

DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENCE RAPID REACTION CAPABILITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

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***Abstract:** In May 2004, General Affairs and External Relations Council agreed upon the new Headline Goal which will guide the European cooperation in the field of defense activities until 2010 (HLG 2010). The main aspects taken into consideration were structured along three priorities regarding forces interoperability, deployment and sustainment capability. In this regard, HLG2010 introduced the notion of “highly deployable force packages” as the main element to be taken into account for planning purposes and overall management of operational commitments. The theoretical support in this approach was based on the Battle Groups Concept having as the main objectives achievement by 2005 of the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and, subsequently, by the end of 2007 of the Final Operational Capability (FOC). Within the overall EU Level of Ambition regarding the capacity to conduct, simultaneously, two rapid reaction operations, it was decided to have two Battle Groups for six months stand-by periods.*

***Keywords:** ESDP, Battle Groups, Artemis Operation, European Security Strategy, Petersberg missions, HLG2010.*

Creating the adequate rapid reactions capabilities in the field of crisis management was a constant feature of the European cooperation in the field of security and defense. The general approach of this topic was strongly related with the Common Security and Defense Policy evolutions, with a particular view on EU autonomous capacity to conduct crisis management operations, initially undertaken by Franco-British Declaration of St. Malo (December 1998). Furthermore, the development of rapid reaction capabilities played a central role in the overall decisions on EU Headline Goals. The first one, adopted by the Helsinki European Council, in December 1999, was focused on creating, by 2003, a Rapid Reaction Force (50-60.000 personnel) / HLG2003, able to be deployed within 60 days, with the possibility to be maintained in the field for one year. From this

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perspective, it highlighted the importance of having precise capabilities targets for rapid reaction aspects of the HLG2003. Given the initial stage of the project, the focus was placed on member states contributions with forces and capabilities, having a special emphasis on the possibility to use them in multinational context, such as EU, NATO and Western European Union. From this perspective, the main lines of actions that could be undertaken within European cooperation framework were:

- strengthening the rapid reaction capabilities at the level of EU member states armed forces;
- increasing the number of highly deployable forces;
- developing strategic transport, especially the air component¹.

It should be underlined that these elements were integrated in a more comprehensive matrix designed to enhance the deployability aspects and to consolidate the command and control arrangements for EU operations². Unfortunately, the political will associated with these objectives was not matched very soon by significant practical developments. This situation was generated by certain incompatibility between the parameters of HLG 2003 and the time constraints of highly deployable operational commitments. The conceptual dilemma was generated by the fact that HLG 2003 was designed against the classical parameters of large structures (e.g. army corps – 15 brigades). Nevertheless, by using this approach was not possible to provide certain granularity on the structural targets that rapid reaction capabilities had to meet. At the same time, the adoption of HLG2003 was used in the absence of real operational experience, providing only a glimpse view on a European approach in which rapid reaction capabilities could fit into theaters of operation.

After the successful conclusion of the negotiation process between EU and NATO (December 2002) regarding future cooperation in

¹ St Malo Declaration, 4 December 1998, available at: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/franco_british_st_malo_declaration_4_december_1998-en-f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936fc8e9bc80f24f.htm, accessed in 04.10.2020.

² Military Capabilities Commitment Declaration, 20 November 2002, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/Military%20capabilities%20-%20EN.doc.html, accessed in 04.10.2020.

operations, the perspective of immediate operational deployments in the Balkans became more realistic. The so-called “Berlin+” Agreements between these organizations paved the way for an enhanced EU profile in the overall management of security evolutions in the Western Balkans.

From a political point of view, the adjustment of capabilities that could be employed by EU as a relevant actor in crisis management field had a real sense of urgency. It was debated, initially, in the bilateral framework, between United Kingdom and France. Thus, the summit in Le Touquet (4 February 2003) underlined the political will of those countries to deploy missions and operations in the Balkans. In the coming weeks, these aspirations took practical shape by launching the EU military operations in Macedonia (EUFOR Concordia, 31 March 2003 – 15 December 2003)³ and BiH (EUFOR Althea, since December 2004).

