



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EU BATTLEGROUPS

Updated: July 2009
Battlegroups/03

Full Operational Capability 2007

The European Union is a global actor, ready to undertake its share of responsibility for global security. With the introduction of the Battlegroup Concept, the Union formed another military instrument at its disposal for early and rapid responses when necessary. On 1 January 2007 the EU Battlegroup Concept reached Full Operational Capability. Since that date the EU is able to undertake if so decided by the Council two concurrent single battlegroup-sized rapid response operations, including the ability to launch both such operations nearly simultaneously.



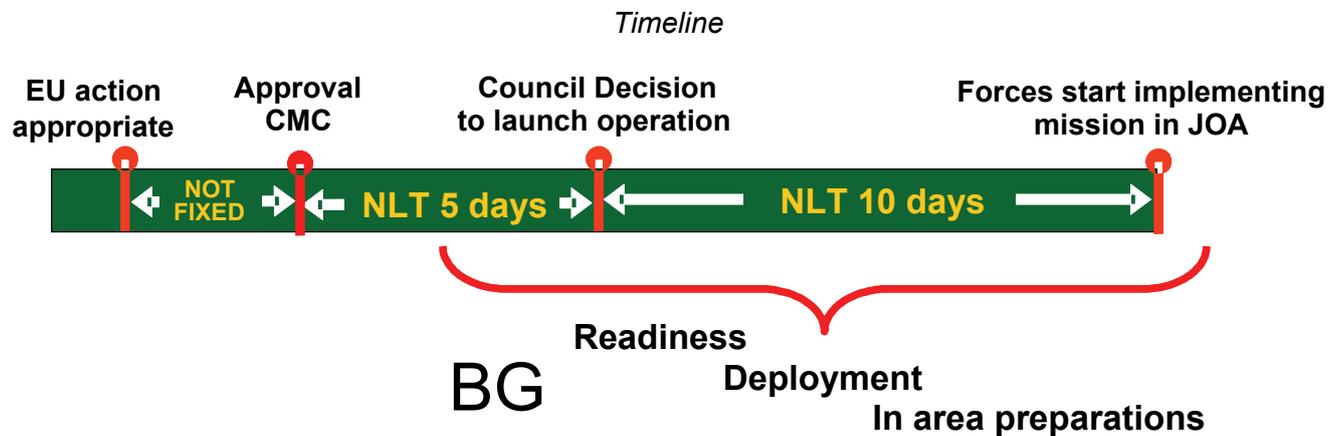
At the 1999 Helsinki European Council, Rapid Response was identified as an important aspect of EU crisis management. As a result, the Helsinki Headline Goal 2003 assigned to Member States the objective of being able to provide rapid response elements available and deployable at very high levels of readiness.

Subsequently an EU Military Rapid Response Concept was developed. In June 2003, the first autonomous EU-led military operation, Operation Artemis, was launched. It showed very successfully the EU's ability to operate with a rather small force at a significant distance from Brussels, in this case more than 6 000 km. Moreover, it demonstrated the need for further development of rapid response capabilities. Subsequently, Operation 'Artemis' became a reference model for the development of a battlegroup-sized rapid response capability. In 2004, the Headline Goal 2010 aimed for the completion of the development of rapidly deployable Battlegroups, including the identification of appropriate strategic lift, sustainability and debarkation assets by 2007.

Within this context and based on a French/British/German initiative, the EU Military Staff (EUMS) developed the Battlegroup Concept, which was agreed by the EU Military Committee (EUMC) in June 2004. Since then the work has been taken forward, based on an agreed roadmap. It was concluded in October 2006 with the delivery of one single Battlegroup Concept document.

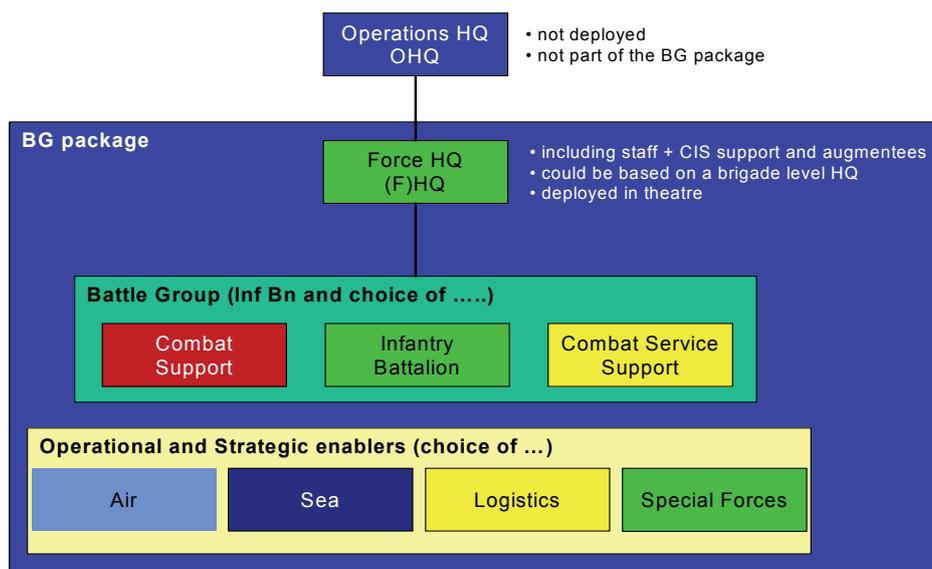
Basic features

The Battlegroup is the minimum militarily effective, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations, or for the initial phase of larger operations. It is based on a combined arms, battalion-sized force and reinforced with combat support and combat service support elements. In its generic composition, but depending on the mission, the battlegroups are about 1 500 personnel strong.



