and branches for many years to come will have the moral obligation to respond to a lot of citizens' concerns and to adapt the means and measures to still achieve "open strategic autonomy" (as the Strategic Compass calls it) for all Europeans. 



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LOOK BACK AT ORION 23 EXERCISE THROUGH THE COMMANDERS' EYES

By Maj.Gen Nicolas Le Nen and Lt.Gen Emmanuel Gaulin



Maj.Gen Nicolas Le Nen

MGen Nicolas Le Nen is Head of the Command for Joint Operations, French Joint Staff

ORION 23 is the first edition of a three-year cycle of high intensity exercises implemented by the French Chief of Defence Staff in 2021, in line with the outcomes of the French Strategic Review. Conducted from May 2022 to May 2023, ORION 23 was divided into four phases: first, a planning exercise for the operational campaign of a Small Joint Operation, second, a first entry operation synchronizing an airborne and an amphibious operation, third, a crisis management exercise at inter-departmental level, and, finally, a high intensity Major Joint Operation against our exercise enemy MERCURE. Marking the return to high intensity warfare for the French Armed forces, ORION 23 correlates with many objectives and elements identified and set in bold relief in the Strategic Compass of the European Union.

As the Commander of the French Command for Joint Operations, I had to conduct ORION 23 Phase 2 from 21st February to 10th March 2023. This second part took place in the South West of France and involved, in a coordinated

manner, all operational components that could be engaged in a modern conflict. This part of the exercise combined the manoeuvres of seven components, subordinated to the Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force ORION. Its three main objectives were: a multi domain integration of operational effects, a first entry operation with a very high readiness task force that we call "Echelon National d'Urgence" (ENU), and cross-component high intensity combat training in a contested environment.

On many aspects, ORION 23 Phase 2 can be food for thought to set up European military capabilities now that the Strategic Compass is under implementation, notably in its "ACT" dimension. It appears that this exercise's scenario-based on a first entry operation in a non-permissive environment intended to help an allied Nation (ARNLAND) under a UN mandate to free its territory against a MERCURE's proxy (the TANTALE militia) - could inspire the current work of the EU on the operational scenarios "initial phase of stabilisation" and "rescue and



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evacuation". Moreover, ORION 23 Phase 2 demonstrated that France could enable the European ambition to develop intervention frameworks based on a rapid reaction capability and ad-hoc coalitions. As ORION force generation can be considered as an allied joint task force built-up around the French high readiness tools, it can fuel the EU reflexion on its Military response concept and especially its Rapid Deployment Capacity. With the exercise engagement of 7000 troops, ORION 23 Part 2 standards perfectly met the European objective to set up a 5000 military strong rapid reaction force. Integrating capacities from six EU members (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain) and those of the United Kingdom and the United States, it also unequivocally demonstrated the status of France as a capable framework Nation within the EU and a trustful and reliable ally.

Even if the process is still being carried out, some lessons identified and learned from ORION 23 Phase 2 already appear to be useful for the development of EU military capabilities. In the short term, many of these could be relevant for the planning of the ambitious EU LIVEX 2023.

Proving the will to exchange our ORION first lessons with the EU, my Deputy

Commander GBA (OF6) Frédéric CHIFFOT, who was the Exercise Director, visited Brussels to brief the PSC and the EUMC. He shared three important topics with the committees.

The first key feedback dealt with the ratio of forces in the different domains. During the exercise, we realised that the force ratios in each domain have a hierarchy. This means that a favourable space force ratio is necessary to allow favourable force ratios for Cyber, Maritime and Air operations (shaping & countering access denial), which then creates favourable conditions for Land operations. Then, you need all the components to coordinate together, including for even more strategic enablers, in order to counter your opponent in all the domains in a hostile environment.

The second point of interest is that the operational level is the only one to have the theatre-wide vision of a dilemma posed by the opponent forces in all domains. It also represents the proper level to orient the effort of the force with cross-domain effects. Therefore, the Force Headquarters set-up and construct, is paramount for conducting cross-domain operations in high intensity conflict. At the tactical level, we recognised that all the Component Commanders focused

their efforts and resources to establish and maintain superiority in their own contested domain.

Finally, Air Commodore Frederic Chiffot emphasized that the Framework Nation role relies on three key capabilities. First, as described before, a very high readiness task force provides the ability to respond to a "fait accompli". Then, robust logistics to conduct large-scale logistical operation: the exercise involved one thousand four hundred (1400) vehicles. Lastly, to keep an agile C2 that builds up as the force deploys is crucial: one of vital moments in the initial entry phase is to finetune the right balance between reach-back and forward elements of the different headquarters. In this respect, high intensity conflict requires, at operational level, a CJTF HQ (circa 400+ personnel) relying on a framework Nation that can be seamlessly plugged to the strategic level.

In today's uncertain geostrategic environment, it is clear that large-scale and realistic exercises like ORION 23 Phase 2 are more than necessary to get ready for the challenges to come. Strongly willing to support the EU to improve its military capabilities, we also expect to welcome even more European contributing nations and units for next ORION. ■■■



Lt. Gen Emmanuel Gaulin

Lieutenant General Emmanuel Gaulin is the Commander of Rapid Reaction Corps France (RRC-FR)

“Force is often one of the first prerequisites for the happiness and even for the existence of nations”.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 served as a wake-up call to those who consider force an inappropriate tool for the management of international affairs. In recent years, analysis of the unrestricted actions of regional actors, the unpredictability of the international situation and a re-emergence of the use of violence to settle confrontations between states has led to an adaptation of the operational readiness of armed forces.

Drawing on lessons learned from recent conflicts, notably between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and during the fighting in Mosul in Iraq, it is possible to define some of the characteristics of modern warfare: lethality, the importance of protection, the need for resilience in command structures and the importance of interoperability. Technological integration in multi-domain operations¹ with the use of drones, cyber assets, hybrid

1 In the French Doctrine, MDO corresponds to operations “multi milieux, multi champs”

capabilities and actions in the information field also shows the range of resources that European militaries can draw on today. To deploy these forces, a strong logistics chain must be mastered, as underlined by the European initiatives within the permanent cooperation structure or the “Solidarity Transport Hub” project.

The challenge for European armies is to develop the capacity to move from rapid, limited deployments in the framework of a small joint operation to absorbing an initial violent and brutal shock from hostile action by a peer competitor. Then, to regain the initiative in the face of such an adversary - to give ourselves time to become resilient and to adapt our force model to regain military ascendancy. To do this, European military staffs must be reactive and embark on a step-change to harden their training.

In a context of inter-state conflict in Europe (or elsewhere), a multitude of conventional-war scenarios might be possible. The culmination of an increase in aggression would be a hypothetical major engagement, corresponding to a situation where Europe, either through its nations or collectively, is officially at war. This would be the most demanding scenario for European armies to face. However the events of 2022 have shown that today we must expect the unexpect-

ed. This cataclysmic scenario was the basis of the ORION 4 scenario.