Based on that, France and United Kingdom, adopted a new course of action regarding the development of rapid reaction capabilities. Taking into account the progresses achieved in implementing HLG2003, an interest was expressed in developing the European cooperation within a more structured approach. This undertaking was meant to respond, simultaneously, to the need of reenergizing the European cooperation project, as well as to provide additional resources for NATO’s rapid reaction capabilities, namely NATO Response Force. From this perspective, the Franco-British summit generated the first elements for the parameters which rapid reaction capabilities had to match. The proposed model was centered on integrating the deployment process in a more ambitious time-frame (5-10 days). In order to achieve it, further efforts were needed, in areas like interoperability for highly deployable forces and deployment capacity along all services (air, maritime, land). Further elements were added in the aftermath of the bilateral summit between United Kingdom and Italy, which took place on 21 February 2003. The Declaration⁴ adopted in this context indicated the full support for the adoption of a new Headline Goal which place a focus on rapid reaction capabilities in the framework of EU answer to crisis situation. Implementing this kind of approach could not be envisaged without

³ Replaced, in December 2004, with a police mission – EUPOL Proxima.

⁴ Rome Summit Declaration, 21 February 2003, in Trybus Martin. *Buying Defence and Security in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014, p.233

adapting the force generation process, especially on flexibility and deployability aspects. Furthermore, the Declaration adopted in Rome brought new reassurances on the member states interests in maintaining an adequate level of complementarity with the efforts made in North-Atlantic Alliance framework, centered on making full operational the NATO Response Force.

Moving towards a standardized formula for rapid reaction capabilities

The full convergence between important actors of the European cooperation was reflected in adopting the EU decision regarding the deployment of its first military autonomous crisis management operation, Operation Artemis in R.D. Congo (June – September 2003). This undertaking was structured following the appeal made by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Anan, in the context of dramatic humanitarian crisis occurred in Ithuri province, especially in the city of Bunia. From a structural point of view, Artemis operation was based on a rapid deployment of a coherent force package (1.800 – 2.000 personnel) in order to maintain the security conditions until a large UN contingent (MONUC, around 10.000 peacekeepers) will arrive in the area. The anticipated time-frame in which EU contingent had to operate was three months, supposedly in a very intense and hostile local conditions, at almost 6.500 km distance from Brussels. From this perspective, Artemis Operation represented a major test for the new European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) capacity to undertake such demanding tasks.

The outcome was fully successful, both in terms of planning, conducting the operation on the ground, as well as on creating local security conditions for UN deployment and humanitarian aid for the civilian population⁵. It is worth mentioning that in spite of a very intense operational tempo, the EU contingent managed to liberate the Ithuri capital from the

⁵ For general overview of civil war erupted in RD Congo and Ithuri province, in particular, see Gerard Prunier. *Africa's World War. Congo, the Rwandan Genocide and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009.

rebel groups and, subsequently, collected all the weapons in the area, which significantly improved the local conditions for civilian population. From the perspective of internal process at EU level it is worth mentioning the way in which the decision-making process was conducted, both in terms of speed and comprehensiveness. Practically, all the procedural steps, including the establishment of C2 arrangements and deployment of force nucleus were made in 20 days.

Obviously, a major role in this accomplishment was played by the substantial contribution of France, which served as the backbone of operation facilitating, equally, the overall process of force generation. By assuming the framework nation role for this operation, France supported the process of testing the viability of the ESDP normative framework⁶, especially in terms of force generation and logistic support. From this perspective, Artemis could be seen as a major opportunity to test the EU ability to conduct autonomously high intensity operations, with rapid reaction parameters and in extremely difficult local security conditions. The modalities for overcoming these challenges during an operation were meant to provide the necessary answers for European debates regarding the way in which EU can formulate rapid response answers in terms of crisis management.

Based on this experience, the Franco-British summit in London (24 November 2003) advanced a more structural approach⁷ on generating rapid response answers in the ESDP context. The main outcome was the consensus to promote an integrated model for EU action in support of United Nations. The Franco-British proposal was centered on creating Battle Groups (BGs) structures (around 1.500 personnel) with high degree of internal cohesion, which could undertake demanding crisis management tasks, according to Article VII of UN Charter. In developing this kind of structures, the burden lies on EU member states' voluntary contribution put together in various formats of cooperation. The main objective was to

⁶ Framework Nation Concept, 25 July 2000, available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11278-2002-REV-1/en/pdf>, accessed on 07.10.2020.

