

EUBG : Origin

The [origin of the European Union Battle Group \(EUBG\)](#) has to be seen in the context of the European Union's striving to develop its own military capacity, in order to be able to intervene in conflict areas.



After [the Maastricht treaty in 1993](#), where a blueprint of a [European Security and Defense Policy \(ESDP\)](#) was created as a foundation of the European vision, it was clear that it was necessary to establish a military apparatus in support of this ESDP.

At [the Helsinki European Council meeting \(1999\)](#), rapid response was identified as an important aspect of 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.

[Operation Artemis \(2003\)](#), executed in [the Ituri region, northeast of Congo](#), without the deployment of NATO means, proved that the proposals formulated in 1999 were feasible: only three weeks separated the political decision and the start of the military operations, the [Initial Operational Capability \(IOC\)](#).



In June **2004**, the **EU** makes an important step forward. EU Military Staff (EUMS) has been tasked by the Military Committee (EUMC) to develop a concept for a European Union Battle Group, based on a document developed by Great-Britain, France and Germany. Goal is to dispose in **2010** of a quick deployable, well trained force of about 1500 soldiers, including the identification of appropriate strategic airlifts, sustainability and disembarkation assets.

These units must be able to intervene in a short notice, outside Europe, in all directions, and to bring stability until the necessary military forces, UN troops or armed forces of other organizations, can relieve them. The nucleus of this capacity is the EUBG. It was concluded in October **2006** with the delivery of a single BG concept document.

In January **2005**, the first battle group is declared "Initial Operational Capable" (ready to execute small evacuation missions). In January **2007**, the concept is certified as "**Full Operational Capable**".

A EUBG is the minimum military effective, credible and coherent, rapidly deployable force package, capable of executing stand-alone operations or the initial phase of a larger operation. The BG can be deployed outside the EU (within a range of 6.000 km around Brussels), principally in response to UN requests. Each semester two BG are ready to be deployed. Such a BG is composed of a deployable Force Headquarters [(F)HQ] with the necessary Communication and Information Systems (CIS), an Infantry Task Force (ITF), and augmented with Combat Support (CS) elements and the necessary Combat Service Support (CSS). It disposes of about 1.500 to 2.000 personnel strong.

The BGs are intended to be deployed on the ground within 5-10 days of approval from the Council. It must be sustainable for at least 30 days, which could be extended to 120 days, if resupplied appropriately.

Larger member states will generally contribute their own Battle Groups. Smaller members are expected to create common groups. Each group will have a 'lead nation' which will take operational command. Each group is also associated with an "Operational Headquarter" (OHQ). An existing national HQ is "multinationalized" to plan and command an EU-led military operation. Five EU Member States (France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom) have declared their national OHQs as being available for an autonomous EU operation. These HQs are respectively located in Paris, Potsdam, Larissa, Rome and Northwood, and can provide the EU with the necessary premises and technical infrastructure to run a military operation with a fully multinational staff.

Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxemburg, Germany, Spain and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will form a Battle Group (EUBG 2014-2), ready to be deployed in the second semester of 2014. For the second time, Belgium is the lead nation and thus responsible for the preparation and execution of this mission.

Composition of the EUBG 2014-2



The Force Commander of the EUBG 2014-2 is Colonel Philippe Boucké, current Commander of the Medium Brigade. The nucleus of the deployable, multinational (F)HQ is the Belgian Medium Brigade from Leopoldsburg. It disposes of the necessary Communication and Information Systems (CIS). In support of this HQ, a Force Protection Coy (FP Coy) is provided by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The main force of this EUBG is the Infantry Task Force (ITF). Besides a staff, this ITF comprises an infantry Coy and a scout platoon on Dingo II (a Multi-Purpose Protected Vehicle) from the Medium Battalion Carabiniers Prins Boudewijn-Grenadiers (1C/1Gr) from Leopoldsburg (Belgium), a Coy on Piranha IIIC Direct Fire 90 from the Medium Battalion Bevrijding - 5e Linie from Leopoldsburg, an infantry Coy on CV90 from the 44 Pantserinfanteriebataljon from Havelte (The Netherlands) and an airmobile infantry Coy from the 12 Infanteriebataljon on Bushmaster from Schaarsbergen (The Netherlands).

The Combat Support (CS), units which provide fire support and specialized support functions to combat units (combat engineering, intelligence, air transport,...), consists of the Belgian ISTAR Battalion (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance), reinforced with a Luxemburg Recce Coy and a Spanish Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) detachment, a Spanish field artillery battery and an air-defense platoon for the necessary fire support. Engineer support is delivered by a Coy composed of Belgian and Spanish engineers. The helicopter detachment is composed of six Belgian A-109 multirole helicopters from the 1 Wing in Beauvechain, German CH-53 "Stallion" transport helicopters from Hubschraubergeschwader 64 (64ste Squadron) in Laupheim and Dutch CH-47 "Chinook" transport helicopters from the 298ste Squadron from Gilze-Rijen.

Combat Service Support (units that provide the essential capabilities, functions, activities and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of operating forces in theater to permit those units to accomplish their missions in combat) is delivered by a theater logistics base and

a multinational medical task force. Within this medical task force, the Role 1 is organized by Belgium, The Netherlands, Spain and Germany. The Role 2 in the theater is assured by a Belgian hospital supported by The Netherlands.

Missions of the EUBG

The missions of the EUBG are set out in Article 43 of the Treaty on EU and the European Security Strategy. A EUBG can execute tasks in the whole spectrum of crisis management operations: humanitarian and rescue tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.



Each decision for the activation of a BG has to be taken after a thorough analysis of the situation and requires the unanimous approval of the EU-members states.

Preparation

The preparations for the European Union Battle Group 2014-2 have already started in 2012 and will continue till 30 June 2014. Challenge: work together with about 3500 soldiers of six different countries, learn from each other and create one BG.

In November 2013, the first major exercise for the EUBG 2014-2, Adjacent Lowlands (AJLL), started in Amersfoort (The Netherlands): an exercise, created to train the Force Headquarter, where all the troop contributing nations (TCN) participated together for the first time. During this exercise the different procedures, the co-operation between the different branches and the reaction on a variety of incidents have been tested and evaluated.

In January 2014, the different phases of a deployment have been trained during the exercise Active Lion, in the vicinity of Leuven and Elsenborn.

More exercises have already been planned in order to prepare everybody to be ready for the stand-by period and an eventual deployment.