Exercise ORION saw the state of Mercure attack the state of Arnland. Within the overall framework of this exercise, ‘phase 4’ was indeed the ultimate confrontation phase. After the triggering of an emergency deployment of a joint force on a contested territory, and then the management of the crisis at cross-governmental level, a decision was taken to deploy a multinational force to conduct operations under a NATO mandate. ORION 4 was, therefore, a large-scale, high-intensity operation in a contested environment, facing a peer-to-peer enemy acting in all domains.

France acted as the framework nation for this coalition, launched within the framework of NATO’s Article 5. The integration of European contributions allowed us to demonstrate the credibility of interoperability between allied armies and to reinforce collective capacities in the service of global security. In addition to the Air Force, the reinforcement of the French Navy and other commands (Cyber, Space), France deployed, in an unprecedented way for training, a multinational operational division to conduct a “hardened” confrontation. For example, several Greek aircraft reinforced part of the air component while German and Belgian



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armoured vehicles were deployed on the ground by the Franco-German brigade and the second French armoured brigade. Moreover, Spanish helicopters completed the system close to the ground.

ORION 4 was an unprecedented exercise in terms of its scope and ambition. 12,000 soldiers with 2600 vehicles participated in a three-week live training. The force faced an autonomous opposing force, which increased combat friction and created the conditions for the fog of war. Rapid Reaction Corps - France, in charge of planning and conducting of this phase of the exercise, commanded Multi-Domain Operations through the deployment of part of its Corps headquarters to integrate the effects of the two divisions manoeuvring in contact.

This exercise proved a real test of the multi-domain combat force system. It also tested our command architecture, its information systems and high-spectrum capabilities ability to act in battlefield transparency, lethality and force protection. Finally, it served as a laboratory for modern warfare, integrating innovative capabilities (for example, in information warfare) and acting in all areas to achieve tactical effects in the depth of the battlefield. If ORION 2 showed that the operational level is the level at which

war is managed, ORION 4 showed that the tactical level is the level at which war is fought. The military leader on the ground integrates the capabilities of the higher levels and other domains with one single goal: to acquire a sufficient force ratio in the close area to gain the upper hand over the opponent.

This is exactly what Rapid Reaction Corps – France did during ORION 4: demonstrate how at the tactical level, a force integrates effects from all environments and fields to defeat a peer opponent, gradually shaping him from all sides.

Finally, based on a NATO scenario, ORION 4 showed the range of possibilities offered by multinational operations using France as the framework nation for a major operation. Whether deployed within the Alliance, the European Union or as a simple ad hoc coalition, the integration of multiple allies at all levels of command strengthens the hand of the military leader. In this area, Europe can draw on the experience of the French armed forces to incorporate European and allied forces, as demonstrated by operations such as EUFOR ones or, more recently, BARKHANE and TAKUBA. ✕



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THE WEIGHT OF EXPECTATIONS: THE EU AND THE PROTECTION OF EUROPE

By Dr Daniel Fiott



Dr. Daniel Fiott

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One of the consequences of the war on Ukraine has been a greater realisation that the defence industry matters to the European Union (EU). This may seem like an odd statement given that the Union started to stimulate its defence industry after the EU Global Strategy with frameworks and tools such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Since 2016, the vast majority of EU Member States have been involved in 60 PESCO projects and a host of defence research and capability development projects under the EDF. Before the war, the EU also sought to create greater linkages between its €115 billion (up to 2027) investments in defence, space and civilian research. So, the EU did not need a war to realise its defence industry was worth supporting.

However, what was always missing in the EU's defence industrial policy was a compelling political reason for investing in the sector. To be sure, EU governments understood that investing in the defence sector was a matter of boosting the Union's industrial competitiveness. What they did not have, however, was a reason to link the need to enhance the defence industry with any response to military aggression in Europe. Thus, what has been brought about by the war is a link between politics, military strategy and the defence industry. Recall, that some leaders have even referred to the need for a "war economy" characterised by greater defence spending and military production.



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BACKING WORDS WITH ACTION

Politics, military strategy and the defence industry are, then, the three major elements of any credible security and defence policy. It is therefore no surprise to see the EU move towards joint procurement of ammunition and equipment to support Ukraine and, at the same time, modernise European armed forces. Remarkably, before 2016 the idea that the EU would have its own budget line for military equipment and operational costs would have seemed unthinkable. Today, though, the EU is using its European Peace Facility (EPF) to reimburse any transfers of military equipment to Ukraine and remarkably it is being used for the joint acquisition of equipment.

Some of us may recall, in its early stages, the EPF was regarded as an important tool to help with train and equip missions in places such as Africa. The inside joke – although never quite funny – was that the EU could not train security forces around the world with painted broom handles or cardboard cut-outs of weapons. While over €700 million in assistance under the EPF is currently being provided in the Western Balkans, Middle East and Africa, the Facility has so far helped deliver €3.7 billion in assistance to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as a direct consequence of Russia’s military aggression. So, those broom handles

have been replaced by armoured vehicles, ammunition and medical equipment.

What is more, the EU has moved quickly to financially reinforce the EPF – taking it from an initial €5.6 billion in 2021 to €7.9 billion in 2023. The Facility is not just helping to deliver military equipment to Ukraine, however, as just over €60 million is being used to directly support one of the Union’s latest Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions to train Ukrainian armed forces. And even here, the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM) to Ukraine is an incredible step forward for the EU: even up to a few years ago, the idea that the Union would be training 15,000 or more Ukrainian soldiers on the territory of the EU would have seemed laughable.

All of these measures are having a direct impact on Ukraine and European

security. For all of the amounts of money and acronyms the EU can speak of, the reality is that real world contribution of the Union is being felt on the ground. As a senior member of the Ukrainian government stated during the 21 March Schuman Security and Defence Forum, “the EU’s efforts are helping to save lives in Ukraine”. **Thus, the reality is that the war has brought the best out of the EU and, even if more support is required, the Union and its Member States have made it their priority to support Ukraine with money, steel and solidarity.**

However, perhaps we are only starting to understand the ramifications of the EU’s support for Ukraine. If we combine the financial efforts made under the EDF and PESCO for defence research and capability development with the



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financial assistance made under the EPF, we might be witnessing the embryonic creation of a something akin to an “EU defence budget”. While individual Member States are still being encouraged to spend more nationally on defence, they are also seeing the virtues of joint investments and procurement at the EU level. There is no better evidence of this than how the European Commission and European Defence Agency are increasingly handling issues such as defence research, capability development and joint procurement on their behalf.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Yet the combination of politics, military strategy and the defence industry, while necessary, also imply a number of challenges and trade-offs. **First, EU governments have to balance their short-term equipment needs with longer-term capability projects.** The war has exposed the gaps in the Union’s ability to manufacture basic equipment, but it has also highlighted that capabilities like tanks are not a thing of the past. Thus, if EU states do not want to be dependent on imports of equipment they will need to collectively develop alternatives over the coming years. Yet, this perspective may depend on how the war evolves: some may regrettably see any defeat of Russia as an excuse to revert to lower

levels of defence spending – this would be an error.

