

Chairman's Newsletter

EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY COMMITTEE



Gen. Claudio Graziano

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In accordance with research conducted by the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), "Instead of supporting simulations and exercises in the wake of a crisis, it is better to engrain a culture of fore sighting and scenario testing in crisis response architectures, before a crisis emerges." EUISS makes a convincing evidence based argument, and concludes that, the costs of "not playing in advance" might be particularly high!

Exercises have a number of implications that go beyond the mere ambition of their conduct. They enable staff to develop and retain their individual knowledge in addressing crises and emergencies. This enhances corporate knowledge in this field, which is paramount for an international organisation like the European Union. Additionally, exercises facilitates and enhances comprehensiveness. This is a key factor for the EU's Integrated Approach (multi-dimension, multi phased, multi-level, multilateral) which calls for a coordinated and synergic use of all available instruments in order to reach beyond the boundaries of the EU institutions and individual services. Exercises also represent a valuable means to demonstrate the solidarity among the Member States and their level of commitment to jointly contribute to crises management. In this sense, exercises contribute substantially to the credibility of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and are a central part of the Union's external action. Finally, recent defence initiatives such as the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) as well as the progressive development of concepts like the Civilian Compact, or important actions like those within the Joint Framework of Countering Hybrid Threats, represent realities that require being continuously tested, in order to validate the EU's preparedness as a security provider. These are all key reasons why exercising is an essential component of the EU's efforts to turn the comprehensive approach into comprehensive action and ensure a timely and coherent response to crises and emergencies.

The EU needs to engage and work together with other international and regional actors to face complex global challenges. This underlines the importance of involving partners and other international organisations, in particular the UN and NATO, in EU exercises. In line with the Joint Declaration of July 2016, the EU and NATO have enhanced their cooperation in the field of exercises by implementing the Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE). Under this framework, we are currently running the EU Integrated Resolve 2020 (EU IR20), an exercise aimed at enhancing the EU's ability to respond to external conflict and crises within the EU's integrated approach, with a focus on the CSDP planning process and operational conduct in a hybrid threat environment. The aim of the exercise is also to improve cooperation and interaction with selected partner countries and international organisations, NATO in particular, on the bases of reciprocity. EU IR20 will enhance the capacity of the Union to respond to external hybrid threats, including exercising the decision making of Member State, and will also increase the awareness and understanding of how the integration of the gender and human rights perspective, as well as the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, can positively impact operational effectiveness. We all look with great interest to the outcome of this exercise, being aware that it represents an innovative step forward in the domain of EU exercises under CFSP, with the aim of improving the EU's ability to respond to external crises and conflicts, making full use of its CFSP tools within the integrated approach. Indeed, EU IR20 is an additional reason to be proud of our collective effort and our commitment towards a Union more and more able to take effective, efficient and timely action as a security provider on the international stage.



The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not represent the official position of the European Union Military Committee or the single Member States' Chiefs of Defence

LATEST EVENTS



7 Sep: Exchange of views with EP SEDE



29 Sep: Intervention at the CSDP HL Course



1-2 Oct: Official visit to Estonia

“Never underestimate the importance of exercises ”

by Dr. Daniel Fiott, Security and Defence Editor at the EU Institute for Security Studies

Unlike the Oracle of Delphi, the EU cannot summon the wisdom of the gods to predict when the next crisis will be. No amount of sacrificial ceremonies will bring about an integrated and robust response to crises either. In this respect, while the EU must continue to scan the horizon and analyse longer-term strategic trends, it also needs to continue to invest in CFSP and CSDP exercises. The Chairman of the Military Committee is absolutely right when he remarks that exercises are a key factor in developing the EU's Integrated Approach. If the Union is not prepared for action, then its credibility as an international actor will be sorely questioned.

