

Chairman's Newsletter

EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY COMMITTEE

@Kostarakos

Message from the Chairman



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Gen. Mikhail Kostarakos

In May, the EU Chiefs of Defence met in Brussels, and I was honoured to chair this first Military Committee meeting of 2017.

On this occasion, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP), Federica Mogherini, updated the CHODs on the implementation of the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security policy. The European External Action Service (EEAS) Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Pedro Serrano, followed up and had a fruitful exchange of views with the EU Chiefs of Defence on the topics of EU/NATO Cooperation, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD) and EU Battle Groups (EUBGs). The Director General of the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen, briefed the CHODs on EUMS Work streams and the military implications of the implementation of the Global Strategy. This meeting provided the opportunity to discuss EU/NATO Cooperation with the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Curtis Scappaprotti, and exchange views on sensitive topics, such as Cyber defence, with the Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency (EDA), Ambassador Jorge Domecq. As a guest speaker, the Ukraine Chief of Defence provided an overview of the current situation and the defence landscape in his country. CHODs from Partner Nations (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia) shared discussions on topics of common interest. Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen, designated as the MPCC Director, presented some key points on the MPCC. The Commander of US Africom, General Thomas Waldhauser and the Central African Republic Chief of Defence, Brigadier General Ludovic Ngaifei, expressed their views during the topic of EU Training and Advisory Missions. A specific session was dedicated to EU Military Operations, and General Sir James Everard, EUFOR ALTHEA Operation Commander, Major General Robert Magowan, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA Operation Commander and Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Commander, briefed the Committee on key forward looking concerns.

The biannual meetings at CHODs level are designed to define Strategic Priorities and working plans and, as such, are crucial to the effectiveness of EU Military Committee. In this respect, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the 28 EU CHODs, for their support and cooperation, as well as my gratitude to all the authoritative guests who honoured and enlightened us with their presence.

LATEST EVENTS

Tallinn 05/03: CEUMC visit to Estonia.



09/03: CEUMC visit to Jordan.



Brussels 12/04: 16th anniversary of the EUMC.



24/05: CEUMC visit to Myanmar.



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High Representative Mogherini pushes ahead with Security and Defence agenda

by Mr. Michael Mann, Head of Division, Strategic Communications of the European External Action Service

The Global Strategy for foreign and security policy, which High Representative Federica Mogherini presented in June last year, described the state of world affairs as one of "predictable unpredictability."

In a world of uncertainty, the European Union is a reliable, cooperative and predictable force. And in the years ahead, the EU will be an increasingly indispensable power to preserve, strengthen and enlarge a cooperative global system.

The EU is the second global economy, the largest global market and the leading foreign investor in most parts of the world. It invests more in development cooperation and humanitarian aid than the rest of the world combined. It is a force for multilateralism, for human rights and for international cooperation. And it is increasingly active as a global security provider.

The EU has always prided itself on its soft power – and rightly so, because it has a unique set of tools in this field. Yet the idea that Europe is an exclusively "civilian power" does not do justice to the reality.

Its civilian and military missions have already become a central feature of EU foreign policy. Thousands of men and women serving under the European flag are working every day for peace and security – Europe's and its partners'. For Europe, soft and hard power go hand-in-hand.

Partnership and cooperation remain the key to the EU's work. Cooperation with NATO will continue to be central to this approach, after the historic Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw last year.

But Europe also needs to be ready to act autonomously where and if the situation so requires. In a world where power is diffuse, it needs to take full responsibility for collective security. To do so, the EU must make better use of existing tools and establish new forms of cooperation where necessary.

Last year, as the High Representative began to work on im-

plementing the Global Strategy, the 28 EU governments agreed on a new level of ambition for security and defence policy. They recognised that the EU must be able to protect its citizens through its external action, strengthen the capabilities of its neighbours and partners to prevent new conflicts, and respond to crises when they arise.

Work has now started to develop the necessary means, instruments and structures to fulfil these tasks, for the benefit of all Member States and all European citizens.

The implementation of the EU Defence Package – with the Global Strategy's Implementation Plan on security and defence, the European Defence Action Plan and a set of measures to operationalise the Warsaw Declaration – represents the best opportunity since Lisbon for a quantum leap in the European project.

In the last year, under High Representative Mogherini's leadership, the EU has achieved more than in the previous sixty years in terms of practical steps towards a European Union of security and defence.

This has been helped by the fact that citizens increasingly understand that their security depends on the EU's ability to bring peace and stability in the region, and because EU countries cannot afford to spend resources ineffectively. While the United States has 27 weapon systems in use, the EU has 154.

In times of strong budget constraints, more effective defence spending is a responsibility towards citizens and the EU's partners, including NATO. In addition, the EU's partners all over the world are asking Europe to be a global security provider.