⁷ Franco-British Summit Declaration, *Strengthening European Cooperation in Security and Defence*, 24 November 2003, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do;jsessionid=1BpNTk1G52mDpQsILFk2vY9Y79K2QKDZ8MrMj1GGjysBzzJ7cLbc!-750017855?docId=125359&cardId=125359>, accessed on 07.10.2020

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ensure proper conditions for timely deployment at strategic distance in 15 days. One of the main prerequisite for reaching this objective was the availability of strategic transport capabilities, be it at national level, be it generated through multinational cooperation formulas. At the same time, the proposal should be seen from the perspective of European capabilities development, especially in terms of overall political interest to adopt a new Headline Goal. The purpose of this undertaking was to align the CSDP cooperation with the operational prerequisites for rapid reaction and timely deployment. From this perspective, France and United Kingdom approached Germany with the above-mentioned proposal in order to forward it as a joint undertaking to be discussed in PSC framework.

It must be highlighted that the paradigm centered on further development of EU capability to act rapidly in crisis situations represented one of the pillars of EU Security Strategy, adopted by the European Council in December 2003. Within this strategic vision, rapid reaction capabilities were the main aspect of ESDP/CSDP contribution to the consolidation of EU profile in the field of crisis management. Taking into account the lessons learned from Artemis operation, a special focus was placed on several aspects with particular relevance for operations, such mobility and flexibility of forces and the availability of strategic transport capabilities.

In the General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting on 17 May 2004 it was agreed the new Headline Goal which will guide the European cooperation activities until 2010 (HLG 2010). One month later, it was endorsed by European Council (17-18 June 2004) having as the main feature the way in which ESDP will support the development of EU global role in the area of security and defense. Practically, HLG2010 was another building block within the construct developed in Helsinki, centered on the idea of a steady development for EU crisis management capabilities. At the same time, it was taken into consideration the need for increase the EU ability to perform the entire spectrum of missions⁸, in accordance of EU

⁸ Joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization (Art.28B, Treaty

Treaty provisions with a special emphasis on preventive engagement and the capacity to plan and conduct, simultaneously, several operation with different level of engagement⁹.

Headline Goal 2010 – integrating the Battle Groups

Based on this guidance, the main aspects taken into consideration for HLG2010 were structured along three priorities regarding forces interoperability, deployment and sustainment capability. In this regard, HLG2010 introduced the notion of “highly deployable force packages” as the main element to be taken into account for planning purposes and overall management of operational commitments. The conceptual support in this approach was based on the Battle Groups Concept having as the main objectives achievement by 2005 of the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and, subsequently, by the end of 2007 of the Final Operational Capability (FOC). Within the overall EU Level of Ambition regarding the capacity to conduct, simultaneously, two rapid reaction operations, it was decided to have two Battle Groups for six months stand-by periods.

Obviously, implementation of the new perspective on European defense cooperation, required more standardization at various levels, which is worth some consideration from at least two perspectives.

First, regarding capabilities development, the standardization model argued on building the Battle Groups structures around an infantry battalion with effective support elements (combat support and combat service support). The size of these structures was around 1.500 military personnel, made available by member states in different cooperation formulas but without imposing a threshold, given the specific conditions, which had to be taken into account for every Battle Group. Nevertheless, special emphasis was placed on keeping, as much as possible, a sort of limit regarding the number of contributing member states, in order to maintain the adequate level of interoperability. At the same time, the participation of third countries in the Battle Group operationalization process was envisaged,

of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007).

⁹ Headline Goal 2010, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_-2009/documents/dv/sede110705headlinegoal2010_/sede110705headlinegoal2010_en.pdf, accessed on 11.10.2020.

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which in most of the cases was implemented through niche contributions. Moreover, the common element used in making operational the Battlegroups was represented by the role of framework nation, which was, practically, the backbone of the structure. The contribution advanced in this capacity had to be, ideally, the most significant, especially on providing capabilities for fighting element, C2, CIS and strategic transport.