Second, EU governments will have manage the weight of expectations now unleashed by the effectiveness of the EPF. The Union’s ability to rapidly finance and deliver military equipment has not been lost on partners that are facing potential future war: think of the Middle East or the Indo-Pacific. A major implication of this weight of expectation is how far EU governments will further expand the EPF: they have already injected a further €2 billion in 2023, but where will it end – €10 billion, €15 billion, €20 billion? And here there is a need to think about how additional money is allocated to common costs for operations and capacity-building in addition to the joint procurement of ammunition and equipment – the EPF has other pillars of action too.

Third, greater demands on the battlefield will inevitably imply a need for more manufacturing capacity and shorter production run times. Yet, from what we hear from industry politicians may need to be more patient. They have largely neglected Europe’s defence industry for three decades, yet expect industry to simply power up factories and supply chains that have not existed for years. Consider how the CEO of one major defence company in Europe has stated that it would take until 2024 be-

fore refurbished battle tanks could be delivered to Ukraine. That is a considerable time lag and it is but one example of major defence manufacturing shortfalls in Europe.

Fourth, there may be a risk that EU governments miss an opportunity to boost the interoperability of armed forces by the sudden and rapid need to acquire defence equipment. The EPF does not prejudice where equipment comes from, and so governments are quickly tapping into global supply chains to procure equipment for Ukraine and themselves. This is to be expected given the severity of the situation in Ukraine. Yet, even without insisting on a “buy European” ethos for equipment bought under the EPF, the risk is that European militaries will modernise without maintaining and enhancing interoperability. Some thought needs to be given within an EU and NATO context about how interoperability is being affected by the sudden surge in weapons acquisition in Europe.

A CULTURE OF DEFENCE

Despite these challenges, however, the EU has undeniably moved at a rapid pace to help Ukraine and boost its own defences. More than any single word in the Strategic Compass, the EU has proven its ability to act in a strategic manner in deeds. This bodes well not only for Europe’s defence industry and militaries, but also for the idea of a European strategic culture for defence. The realisation that Europe has to do more for its own defence – with or without close partners – is sinking in for many capitals. Yet complacency should not be allowed to creep back in: the EU’s growth as a defence actor should not depend entirely on what happens in Ukraine. If Russia is defeated, it will still remain a threat. And there is a world beyond Ukraine that is becoming ever more worrisome. ❌

UNITED EUROPE OF DEFENCE: CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITIES

By Adm (ret) Matteo Bisceglia

The current geopolitical context has revealed new threats to security in Europe, bringing the issue of Common Defense back to the top of the agendas of the main European fora, as a pillar of strategic autonomy for the European Union.

Potential future threats require capabilities difficult to develop on a national basis, due to limited technological resources and reduced national investments in the defense sector. Inadequacy of investments causes the risk of weakening the defense industry in Europe with repercussions on the ability to develop new technologies and autonomously guarantee security in Europe.

However, if on the one hand the current crisis on the eastern borders has relaunched the European countries to an arms race with a minimal increase in investments, on the other it has accentuated the risk that the nations may give priority to the internal market for development and the purchase of additional capacity.

The sought-after Strategic Autonomy in Europe therefore risks being hindered not only by insufficient investments, but also by the propensity of individual states to procure defense systems on a purely national basis, assuming a protectionist posture towards their respective industries. The result is solutions of questionable cost-effectiveness and growth of the technological gap with overseas countries.

It is also true that the awareness that the only effective solution is to seek and encourage cooperation in the defense sector is reflected in the many initiatives launched in Europe. I am referring to

the European Defense Industrial Development Program (EDIDP) and the European Defense Fund (EDF) projects that, together with the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), introduce clear economic and strategic advantages, both for the Member States and for the industries in Europe. Some successful programs such as ESSOR (European Secure Software defined Radio) and MALE RPAS (Medium Altitude/Long Endurance drone), financed within the EDIDP, are proof of this.

Nevertheless, in my opinion EU Member States do not cooperate enough and continue to favour the interests of the national industry with negative impacts on the technical and economic effectiveness of the acquisition programs, hindering the process of establishing a common European defence. National procurement activities are still numerous; EU Member States prefer national development and production programs, generating fragmentation, ineffective spending and weakening of the industrial structure.



Adm. (ret) Matteo Bisceglia

Italian Navy Officer, former
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In this scenario, it appears necessary to increase efforts in promoting cooperation, starting from sharing national needs from which to derive common and harmonized European requirements. A process that would find a favourable boost from the greater recognition by the EU Member States of the many consequent advantages, such as the reduction of duplications and fragmentation of military capabilities, the growth of the levels of interoperability and standardization, and the possibility of benefiting from support in common services and high economies of scale.

On this subject, during my mandate as Director of OCCAR, in each forum I have beaten the drum with a motto: “Cooperation, Cooperation, and Cooperation”. This is not an empty and imaginative slogan. In my view, there are three levels of pragmatic implementation.

First, cooperation among nations, to be encouraged at various political levels. The political will to cooperate among EU Member States must be complemented by a push aimed at strengthening cooperation among industrial partners, which should be combined with cooperation among international organizations. The relationship between international or-

ganizations is often forgotten, leading to duplication of efforts, fragmentation of capabilities, lack of interoperability and standardization of procedures, as well as additional costs.

Cooperation among states, industries and organizations is, therefore, the keyword that must form the basis on which to develop a common defense in Europe.

Industrial cooperation can contribute to the establishment of a robust and competitive European Defense Technological Industrial Base, fundamental not only for the search for advanced technologies necessary for the development of new capabilities, but also for the competitiveness of European industry in international contexts.

Unfortunately, industrial realities with a European connotation, such as MBDA and partly Airbus, are numerically limited in order to aim towards a real European defence. Aggregations in the land field such as Nexter and Krauss Maffei Wegmann, as well as Naviris (Fincantieri and Naval Group) in the naval field, are examples of regional and not European cooperation.

It is therefore necessary to address and eliminate this unhealthy competition among industries in Europe, and to en-



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courage forms of cooperation in which each industry can operate in the sectors in which it is able to express greater capabilities and can give guarantees of reliability and effectiveness. I am referring to industrial groups to which to entrust the construction of aerial, naval and land platforms, given the gained experience, leaving the market of components to the specialized niche industries.

Along the same lines, duplication and fragmentation must also be avoided in regard to the management of programs by international organisations. Greater interoperability and standardization as well as minimization of additional costs are achievable objectives through the identification of centres of excellence, which can coexist as partners, operating on the basis of their experiences and skills, while sharing relevant knowledge.



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This approach can support a more integrated, innovative and cooperative European defense, to the benefit of both nations and industries.

More specifically, among the main organizations operating in the defense sector in Europe, I believe that the European Defense Agency can operate in support of nations in the development and harmonization of requirements, providing for the involvement of OCCAR right from the early stages of the preparation of these requirements. The management work of the definition, development and production phases by OCCAR would follow, concluding with the work of the NSPA, for the in-service support phase.