So the EU is working to use its assets more effectively and more rapidly. For instance, it is establishing the first command centre for the EU's training and advisory military missions, and a coordination cell to improve cooperation between civilian and military structures. In an in-



creasingly interconnected world, it is essential that forces on the ground cooperate in the most effective way.

Discussions are also ongoing with Foreign and Defence Ministers how to improve the EU's rapid response, both on the civilian and on the military side, and remove the political, technical and financial obstacles that have so far prevented the deployment of Battlegroups.

But it is also essential to amplify the impact of defence spending, investing in economies of scale and joint programming. To do so, work is ongoing to establish a Permanent Structured Cooperation among Member States that are willing to strengthen their cooperation on defence and spend their resources more effectively.

In addition, efforts are being made to develop a Coordinated Annual Review of Defence, that is, a process to increase coherence and complementarity among national defence budgets. The Review will be driven by Member States but with an important role for the European Defence Agency.

The European Commission is currently developing a new Defence Fund, in close consultation with Member States, that will also contribute to the development of cooperation projects for the European defence industry and in the field of military-related research.

All of the ongoing work received the firm support of EU leaders at the March European Council. With this political backing, and against the background of an unpredictable world, this is just the beginning.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY STRUCTURES

EUNAVFOR MED (Operation SOPHIA)



In this issue we asked some questions to Rear Admiral (UH) Enrico Credendino, operation Sophia Commander, on the ongoing activities.

Can you explain the role of Operation SOPHIA?

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is one element of a broader EU comprehensive response to the migration issue, which seeks to address not only its physical component, but also its root causes as well including conflict, poverty, climate change and persecution.

The mission core mandate is to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers, in order to contribute to wider EU efforts to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean and prevent the further loss of life at sea. Last 20 June 2016, the Council extended until 27 July 2017 operation Sophia's mandate reinforcing it by adding two supporting tasks, the training of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy, and the contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya, in accordance with the UNSCR 2292 (2016).

We asked some questions to Rear Admiral (UH) Enrico Credendino, operation Sophia Commander, on the ongoing activities.

The numbers of migrants from Libya in 2017 rose since the very same period last year. What does this mean?

Human smugglers and traffickers are pushing to put at sea the highest number of migrants. One of the possible reasons might be that they are aware that operation SOPHIA is training the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy, loyal to the UN backed Government of National Accord (GNA). When the Libyan legitimate coast guard will have the means to fight human smugglers and traffickers, sending migrants at sea will be most likely more difficult.

Can the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy be able to manage this situation?

Libya lacks of everything today: structures for maritime defence, ships, radars, rescue coordination centres. Today the Libyan personnel have only few rubber boats, but they do what they can. In 2015 they rescued only about 800 migrants at sea, in 2016 the number of migrants rescued rose to 14-16 thousand. This is the main objective of the training we are delivering them, to teach them what to do and how to do it. Not only rescuing people at sea, but also to fight all the illegal activities in their territorial waters, in order to improve security in the Libyan waters.

You have fought against the Somali piracy. Is human smuggling a different crime?

Piracy is a recognised international crime, human smuggling and trafficking are not. This makes the fight against piracy more effective. Our need is to try to make human smuggling and trafficking an international crime as well, so that a smuggler can be prosecuted not only in Italy, as it happens nowadays, but also in other countries.

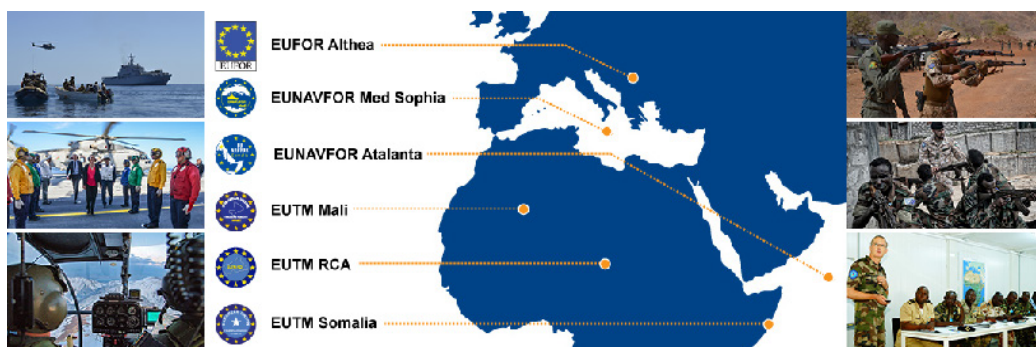
Are terrorists coming to Europe through the migrant boats?

There is the possibility, but it is unlikely. Terrorists know that it's a dangerous trip: it's much easier for them to take a plane...

An update on the training?