Second, from the perspective of national decision-making process, the HLG2010 implementation process required a better alignment of procedures used by member states for timely approval of national forces and capabilities deployed abroad. This aspect was quintessential for meeting the rapid reaction threshold in crisis situation. Once again, the experience of Artemis operation was instrumental in setting the time-frame of fifteen days for BG deployment. Within this approach, five days were allotted for conducting the procedural steps, both at national and EU level, namely approving a BG operation based on planning documents. The other ten days were assigned to deployment procedures in order to reach relevant strength for allowing starting the mandate implementation. The crisis management scenarios on which BGs could be employed were derived from the Petersberg tasks without excluding the possibility of using these structures as reserve in support of other EU and UN operations.

On a similar note, another possibility was envisaged, namely the possibility of using BGs as support elements for other operations, in order to assist it in performing various tasks. In this vein, the planning process for BG deployment will have to take into account five scenarios: conflict prevention, separation of forces, stabilization and reconstruction, evacuation, assistance for humanitarian operations. In close relations with these aspects, the command and control arrangements were defined with recourse to the agreed procedures and existing capabilities made available under ESDP. Therefore, C2 design for Battle Groups was derived from the system used for planning and conducting EU autonomous operations. In this respect, for a BG deployment, one of the operational headquarters can be used that five member states made available for EU operations. The second option evolved gradually after the creation of the Military Planning and

Conduct Capability (MPCC)¹⁰, which has the potential to develop additional options for C2 arrangements to be used in EU operations with recourse at Battle Groups.

All of these guidelines were agreed in Brussels, during a defense ministerial meeting, which took place in November 22, 2004 providing, thus, an agreed conceptual baseline for generating Battle Groups. The main line of action was that BGs are specific rapid reactions formats that EU could use in the crisis management context. Within this perspective, the Battle Groups either had to operate as stand-alone unit or as an entry force deployed in order to create the security conditions for a larger follow-on force. On both scenarios, the sustainment capacity was very important, given the fact that BGs had to stay in theater of operation up to 120 days. From this perspective, additional criteria were agreed on C2 arrangements (pre-identified OHQ, FHQ) and critical enablers (especially on logistic and strategic transport). It must be underlined that the implementation of BG concept would give a new impulse of European cooperation in the strategic transportation domain. The main idea was to make available sufficient capabilities for ensuring the BG deployment either through an acquisition solution, or multinational cooperation. Increasing the synergy of national approaches as well as rationalizing the use of available capabilities (air and maritime) were the main lines of action¹¹ in this regard. The review of the progresses achieved in making operational Battle Groups was structured

¹⁰ MPCC established through Council Decision (EU) 2017/971 of 8 June 2017 determining the planning and conduct arrangements for EU non-executive military CSDP missions and amending Decisions 2010/96/CFSP on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces, 2013/34/CFSP on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian armed forces (EUTM Mali) and (CFSP) 2016/610 on a European Union CSDP military training mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) (OJ L 146, 9.6.2017, pp. 133-138)

¹¹ The main objectives for HLG 2010 implementation in the field of improve the overall potential for deployment were focused on optimizing the coordination activities on strategic transport. In this respect, it was decided that by 2005 to implement by 2005 EU joint coordination in strategic lift (air, land and sea) as a step towards achieving full capacity and efficiency in strategic lift by 2010. At the same time, it was envisaged to transform (in particular for airlift) the European Airlift Co-ordination Cell into the European Airlift Centre by 2004 and to develop (between some member states) a European airlift command by 2010.

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around the dialogue between member states and EU political and military structures in BG Coordination Conference. These were held on every six months debating the main features of the Battle Groups, which were scheduled to perform a stand-by period.

Besides these parameters, the way in which BGs structures were developed encompasses different approaches pending on different aspects related primarily to the missions to which they were dedicated. From this perspective, the Battle Groups formulas advanced in the initial stages included different models and typologies generated by specific forms of cooperation among participating countries. The dominant model involved participation of several countries, while there were other types of Battle Groups developed by individual member states. This is the case, in the initial stages, for France, Italy, United Kingdom. However, but it changed in the next phases of the development process by increasing the multinational character of BGs, both through expanding the number of participating member states, as well as by inviting different third countries to associate with niche contributions. Practically, at the end of the process every¹² EU member state was involved in at least one BG formation, while there were several third countries, that made available contributions (e.g. Ukraine, Turkey, Norway, Serbia).