Exercises are a crucial feature of strategic life. After all, how are different crisis response actors in the EU supposed to share a common understanding of objectives or a unified sense of purpose without exercises? To be sure, crisis preparedness is all encompassing and includes a need to enhance capabilities and the political will to act. However, exercises help the EU build a sense of purpose (or *esprit de corps*) and they allow the dedicated personnel who sustain CFSP/CSDP to jointly assess their assumptions, and, dare I say it, biases about the world too. In this respect, exercises serve the purposes of strategic communication, education and self-reflection. They can only strength CFSP and CSDP.

Too often, however, exercises can be seen as a largely institutional effort that may not necessarily cap-

ture the hearts and minds of citizens. In this regard, the EU perhaps needs to do a more effective job of communicating its exercises to the wider public. I believe this is also a way of showing the world the specific way the EU engages in crisis management. Exercises are undoubtedly important to ensure the EU's institutional readiness, robustness and responsiveness to crises. The Union has indeed an intricate crisis response architecture involving multiple actors, yet exercises are essentially about the civilian and military personnel that the EU deploys. Exercises help the Union support personnel in the field by testing and recalibrating strategic assumptions, methods and ways of acting.

Yet, we must also recognise the specific nature of EU exercises. As the Chairman rightly points out, when the EU exercises it is a truly collaborative approach involving multiple EU institutions and bodies, plus, importantly, international partners such as the UN and NATO. For example, the Parallel and Coordinated Exercises are a good way for the EU and NATO to learn from one another and in 2018 the Union led the first such exercise, covering a crisis simulation in an hybrid threat context. While the latest EU exercise - Integrated Resolve 2020 - will not mobilise real assets on the ground, it will bring together the EEAS, Council of the EU, European Commission, EU member states and NATO officials for a scenario-based brainstorming.

Although it is important to bring a multitude of crisis response actors together, it is equally essential to set the correct strategic context for the exercises to take place. This is why it is important for any fictitious scenario used during exercises to reflect the realities of today and

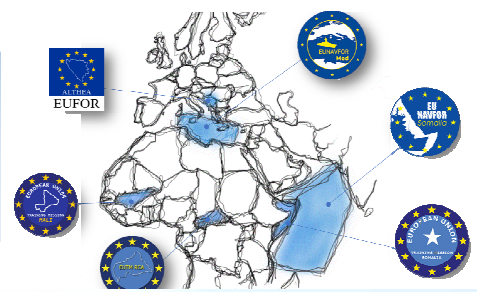


Dr. Daniel Fiott, Defence

possible future trends. That is why past EU exercises have taken on a hybrid nature and have revolved around simultaneous crises such as border strains, terrorism and cyber-attacks. Whenever the EU Institute for Security Studies conducts its own smaller scale scenario workshops with colleagues and partners, we also insist upon a multifaceted crisis scenario. Working together on 'out of the box' and hybrid scenarios is a prerequisite for early warning and preparedness.

Of course, exercises can all too easily be seen as a substitute for reality. Thus, being successful during an exercise scenario is not the same as being successful in real crisis situations. Crisis response is never an exact science, yet it is obviously far better to make a strategic error during an exercise than in real life. As the Chairman has also pointed out, exercises are also a key way to ensure that every institutional and partner voice is heard – integrating political and legal obligations in our way of thinking is necessary too. Overall, exercising together is a way to ensure that the EU can keep up with the ever-shifting geopolitical and technological landscape of the world. So, while exercises do not serve as a strategic oracle they do fulfil the Delphic maxim "know thyself".

News from our Operations & Missions



EUFOR ALTHEA

On 14 October, Soldiers, airmen and sailors based at the EUFOR Headquarters and throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina received their deployment medal on a sunny autumn morning at Camp Butmir. The formal ceremony was presided by Commander EUFOR Major General Reinhard Trischak, who thanked the troops on parade for their effort and dedication to maintain a safe and secure environment.