A scenario, the latter, not entirely remote, since it represents what is already applied in the management of the Multinational Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) Fleet (MMF) program, example of a successful program that has seen the effective coordination of multiple actors involved, be they nations, industries and international organizations.


Observing and operating in this complex scenario from a privileged position, I can state that there are many examples of successful armament programs devel-

oped in cooperation in Europe (A400M, MALE RPAS, FREMM, BOXER, TIGER, etc.), and they have traced a path that can represent the guideline on which to proceed to achieve a united Defense in Europe.

Furthermore, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict at the doorstep of Europe may represent a decisive moment in the launch of cooperative armament programmes. It is the right time to get the

maximum value from the cooperation. Avoiding competition among nations, industries and international organizations is essential to allow Europe to equip itself with new and advanced capacity assets, with maximum cost effectiveness.

In my opinion, the tools are there.

Political and industrial will must now more than ever converge, along the direction of a most-needed defense cooperation. 



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PREPARATION OF THE MILEX-23 EXERCISE

By Spanish Defence Joint Staff - Force Development Division



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Since joining the European Union (EU) in 1985, Spain has actively participated in the construction of the European project, getting involved and contributing to the development of the most important European policies, with sustained contributions in a wide range of areas.

A clear example is the commitment shown to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), a policy considered essential for enhancing Europe's defence in the wake of the global security challenges facing the continent.

The EU's strategic plan of action to strengthen the CSDP over the next decade, the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, contains, among other actions, the creation of an EU Rapid Deployment Capability (EU RDC) of up to 5,000 military personnel, under the Military Rapid Response (MRRC) concept, to address the EU's need to respond to imminent threats or to react rapidly to a crisis situation outside the Union.

The EU RDC capability will enhance the EU's response mechanisms to respond

to such threats or crisis situations, and it is designed to address the full spectrum of crisis management missions envisaged in the Union Treaty in the field of Security and Defence.

The EU Battlegroups (EUBGs), which have proven to be a valuable tool for defence cooperation, transformation and interoperability, will be a central element of the EU RDC, which will also integrate pre-identified modules made up of military forces and capabilities belonging to the Member States. The EU RDC framework will be supplemented by other elements necessary for its employment, such as forward planning, operational scenarios and EU support structures. This design will allow the EU RDC capability to be tailored to the mission and the conduct of exercises will contribute to its readiness and interoperability.

From the outset, Spain is supporting the conceptual development and the need to start organising LIVEX exercises in 2023 to contribute to the development, readiness and interoperability of

the future EU RDC, which, as set out in the Strategic Compass, should reach full operational capability by 2025.

In April 2022, therefore, Spain made a commitment to the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) to support the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) in the execution of the MILEX-23 exercise and its associated LIVEX phase with the progressive participation of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC). Spain committed to do so by providing dedicated exercise training scenarios (FHQ, forces), a training area for the exercise execution phase and the host nation support (HNS) necessary to carry out the implementation phase of the multinational exercise, scheduled for the second half of 2023, coinciding with Spain's Presidency of the Council of the EU. This will be a new opportunity to bring forward, along with the other EU partners, the EU's significant and ambitious agenda and its objectives.

The MILEX-23 exercise will be a historic milestone, as it will be the first LIVEX exercise of the EU RDC concept to be carried out within the EU, marking the beginning of the process to achieve a military capability that will enable the EU to act with its own means to resolve crisis situations outside its borders. The aim is to improve the EU's military preparedness and ability to respond to external conflicts and crises by focusing on the planning and execution of a military operation in a hybrid threat environment, with a view to the implementation of the EU RDC.

An innovative aspect is also the financial aspect of the exercise. The Strategic Compass calls for a reassessment

of the scope and definition of common costs, and the introduction of greater flexibility in the collection and use of EU Member States' financial contributions, as well as in the use of the European Peace Facility (EPF) financial mechanism, for funding that could cover eligible exercise-related costs. Similar to the coverage of missions and operations.

This way, it is considered that solidarity would be strengthened and participation would be encouraged, not only in EU military missions and operations, but also in EU exercises.

In order to finance the eligible costs of MILEX-23, and without prejudice to future decisions on the financing of common costs, the Council of the EU has agreed (by decision (CFSP) 2023/577) to set a financial reference amount of 5 million EUR.

On its side, Spain's support for the MILEX-23 exercise, in its dual role as framework nation and exercise host, is materialised in the national contribution of military assets that could be grouped into three blocks of capabilities.

In the first, linked to command and control capabilities, Spain contributes the Force Headquarters (FHQ), which - within the EU's operational structure - corresponds to an operational level headquarters. This HQ will have the particularity that it will be on board a naval asset.

In the second block, Spain will provide the majority of the force in the naval domain (two amphibious warships, an escort vessel, a landing group, embarked naval aviation), in the land domain (a tactical group) and in the aerial one (combat, transport and reconnaissance aircraft). These will be complemented by units and capabilities contributed by the other EU Member States, until the force required to achieve the exercise's objectives is complete.



In the third block, Spain will provide the "Sierra del Retín" exercise range, located in the south of the province of Cádiz. This site covers an area of more than 53 square kilometres and has a beach area suitable for an "amphibious landing".


One of the most important aspects of the exercise, in terms of interoperability in communications between the EU command structures and those of the EU Member States, is that the exercise will be conducted between the strategic and operational levels using the EU command and control system. To achieve this objective and to ensure communications between the EU OHQ, the embarked EU FHQ and the forces under their command, a fielded communications and information system (EU CIS DP) will be installed on board the operation level command ship.

The exercise has been designed by the EUMS, and its planning is being led by the MPCC, with support from the designated FHQ. It is planned to take place in a Stabilisation (SASE: safe and secure environment) scenario, in a coastal area requiring an amphibious entry force to control a seaport (SPOD: Sea Port of Debarkation) to enable the continuation of the campaign through the deployment of follow on forces, supported by air assets. The choice of this scenario for the exercise should serve to establish the basis for the general framework of action of the EU RDC, which is the deployment of forces linked to previously developed operational scenarios, the composition

of which is derived from the analysis of these scenarios.

During the execution phase of the exercise, due in October, a demonstration of capacities will take place, for the benefit of attending authorities and different civilian and military personnel. The purpose of this activity is to promote the objectives and scope of the exercise and to reinforce the knowledge of the military aspects of crisis management. This activity will take place on board the LHD (Landing Helicopter Dock) "Juan Carlos I", followed by an amphibious demonstration on the Chorrillo beach of the Rota Naval Base (Cadiz).

In short, the execution of the EU LIVEX MILEX-23 exercise will provide an excellent opportunity to show how the EU's military planning mechanism works in response to crisis management. It will highlight the fact that the EU has the military expertise and mechanisms to plan and conduct a mission in response to a crisis.

MILEX-23 will be an historic milestone in the framework of the objectives set out in the Strategic Compass to meet the challenges of the next ten years. It will also contribute to reinforcing the capacity of the MPCC and facilitate the training of an independent EU military operation at all three levels (strategic, operational and tactical) to respond to crisis situations with a view to the full operational capability of the EU RDC which, driven by this exercise, shall reach its full combat readiness by 2025. 