As regards the training and certification aspects, these were handled with the same degree of flexibility by conceding the main prerogative to the framework nation, which thus became accountable for final outcome of the cooperation developed in BG formats. It is worth mentioning here that the certification process is conducted by national authorities with the participation of relevant structures (EU Military Committee, EU Military Staff) and based on procedures agreed at the EU Level.

Implementation of the Battle Groups Concept

In May 2004, General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted some points of clarification regarding the implementation process. In this vein, it was decided that for Initial Operational Capability (2005-

¹² With the exception of Denmark and Malta.

2006), the Level of Ambition is to have at least one fully functional Battle Group in order to undertake one Battle group-sized operation. For 2005, there were advanced several contributions from United Kingdom, France and Italy, every country making available, individually, a Battle Group structure for 2005. Additionally, Germany and France, together with Belgium, made a contribution for 2006. In the same respect, Spain together with Italy, Portugal and Greece advanced another Battle Group. The contributions increased significantly in the coming months, officially confirmed during the Military Capability Commitment Conference (Brussels, 24 November 2004). All in all, there were 13 Battlegroups formats, involving, at that moment, almost all member states, and Norway as third state (France • Italy • Spain • United Kingdom • France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and potentially Spain • France and Belgium • Germany, the Netherlands and Finland • Germany, Austria and Czech Republic • Italy, Hungary and Slovenia • Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal • Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania • Sweden, Finland and Norway • United Kingdom and the Netherlands)¹³. Gradually, the Battle Group project gathered commitments from all member states, which allowed increasing the BGs number and further consolidating internal coherence. Furthermore, by expanding the member states contributions the burden on implementation was redistributed in a more balanced way between participating member states. This approach could be depicted in the next stages of implementation process, in which the BGs made available as individual contributions incorporated additional contributions from other member and third states.

In discussing the practical formulas on which Battle Groups were developed, the geographical aspects must be taken into account, which influenced considerably the national approaches on this project. Therefore, it is worth highlighting the important role played by the regional cooperation initiatives in the field of defense, developed in the last decades in Europe. Practically, the groupings of different member states in order to develop the BG's structure were fundamentally linked with their existing

¹³ Military Capability Commitment Conference, 24 November 2004, available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/sede110705militarycapabilities/_sede110705militarycapabilities_en.pdf, accessed on 12.10.2020.

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arrangements of co-operation. Therefore, it can be argued on developing another criterion, namely the geographic one, for creating clusters of cooperation for BG development. The geographical perspective based on regional cooperation experience was induced, also, by the need to fulfill some demanding technical parameters, especially on deployment timeline, interoperability and strategic transportation capabilities. From this perspective, grouping the participating member states along the geographical proximity lines was a natural option in order to maximize the operational efficiency and avoid any redundancy and duplications in force generation process.

One of the most relevant aspect for this discussion is the military cooperation in Northern Europe, which started in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the creation of the Nordic Defense Community (1948). It was followed by several other cooperation projects, with immediate applicability in defense, such as Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS), including countries from the region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). The comprehensive framework developed thus contributed extensively to the creation of the so-called Nordic Battle Group, with Sweden as framework nation, the core of the structure being provided, initially, together with Finland and Norway. The number of participating countries expanded gradually, encompassing Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Ireland.

At the same time, the significant dynamic of regional cooperation in South-Eastern Europe contributed, also, to the establishment of the HELBROC, structured, initially, along the contributions of Greece (framework nation), Romania, Bulgaria and Cyprus. The Technical Agreement on this initiative was signed in November 2006, the Battle Group being made available several times for potential EU operations. The development of this structure benefitted from the consolidated experience of bilateral and multilateral military cooperation between participating countries, which was extended by including Ukraine (2011) and Serbia (2016). We need to underline, in this regard, the positive effects generated by the cooperation of the participating countries within various initiatives, especially Multinational South-Eastern Europe (MPFSEE) and South-

Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG). In the same vein, the cooperation in the field of defense between Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary under the auspices of the so-called “Visegrad Group-V4” regional initiative generated, also, a Battle Group formation. Based on the political decision adopted by the meeting of Visegrad Group Head of Governments in October 2013, they assumed the objective to make available a V4 Battle Group in the first half of 2016¹⁴.