The battlegroups are based on the principle of multinationality and could be formed by a framework nation or by a multinational coalition of Member States. In any case, interoperability and military effectiveness will be key criteria. A battlegroup is associated with a deployable force headquarters and pre-identified operational and strategic enablers, such as strategic lift and logistics. Member States may also contribute niche capabilities, providing specific elements with added value to the battlegroups. The battlegroups are on standby for a six-month period and should be initially sustainable for 30 days, extendable to 120 days if re-supplied appropriately.

Generic composition and command & control



Tasks

Based on the Headline Goal 2010, which places the emphasis on rapid response and deployability, the EU has progressed well in further developing its military capability. Battlegroups will be employable across the full range of tasks listed in Article 17.2 of the Treaty on European Union and those identified in the European Security Strategy. They are combat-trained, so their full potential would be best realised in tasks of combat forces in crisis management, bearing in mind their limited size. Battlegroups operations would as a rule be conducted under a UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), although operations could be envisaged where a UNSCR would not be necessary (e.g. evacuation of EU citizens).

Standards, training and certification

To qualify as an EU Battlegroup, the battlegroup packages have to meet commonly defined and agreed military capability standards. Standards and criteria embodied in the BG Concept and the BG Preparation Guide, form the basis for the Member States to develop specific instructions to ensure coherence between the constituent parts of the battlegroup package, taking into account the demands for multinationality. A basic



principle is that the battlegroup training is the responsibility of the Member States concerned. The EU facilitates the coordination among Member States. The certification of battlegroups also remains a national responsibility of the contributing Member States. The EU Military Committee, assisted by the EU Military Staff, monitors the battlegroup certification process which must be undertaken according to fixed EU-agreed procedures. Training is a key requirement for battlegroups. Member States concerned conduct a series of exercises in this context prior to taking a battlegroup stand-by period. For instance, exercise European Endeavour 06 and 08 were carried out in Germany in November 2006 and May 2008 to certify the Force Headquarters of a German-led Battlegroups. Exercise Quick Response conducted in Belgium in September 2006 and June 2009 also featured an EU battlegroup. Other examples include the Swedish-led exercise 'Illuminated Summer' in July 2007 in the context of the Nordic Battlegroup¹, and the Greek-led exercise EVROPI II-07 and 08 in May 2007 and September 2008 for the 'HELBROC' Battlegroup². Finally, a Czech-led Battlegroup was certified in March 2009 during the exercise Collective Shield 2009. The certification of the battlegroup package by the Member States will provide the EU with the necessary assurance that it is ready for a possible mission. The Operation Commander, who will be appointed by the Council on a case-by-case basis, has the authority to tailor the command and control structure and the battlegroup package assets and capabilities to the specific requirements of the operation.

Battlegroup commitments

The Member States conduct the generation of a battlegroup package and are responsible for offering a complete package formed by a framework nation or by a multinational coalition of Member States. The battlegroup package has no fixed structure and thus provides Member States with the necessary flexibility to form their own battlegroup package. This could lead,

¹ Sweden, Finland, Norway, Estonia and Ireland.

² Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus.

for instance, to battlegroups with a mountain or amphibious capability. This flexibility aims at facilitating a smoother force generation and a broader spectrum of capabilities. The Member States offer their battlegroup packages at the six-monthly EUMS-chaired Battlegroup Coordination Conference (BGCC). The planning horizon of the BGCC is five years. It is up to the Member States how they constitute a battlegroup package and for what time frame it will be offered. The last BGCC held in April 2009 confirmed that stand-by periods are completely subscribed until 2011. MS have committed several other battlegroup packages for the period beyond. Operation Headquarters are pre-identified for most of the battlegroup packages. Four non-EU European NATO countries and other countries which are candidates for accession to the EU take part in the EU Battlegroups as Troop Contributing Nations. Furthermore, multinational coalitions of EU Member States (such as EUROFOR) have expressed their interest to post themselves at the disposal of the EU as battlegroup packages.

The Role of the Battlegroup Concept

The Battlegroup Concept provides the EU with a specific tool in the range of rapid response capabilities, which contributes to making the EU more coherent, more active and more capable. This concept enables the EU to respond rapidly to emerging crises with military means, taking into account the size and capabilities of the battlegroups on standby. The Battlegroup Concept also has the potential to be a driver for capability development and for making the armed forces of Member States more capable of undertaking rapid long-range deployments. Significantly, the need for additional strategic lift capabilities is underlined by the Battlegroup Concept. Furthermore, the concept emphasises the need for accelerated decision-making. Not only do the EU bodies need to be ready but the national decision-making processes need to be synchronised to meet the demanding timelines. Setting up a battlegroup package is an opportunity for enhanced military co-operation between Member States. This improves mutual knowledge of each other's capabilities with regard to military means and political decision-making. Finally, the Battlegroup Concept reinforces the EU's military identity in a concrete manner.

The European Union Battlegroups

Since the Battlegroup Concept was agreed in June 2004, much has been achieved. With the full commitment of the Member States, the Battlegroup Concept has already shown its potential value in securing increased co-operation and capability development among Member States. It has contributed to enhancing the EU's capability to deal with rapid response and will continue to do so. The EU Member States are examining ways to further enhance the flexibility and usability of Battlegroups.

*The European Union's **European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)** is an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It includes all questions relating to the security of the Union, among which the gradual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time and in accordance with Member States' constitutional requirements lead to a common defence. The ESDP allows the Union to develop its civilian and military capacities for crisis management and conflict prevention at international level, thus helping to maintain peace and international security, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The ESDP includes a strong conflict prevention component.*

More information and background documents available on: www.consilium.europa.eu/esdp