EU NAVFOR Atalanta

Operation ATALANTA has been cooperating closely with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) and has conducted a number of joint exercises in an effort to strengthen the efficiency of tactical procedures between both navies. These activities between European and Japanese ships, off the Horn of Africa, in the Somali Basin or in the Gulf of Aden, are not uncommon. They occur on a regular basis as both the European Union (EU) and Japan have been contributing for years to the international community's efforts to tackle the issue of the piracy in the region by taking part in surveillance missions and by collaborating closely with other key actors.

The last encounter at sea of EU NAVFOR and JMSDF took place on 5th October, 2020. This exercise was the first of several joint activities of Japan and the European Union aiming at strengthening cooperation in the field of maritime security and coordinating efforts in the Indian Ocean.



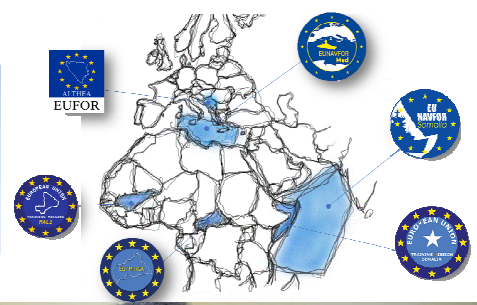
EU NAVFORMED Operation Irini

On 20 October, Operation EUNAVFOR MED Irini boarded and inspected the Merchant Vessel (MV) MEDKON SINOP in application of the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 2292 of 2016 concerning the arms embargo on Libya, whose validity was extended until 5 June next year. The boarding team examined the available documentation on board and inspected the cargo (in containers) on a random basis. Nothing suspicious was found and the boarding team returned to its unit allowing the vessel to proceed on its way.

The procedure went smoothly and the boarding took place in a collaborative atmosphere of both the master and the crew. All recommended COVID-19 precautions were observed during the boarding.

Operation Irini is a part of the EU's commitment to support the Berlin process, restore stability in Libya and bring peace to its population.

News from our Operations & Missions



EUTM Mali

On 28 October, the closing ceremony of the Pre-deployment Training for the G5 Sahel Joint Force Command Post took place at the Peace-keeping School "Alioune Blondin Beye" in Bamako. More than thirty Staff Officers attended the course that was held between 12 and 27 October. With the attendance of this course, the elements that will integrate the G5 Sahel Joint Force Command Post, starting in November, received the expected profiles and the desired knowledge. This ensured that the Staff have met all the requirements and have received the necessary skills for their positions.



EUTM Somalia

On 29 October, a brief informal meeting between the new Somali MoD, H.E. Xasan Xuseen Xaaji, and EUTM-S Force Commander, B. General Zinzone, took place in Villa Gashandiga. This was a precious occasion to discuss on the training activities for the SNA, an effort that never stops.



EUTM RCA

On 30 October, the EUTM-RCA celebrated the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women peace and security. EUTM-RCA's men and women are, strongly committed, share their knowledge in pursuit of a better future where peace and security will prevail.

News from the Committee



Informal EU Military Committee

On 8th October, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), General Claudio Graziano, chaired in Bruges, an informal EU Military Committee meeting hosted by the German Presidency of the Council of the EU. The meeting paved the way to fruitful discussion on the recent defence initiatives, including on the MPCC's role, command & control options and the military level of ambition.

Meeting with MEP Riho Terras

On 8th October, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), General Claudio Graziano, met with the Member of the EP, Riho Terras, former Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces.

The meeting was a precious occasion to discuss the EU defence, with a particular focus on the role that emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence and cyber, play in the digital age. Both parties agreed on the fact that digital domain is the core of our efforts to protect European citizens.



Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) Webinars

On 20th October, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), General Claudio Graziano, participated as key note speaker to the IIEA Webinars on the evolving threat landscape facing the EU.

"We're living in an epochal moment" General Graziano stressed, "Next months will be crucial for the EU Defence which is well on track to gain the full status of credible security provider, based on a complete set of tools and its full engagement and commitment".