THE NEW FRONTIERS IN SPACE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EU

By Mr. Timo Pesonen



Mr. Timo Pesonen

Director General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) at the European Commission, since January 2020

Europe is a space power. Its space flagships Galileo (for positioning, navigation and timing - PNT), Copernicus (for Earth observation) and, tomorrow, IRIS² (for secure telecommunications) are key to our strategic autonomy, economy and security.

With the unjustified Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the EU faces new challenges: its space assets are no longer immune to threats and hostile activities. At the same time, it can also seize new opportunities in Space to support its security, and enhance its strategic posture, by developing and deploying new means and capabilities.

The EU started already in 2021 to invest in space-based defence R&D activities via the European Defence Fund. Member States decided to allocate indicatively at least 10% of the overall spending of the Fund to space-related actions. To date, over three annual work programmes a EUR 324 M investment has already been decided.

The first ever EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence was published on 10 March 2023. For the first time at the EU level, it brings together space, security and defence. Alongside the air, land, maritime and cyber domains, space is recognised as an operational domain. All are interconnected: a cyberattack can severely affect the functioning of space assets, in outer space or on the ground.

Space has become more critical for security and defence. Space-based assets, such as satellites, play a vital role in modern warfare, based on communication, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance positioning, navigation and timing. Any disruption to these assets can severely impact military operations.

Satellites in low Earth orbit can provide real time military communication over a vast range of locations, thus overcoming limits related to ground-based and geostationary orbit -based radio-communication and making it easier and



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safer for forces to exchange with their commands or with allied forces.

Near real time Earth observation permits early warning and enable military decision makers to quickly react to developing situations on the ground.

And PNT provides highly accurate location information, allowing troops to navigate timely through unfamiliar terrain and/or target specific areas. The Public Regulated Service (PRS) of the EU PNT system (Galileo) has been designed for security and defence applications and should reach its initial operational capability by the end of 2024.

The Russian war in Ukraine has revealed the key role of commercial players in providing imagery, data and services to an active warzone. Armed forces are also more and more relying on commercial initiatives to complement governmental systems. This is notably the case for Earth observation, but also sometimes for launchers¹.

¹ The United States are awarding contracts to emerging actors to meet defence needs for launchers.

Space is therefore a critical enabler not only for our everyday life, but also increasingly for security and defence. This new reality underpins our EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence. In close cooperation with Member States, the Commission will capitalise on the deepening link between space and defence and further develop synergies.

Breaking silos between space and defence will ensure that the EU can defend its interests in and from space, by improving the resilience of space systems and services, and by enhancing the use of space for security and defence purposes. This will require better taking military and security related needs into account when developing EU space initiatives. But let's be clear: The EU is not operationalizing space for warfighting purposes or weaponising space. Its ambition is to continue promoting responsible behaviour and the peaceful use of space.

SPACE CHALLENGES

The starting point for the Strategy is the **shared understanding of space**

threats. It requires taking into account the capabilities of potential adversaries as well as their behaviours in space, but also from the ground towards space assets. The Strategy proposes to perform this analysis at EU level, which is new. This will result in an annual classified threat assessment, relying on inputs from the intelligence community. The Commission will also contribute to this threat assessment based on the security monitoring of the EU space components.

This strategic understanding will set the scene for the EU: how to build resilience and protect its space assets, how to respond to space threats, how to enhance the use of space in security and defence and finally, how to engage more with partners. These form the building blocks and core of the strategy.

The challenges for the EU arise from a rapidly changing strategic environment. The continuous development of space capabilities brings more opportunities to access space and to develop space-based systems and services, both for our citizens and for security and defence. But this also comes with higher exposure to

risks. Challenges can arise all the way from intentional hostile behaviour to unintentional safety risks caused by debris.

In November 2021, Russia tested an anti-satellite weapon against one of its own satellites, generating a large amount of space debris that could threaten our assets in space. **Space-based services can easily be disrupted** by different and evolving kinetic and non-kinetic means, like cyber and electronic warfare. Jamming of positioning signals is a typical example of this. As several space powers, among which Russia and China, are developing **counterspace capabilities** and related doctrines, space has become an increasingly contested area. It is also becoming congested, especially since new actors, beyond the historical space powers, are now also accessing the space domain. Like on a crowded highway, accidents happen where there is more speed and traffic. It is critical to cooperate and exchange information to avoid collisions and **keep space safe and secure**.

This complex and continuously evolving space landscape, and the fact that space has no frontiers come as an opportunity for the EU to strengthen its strategic posture. The EU and its Member

States need to collectively stand ready for the protection of our interests and assets in the space domain.

RESILIENCE AS THE FIRST LINE OF DETERRENCE

The more vulnerable the target is, the more it attracts possible hostile action. Resilience is the best way to raise the threshold for adversaries to attack.

Some EU Member States have already developed resilience related national regulations and means. But a lot remains to be done to make these efforts more consistent and ensure coordination in case of crisis. At the EU level, we need to build resilience, protect and respond.

The Commission will propose **an EU Space Law** to enhance the security, safety and sustainability of space operations and services in the EU. It will encourage the development of resilience measures, foster information exchange on incidents as well as cross-border coordination and cooperation.

An Information Sharing and Analysis Centre (EU Space ISAC) will be established to strengthen the resilience of capabil-

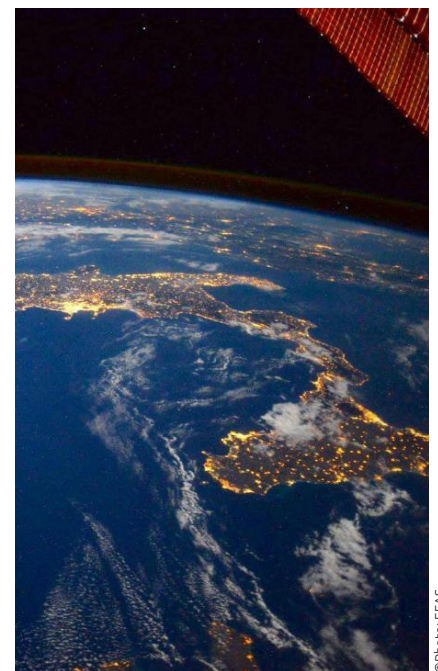
ities of the EU space industry, including New Space.

The EU will also ensure security of supply by **reducing strategic dependencies** on critical technologies for ongoing and future space projects in the EU and for EU space programmes.

The EU should also take action to ensure **long-term EU autonomous access to space**, which is key to be able to quickly react to any incident in space. Defence users could also benefit from the innovative, responsive and versatile launch solutions that would be supported.

ENSURE THE ABILITY OF THE EU TO RESPOND TO SPACE THREATS

Before attributing and responding to a space threat, it is necessary to detect and characterise it. The EU and its Member States need to know who stands behind any hostile activities and be able to rapidly react. The Strategy calls for enhanced **space domain awareness at EU level**, relying upon better space surveillance capabilities.