Another example of interaction between regional cooperation and the creation of Battle Group formations is related to the Multinational Land Force initiative, developed in 2002 between Italy, Slovenia and Hungary. On this basis it was further consolidated by launching the Defense Cooperation Initiative (DECI), which included, besides three founding members, Austria, Croatia, Albania and Montenegro. In June 2013, the Chiefs of Defense from DECI countries agreed on making available, in the first half of 2017, a Battle Group generated through contributions in this format.

The similar approach is governing the participation of some member states, which are participating in the Eurocorps initiative, created in 1993, as French-German Corps, and declared operational in 1995. The member countries/framework nations are Germany, France, Luxembourg and Spain, while the Franco-German Brigade created in October 1989 represents the nucleus of the initiative. In addition to those countries there are associate members (Poland, Greece, Italy, Romania and Turkey) which contribute with staff officers and forces to the overall activities under this initiative. In the EU BG development process, the framework nations advanced¹⁵ contributions as Eurocorps framework nations, consolidating the interaction between CSDP and regional cooperation component.

Conclusions

Obviously, the creation of Battle Groups was, first a reflection of the progress achieved by the European defense cooperation. Nevertheless, the

¹⁴ Budapest Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group Heads of Government on Strengthening the V4 Security and Defence Cooperation, October 14, 2013, available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2013/budapest-joint-statement-140929>, accessed on 15 October 2020.

¹⁵ EUISS Yearbook of European Security, Paris, 2016, p.65-66

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trigger was strongly related to UN undertakings to find additional opportunities to increase the operational deployments, especially in terms of rapid reaction in crisis situation, with a particular focus on Africa. In this regard, experience from Artemis operation was one of the relevant factors which led to the adoption of BG concept and, subsequently, initiation of implementation process. Practically, the operation conducted in RD Congo fully confirmed the urgent need for this kind of capability which can rapidly project the EU answer to crises even in the remote geographical areas. It is beyond any doubt that the BG concept was fully validated on different aspects by Artemis Operation, in terms of general concept of operation, procedures used for deployment, logistic support as well as the practical implementation of the mandate. All of these were fully incorporated in the framework adopted through Headline Goal 2010, reflecting thus the operational validation of Battle Groups in real time situations.

However, this did not happen in the coming years in spite of certain expectations regarding the use of Battle Groups in EU operations. These expectations did not lead to a higher convergence between member states perspectives on involving BGs in certain EU operations. Of course, there were difficult challenges that had to be overcome, especially the financial burden, demanding timeframe for deployment, interoperability between contributing member states and so on. The financial implications generated by an operation with recourse to Battle Groups were significant, representing the main line of effort, which member states, especially those who are fulfilling the framework-nation role, had to take into account in the overall planning of operational priorities. From this perspective, finding a solution for sharing the financial burden could alleviate some of the concerns and give new impetus for possible BGs employment in operations.

In this respect, special consideration should be allotted to the way in which enabling capabilities are provided, especially those related to strategic and tactical transportation. It should be seen both from the perspective of financial implications, as well as from the perspective of capabilities availability at short notice, especially in cases where member states are not able to provide them.

All of these generated precautionary feelings in many European capitals regarding the practicality of engaging Battle Groups, at least in the following years after they reached Final Operational Capability. At the same time, there is room for a more optimistic perception regarding the innovative role on which Battle Groups – having in mind that this project – brought the entire European defense cooperation at a new level of ambition. Furthermore, it expanded the way in which EU can formulate its contribution in the field of crisis management by increasing the number of options that could be implemented in generating the operational commitments. Even in the absence of involvement in operations, the development process had practical results in generating different Battle Groups formats which are part of the EU defense planning system, ensuring, also, a constant flow of capabilities which can be involved in crisis management operations.



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