We have recently concluded the training package one, in which we trained 93 Libyans belonging to the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy. The first package was really challenging, because it lasted 14 weeks: two at sea, one at home in leave. It is important to understand that the trainees were not used to be at sea for such a long time, but we accomplished to train them all and, on the other side, they found the training really useful. Among these 93 trainees, there were also 3 crews of 13 people each, which will be the first crews of the patrol boats some Member States, on a bilateral agreement basis, will shortly deliver to the Libyan UN recognised government. Now we are carrying on the second package out of three. We started at the end of January in Crete, and is now proceeding regularly in Malta. Shortly, we will have 255 Libyan trainees in Italy, and also Spain made available one training centre for about 40 Libyans.

News from our Operations and Missions



EUFOR ALTHEA

On April 21st, a unit of the 6th Infantry Brigade of the Armed Forces of BiH conducted an Urban Operation Training inside their barracks in Prijedor, supported by a EUFOR Embedded Advisory Team. The 6th Infantry Brigade of the Armed Forces of BiH is dedicated to the NATO "Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process" and this training operation has represented an important step forward in achieving military interoperability with Armed Forces of NATO member states.



EUNAVFORMED Sophia

On April the 27th, on the eve of the informal meeting of Defence Ministers of the 28 European Union Member States, in Malta, the High Representative Federica Mogherini and the ministers visited the ITS San Giusto, the flagship of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU operation to disrupt the business model of human traffickers at sea, which is also providing training to Libyan coast guards.

EUTM Mali

On May the 12th, the closing ceremony of the G5 Sahel LNO (Liaison Officer) course took place in Bamako. For two weeks, 23 officers from the 5 countries of the G5 Sahel (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) received training to enhance interoperability between their armed forces. At the graduation ceremony, Brigadier General Devogelaere, EUTM Mali Commander, thanked the various partners who helped to make this training a success, in particular the MaAF, EUCAP Sahel Mali, Barkhane Operation and MINUSMA.



EUNAVFOR Atalanta

On April the 24th, during a European Union counter-piracy patrol close to the east coast of Somalia, EU NAVFOR's Spanish flagship, ESPS Galicia, prevented Merchant Ship MT Costina from Being Pirated by Armed Men off East Coast of Somalia. Upon receipt of the distress call, ESPS Galicia launched a SH-3D Sea King helicopter and sailed at full speed towards MT Costina. As soon as the pirates became aware that the EU NAVFOR warship was fast approaching, they broke off their attack and fled.

EUTM RCA

On May the 11th, at the Kassai Camp in Bangui, a ceremony marked the end of the training and formation of the 3rd Infantry Territorial Battalion (BIT3) of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA). Enhanced by the presence of political authorities, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense of the Central African Republic the ceremony, presided over by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Brigadier General Ludovic Ngaifei, honoured the men and women of this battalion who have been trained for almost 7 months by the instructors of the European Union Mission EUTM RCA (European Union Training Mission).



EUTM Somalia

EUTM Somalia, as one of the main partners advising Somali authorities, daily supports the Somali Government in building a national army with respect for Somali culture and equal rights. In the General Dhagabadan Training Centre, Somali Soldiers are currently attending a military police course and, of note, 16 of the soldiers attending the course, are women.

News from the Committee



CEUMC official visit to ESTONIA

From the 05th to 07th of April, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee paid an official visit to Estonia, at the invitation of the Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, General Riho Terras. The high-ranking EU military official met with the President of the Republic of Estonia H.E. Mrs Kersti Kaljulaid, the Minister of Defence Mr Margus Tsahkna and the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the EU, Mr Matti Maasikas and shared their views on issues of mutual interest.

General Kostarakos also visited the Baltic Defence College, where he delivered a speech on: "Shaping European Union's Security and Defence Identity".



CEUMC official visit to JORDAN

From the 08th to 10th of April, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee paid an official visit to Jordan, at the invitation of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordan Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Frihat. On the occasion, General Kostarakos met His Royal Highness, Prince Faysal bin al-Husayn, and the Minister Counsellor at the EU Delegation to Jordan, Mr Koenraad Dassen, sharing with them views on issues of mutual interest. The Chairman of the European Union Military Committee also visit-

ed the Northern Military Region, where he received a briefing on the situation by the Regional Commander, Brigadier General Ghazi Al Sarhan.



16th Anniversary of the EUMC

On April the 12th, the Military Committee meeting has commenced with a short address from the 1st Chairman, General Gustav HAGGLUND, to commemorate the 16th anniversary of the EUMC.



CEUMC official visit to MYANMAR

Upon invitation by the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee has paid an official visit to Myanmar, from the 21th to 24th of April. On the occasion, General Kostarakos had the honor to meet H.E Daw Aung San Su Kyi, State Counselor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and share with her views on issues of mutual interest.

Chairman EUMC Communication Team

Colonel Nikolaos CHOLEVAS: nikolaos.cholevas@ext.eeas.europa.eu

Lieutenant Colonel Marcelvito DANISI: marcelvito.danisi@eeas.europa.eu



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