MAKE SPACE A STRONGER AND INNOVATIVE ENABLER FOR DEFENCE

There are two important lessons stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine: the strategic nature of space-based services for defence, and the risks resulting from dependency on a third country for critical services.

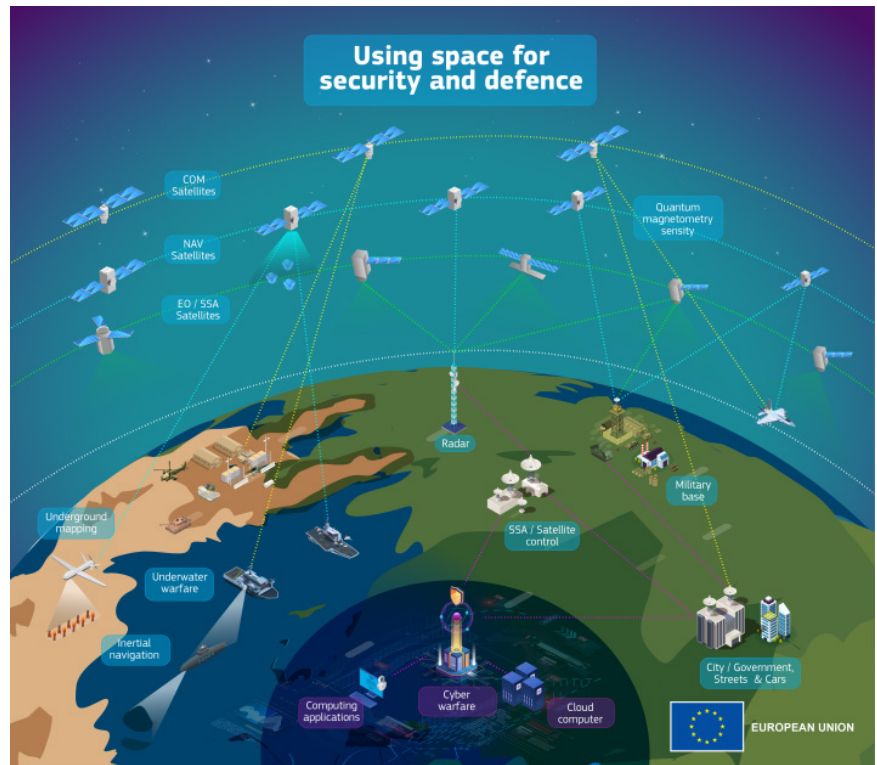
Through the European Defence Fund, the EU will keep on investing significantly in space-related defence R&D. But we need to do more. Thus, when developing future EU space programmes, the Commission will take into account **long-term military requirements for space-based defence services**, the same way it will be done to define the service portfolio for the secure connectivity programme, IRIS². The Commission is also considering defence needs for an EU Earth observation governmental service.

There is also a need to have **all required skills** within the European Union. The Strategy announces upskilling and reskilling activities to meet industry demand and avoid future skills gaps, focusing in particular on space for security and defence, and supporting the 2023 European Year of Skills.

Europe also needs to be able to capture and stimulate all the **innovation potential of our space and defence industry**, including New Space. This is why the Commission will bring together space, security and defence start-ups to explore how to integrate defence needs and commercial space solutions better and faster.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

The Strategy stresses the importance of **deepening cooperation in space security and defence** with the US and



NATO, as well as developing space security dialogues with third countries. It will support multilateral efforts to reduce space threats, including in the United Nations, and stepping up the public diplomacy campaign for Safety, Security and Sustainability in Outer Space.

To conclude, the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence is a perfect demonstration of how a geopolitical Commission makes the best use out of its competences to defend the EU's strategic interests in a tense geopolitical

and geoeconomical environment. With the Strategy, the Commission, the High Representative and Member States will define a **European response** to current and future space threats, enhance the EU's strategic posture and autonomy in the space domain and break silos between space and defence. This is a complete change of paradigm that will have long-term consequences for the future, as we will proceed in its implementation together with Member States. ❌



NEWS FROM THE EUMC

BY EDITORIAL BOARD

VISIT TO MOZAMBIQUE (25-28 JANUARY)

General Robert Brieger visited the EU CSDP Training Mission in Mozambique, where he met with the Mission Force Commander, Commodore Martins de Brito (PT Navy Marines) and visited the Katembe Training Camp. Gen. Brieger noted the high quality of the training provided by EUTM, and emphasized the mission's crucial role in assisting the Mozambican armed forces to respond more efficiently and effectively to the crisis in Cabo Delgado, in accordance with human rights and international humanitarian law. Additionally, the mission focuses on preparation for protection of civilians, including gender-related is-



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sues, and specific training on Women, Peace and Security. Admiral Joaquim Mangrasso, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Mozambique, and Ambassador Antonino Maggiore,

Head of EUDEL to Mozambique, met with CEUMC to discuss political, military, and civilian developments in the country and its neighbourhood.

OFFICIAL VISIT TO GERMANY (9-10 FEBRUARY)

On the invitation of Gen Eberhard Zorn, Inspector General of the Bundeswehr, the German Armed Forces, CEUMC travelled to Berlin for an official visit, to discuss the effects on Europe of the war in Ukraine, and the progresses in implementing the Strategic Compass. "This landmark document has paved the way for a *mentale Zeitenwende* in how we, as Europeans, will respond to challenges and threats to our own interests and citizens," said Gen. Brieger. "It is now time for EU Member States to contribute responsibly and collectively. In response to calls for the EU to play a more active role as a security partner and provider,

we must speak with a unified voice. What is at stake is the Union's credibility as a collective team and its defense and security ambitions."

The CEUMC exchanged views with State Secretary Thomas Hitschler and LtGen Andreas Marlow, commander of the German Special Training Command that provides artillery training to Ukrainian soldiers, within the EUMAM training framework. In this context, discussions centred on the necessity of bolstering EU support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity by any means possible.



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VISIT TO CAT-C, POLAND (23 FEBRUARY)



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CEUMC made a brief operational visit to the EUMAM Ukraine Training Facility hosted by the Sapper Camp, home to the Combined Arms Training Command (CAT-C) and the 1st Brest Sapper Combat Engineer Regiment. On behalf of the

27 Chiefs of Defence he represents, he expressed appreciation and satisfaction for the quality of the training: “Our praises go to the Polish government and all Member States that contribute to enhancing the military capability of Ukraine’s Armed Forces to regenerate and conduct effective operations. These efforts will strengthen Ukraine’s capacity to defend its territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, to assert its sovereignty, and to protect its civilians.”

Gen. Brieger, accompanied by Amb. Pronk, Chair of the EU Political and Security Committee, toured the Camp’s logistical and training facilities and had a

chance to converse with several Ukraine soldiers stationed there for training. “As we approach the one-year anniversary of Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, I can assure you that Europe and its partners will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it is necessary.” While in Poland, the Chairman also had the opportunity to meet with General Rajmund T. Andrzejczak, Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. The primary topic of conversation was the training of Ukrainian troops in Poland, with a focus on tank crews on LEOPARDs, donations for the UKR, and EU training expenditures.

SCHUMAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE FORUM, BRUSSELS (20-21 MARCH)

Gen Brieger attended the first edition of the Schuman Security and Defence Forum, in Brussels (20-21 March). The Schuman Forum is a component of the EU’s broader effort to establish a more coherent and extensive network of relationships with international and regional actors and bilateral partners around the globe. Specifically, it seeks to facilitate dialogue and strategic reflection on international security and defense among

the EU, its Member States, and their partners by examining current trends, issues, and initiatives. It brings together politicians, senior decision-makers, military representatives from EU Member States and partner nations, as well as representatives from international and regional organizations with which the EU cooperates on security and defense. Also invited are members of civil society, thought leaders, and opinion leaders.



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Under the auspices of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the Schuman Forum is held every two years.

OFFICIAL VISIT TO SPAIN (23-24 MARCH)

General Robert Brieger paid a two-day official visit to Spain at the invitation of Admiral General Teodoro Esteban López Calderón, the Spanish Chief of Defense. CEUMC engaged in fruitful discussions with the Spanish Minister of Defense, Margarita Robles, and delivered a briefing to an international audience at the CESEDEN (Centro Superior de Estudios de la Defensa Nacional). During its time

in Spain, CEUMC visited the EUNAVFOR Atalanta OHQ in Rota and the EU SATCEN facilities in Torrejón de Ardoz. “I am very pleased with this extensive and fruitful visit. Spain is a significant contributor to EU CSDP activities and a staunch supporter of the Strategic Compass initiative. All EU Member States have enthusiastically endorsed Spain’s proposal to serve as the host nation for the very first live ex-

ercise of our premier military tool, the Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC). As requested by the Strategic Compass, this exercise represents a key milestone in achieving the RDC’s Full Operational Capability. With so many factors to consider for a new initiative and a very short timeline, it would be difficult for anyone to accomplish. I am confident that Spain will achieve this objective timely!” said ▶

► General Brieger. The visit to the Atalanta OHQ, in addition to the one paid in Djibouti on 22 July, afforded CEUMC the opportunity to personally confirm the astounding daily results achieved by this EU CSDP Operation. General Brieger congratulated Commander VADM Nuez and his staff on fifteen years of successful multitasking operations and naval diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region for

peace, stability, and security. General Brieger had also the opportunity to visit the EU Satellite Centre. “The EU’s daily military missions and operations rely heavily on satellite services to accomplish missions and protect our forces. We are really grateful to the SatCen for their commitment around the clock”.



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OFFICIAL VISIT TO IRELAND (29 MARCH – 1 APRIL)

The Chairman of the EU Military Committee paid a visit to the Irish defense authorities, where he emphasized that Ireland’s contribution to the implementation of the Strategic Compass, in conjunction with all EU Member States, is crucial to the overall success. “We appreciate Ireland’s political and military leadership in these efforts. A credible, shared EU security and defense objective is now within reach.” CEUMC met with An Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Micheál Martin, and with Lieutenant General Seán Clancy, Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces. The status quo in the implementation of the Strategic Compass, the ongoing debate about the adaptation of the EU Command and Control architecture, the EU’s support for Ukraine, and the future

of EU CSDP missions and operations were the primary topics of discussion.

General Brieger addressed two distinguished groups: the Joint Command and Staff Course along with the Senior Enlisted Leaders Standing Advisory Group (SELSAG), and the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA). In

both instances, the CEUMC stressed how “we have accomplished much, but much remains to be done. There is no room for complacency so long as our security remains at risk. No one can overcome all obstacles on their own, which is why we must combine our efforts with the utmost resolve.”



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EUMC AWAY DAYS, SWEDEN (19-21 APRIL)

Under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency of the Council, the EU Military Committee met in Goteborg for a 2-day discussion on the lessons learned from the ongoing war in Ukraine (possibly useful for future CSDP engagements), and how to enhance the timely and effective military contribution to the overall EU decision-making process. “The Away Days represent for the Military Committee a traditional opportunity to deepen debates on current issues, while engaging



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directly with relevant military and political authorities from the Member State hosting the event. I am grateful to our

Swedish colleagues for the opportunity and the fruitful outcomes,” said Gen Brieger, CEUMC, departing from Sweden.



Q&As

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO GEN BRIEGER, AS EU SENIOR MILITARY EXPERT, AT: CEUMC.SECRETARIAT@EAS.EUROPA.EU

How did the Russian aggression affect the way we look at defense planning in EU and within Member States? Will this generate further synergies and boost interoperability, considering the existing fragmentation in the EU defense environment?

Let me start by providing some context so that I can properly answer these very interesting questions. In response to Russia's attack on Ukraine, EU Heads of State and Government pledged at Versailles on March 11, 2022, to "boost European defense capabilities." They asked the Commission to "present an analysis of the defense investment gaps [...] and to propose any additional measures needed to strengthen the European defense industrial and technological base," among other things. Following that, the Commission and the European Defense Agency (EDA) conducted the requested research and issued the Joint Communication in May 2022. Due to the increased security threat, it was suggested that the most critical capability gaps be prioritized at the top of the list. Immediate goals include restocking, replacing legacy systems from the Soviet era, and improving air and missile defense systems. In light of these concerns, the Commission approved a plan for a Regulation in July 2022 to establish the European Defense Industry Strengthening through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) for the years 2022-2024. The Instrument, which responds to a request from the European Council, aims to encourage Member States to buy urgently needed military goods in a spirit of unity and to make it easier for all Member States to do so. Even though we are still in a "cooperation" situation, "most defense planning is still done in isolation," according to the 2022 Consolidated Annual Review on Defense (CARD) study report. CARD, as a pioneer for collaborative possibilities, plays an important role in identifying and implementing capacity development projects, including those that are part of the PESCO framework and align with the European Defense Fund (EDF). The current rewrite of the CDP (Capability Development Plan - EDA being the custodian), whose content has been improved by significant EUMC feedback, should also be highlighted. The CDP's overarching goal is to make it easier for Member States to plan their defenses in ways that are consistent with one another, as well as to make it easier for European countries to collaborate. This will be accomplished by examining future tactical requirements and establishing

shared EU Capability Development Priorities. That said, we can certainly assess that we are in a transition period between two eras: the old one, when we largely conducted stove piped planning and isolated procurement, and the new one, where we see an encouraging boost in defense planning. Nevertheless, the risk of Member States shifting from uncoordinated savings to uncoordinated spending remains high. Of course, the issue is not one of military strategy, but rather one of national policy, with political and economic implications. As I always say, if we are to progress as a team, we must all take a step back as individual nations. We will either succeed together or fail together. One thing is for sure, we should not be mistaken about the magnitude of the changes at work in the defense landscape. Failing to identify them properly and reap benefit from their potential would be tragic.

How do you see the role of the EU Military Committee changing, in the aftermath of the Russian aggression to Ukraine?

If we could only take one lesson away from the ongoing crisis, which began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has since spread to multiple domains around the world, it would be this: Security is one of the facets of the dice that determines our world's fate. A key facet. From various angles, the dice represent the economy, social stability, international rule of law, and even the climate. The fact that they are intricately intertwined, forming a single organism, and that if one changes, the others will respond accordingly, is relevant. Decision-makers have long recognized this, but taxpayers are sometimes partially unaware of the importance of relying on a secure framework for our societies' development and flourishing. To put it another way, we take safety for granted. Too much and too often. The current crisis, which has wreaked havoc on distant regions like a tsunami, has once again demonstrated the importance of including security concerns in all discussions. Even in organizations that were not designed to deal with purely defense and security (i.e. military) issues. It is widely acknowledged that the EU, unlike NATO, is not a military organization. Nonetheless, incorporating military advice into the majority of EU-level decisions is more and more advised. As a result of Russia's unjustified aggression, the EU Military Committee and I have been consulted on a growing number

of aspects of the conflict, as well as related ramifications in other domains, in recent months. For example, in maximizing the potential of the European Peace Facility, as Subject Matter Experts, we can provide significant guidance on where to channel funds for the benefit of host nations. Nonetheless, given the EU Military Committee's position within EU Institutions, as established by the Council decision, the time may be ripe for a discussion on how to optimize (particularly in terms of speed) the EU's decision-making and information-gathering processes when security and defense are at stake. This may eventually necessitate a repositioning of the EU Military Committee, as the entity representing the EU's 27 Chiefs of Defence, and other military elements in the EU structure, in order to improve the EU's ability to respond to any type of challenge, in an enhanced, timely and effective manner. In essence, the EUMC's role and relevance has increased, not only for providing sound military advice, but also for fostering and socializing EU defense trends and initiatives among EU CHODs and their representatives.

In which way can we make EU military missions and operations more effective?

Let's start by saying that for the EU Military missions is essential to increase efforts to build trust and confidence with the Host Nations. Another important point is to support and ensure the Host Nations' ownership. EU military missions currently face a number of challenges limiting their effectiveness, including: highly volatile operational environments, which can lead to a rapid deterioration of the security situation; structural local shortfalls, such as a lack of local ownership and the fragility of institutions; existing shortfalls, such as personnel shortages and delays in the delivery of Assistance Measures; and a highly competitive international environment, with an increase in the number of competitors. It is not new that these factors are combining at an unprecedented speed. As a result, Missions' freedom of action and capacity to carry out their mandates have been limited, primarily in Mali and RCA, and to a lesser extent, Somalia. Even in highly successful missions, such as Mozambique, any delay in the delivery of EPF assistance measures equipment can hamper the train and equip concept. At the same time, the EU's approach of only providing non-lethal equipment and the difficulty in implementing accompaniment of trained units, when other actors are willing to go beyond this, puts it at a disadvantage, because host nations may choose other options that provide more agile, expedient, and comprehensive solutions to their problems. Furthermore, the EU's current level of commitment to Ukraine, which includes timely and extensive

assistance as well as lethal equipment, raises expectations among other partner countries. The EUMC approved the Concept for Increasing the Effectiveness of EU Military Missions in 2022. We must now discuss how we can tailor our training missions to the challenges we face, including the implementation of the authorized concept. Because the EUMC is in charge of providing military direction and overseeing all missions, it must address these issues in two ways. First with the EU Military Staff, in terms of doctrine and capability development and support to defense planning through the formulation of the military requirements (in direct support to EUMC), and then with the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), in terms of operational conduct and planning. The most pressing issue is determining how the military instrument can fully implement the approved concept for increasing mission effectiveness and what else can be done to counter these threats to our missions. The second challenge for CHODs is to develop the capabilities required for our missions through appropriate national processes. Although conditions remain tough, I remain confident in our adaptability.

In the current battle of narratives, is the EU exploiting the full potential of STRATCOM?

The battle of narratives is a complex challenge because it encompasses all forms of communication: what we say, how we appear, but most importantly, what we do and how this is perceived. While we, as organizations that respect international order and laws, and have ethical principles and a responsibility to our audiences, particularly internal audiences, abide by these rules and principles, our adversaries do not, and the battle becomes increasingly difficult to fight. Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) by non-aligned actors is currently one of the most significant challenges confronting a number of EU CSDP military operations and missions. The FIMI includes extensive disinformation campaigns against the EU's military activities, as well as direct influence over local governments, institutions, and the general public. Because of FIMI, some EU military missions have seen a reduction in their freedom of action and ability to carry out their mandates, resulting in the cancellation of some activities, and, as a result, a partial disconnection with the Host Nation. STRATCOM has been designated as critical not only for supporting and enhancing the EU CSDP's activities, but also for countering the effects of FIMI. Therefore, there is general agreement that STRATCOM should be strengthened and made more effective. But what exactly is STRATCOM? STRATCOM is not a bloated version of Public Affairs. A Tweet or a Press Release cannot be used as the only weapon in the Battle of Narratives. Let us not forget

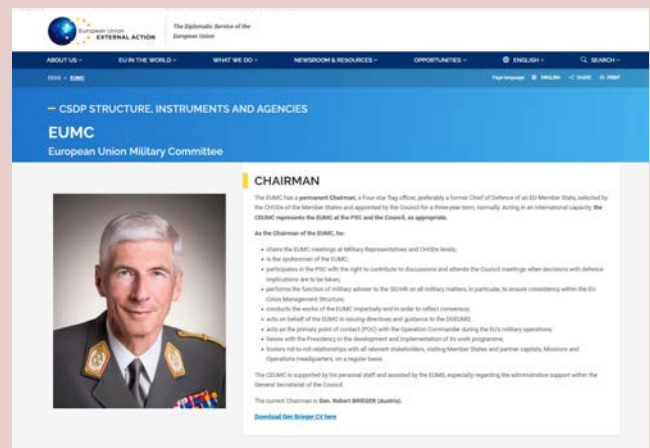
that actions speak louder than words. STRATCOM is therefore everyone's responsibility, from the political, through strategic and operational, down to the tactical level, during planning and execution of the missions. Yes, an attractive website, a supporting publication, and a steady stream of convincing messages via the most recent social media platforms will be beneficial. But we also play successful STRATCOM by delivering on our missions and operations mandates, and communicate accordingly. To counter FIMI and support EU military missions, STRATCOM requires an EU Integrated Approach effort and greater synchronization of civilian and military activities at all levels, from strategic to tactical. In that vein, from a military perspective, the first and

most important challenge is determining what the EU military instrument must do in terms of STRATCOM to counter these FIMI and support our missions, and at what level. The second challenge is to develop the necessary STRATCOM capabilities for our missions through appropriate national processes. The correct implementation of STRATCOM concepts and capabilities within the EU's integrated approach for each mission and circumstance is a third challenge. The aim should not be to combat FIMI by following the news-cycle cadence, but rather to consider the communication and information impact of all our actions and inactions, throughout the whole process of our engagement, from planning, through preparation, to execution.

STAY IN CONTACT WITH US

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