

Special Report

**The EU police mission
in Afghanistan: mixed
results**



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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015

Print	ISBN 978-92-872-2506-1	ISSN 1831-0834	doi:10.2865/699786	QJ-AB-15-007-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-872-2514-6	ISSN 1977-5679	doi:10.2865/893461	QJ-AB-15-007-EN-N
EPUB	ISBN 978-92-872-2515-3	ISSN 1977-5679	doi:10.2865/641246	QJ-AB-15-007-EN-E

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Printed in Luxembourg

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(pursuant to Article 287(4), second subparagraph, TFEU)

The ECA's special reports set out the results of its performance and compliance audits of specific budgetary areas or management topics. The ECA selects and designs these audit tasks to be of maximum impact by considering the risks to performance or compliance, the level of income or spending involved, forthcoming developments and political and public interest.

This performance audit was produced by Audit Chamber III — headed by ECA Member Karel Pinxten — which specialises in external actions spending areas. The audit was led by ECA Member Hans Gustaf Wessberg, supported by Sabine Hiernaux-Fritsch and Fabrice Mercade, heads of unit, Peter Eklund, head of private office of Mr Wessberg, Nikolaos Zompolas, team leader, and Emmanuel-Douglas Hellinakis, attaché in Mr Wessberg's private office.



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Reply of the Commission and the EEAS

Advising: Short-term transfer of knowledge/support to a group, aimed at identifying solutions for specific problems and developing projects in a specific timeframe (*source:* EUPOL's Mentoring Handbook, April 2013).

Civcom: Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, an advisory body established by the Council which provides information, formulates recommendations and gives advice on civilian aspects of crisis management to the PSC.

CMPD: Crisis Management and Planning Directorate, the primary EEAS department responsible for political and strategic planning on CSDP. In charge of conducting strategic and advance planning of new CSDP missions and conducting strategic reviews of existing CSDP missions.

Conops: Concept of Operations, a planning document that translates political intent into direction and guidance by indicating what action is needed to accomplish a mission.

CPCC: Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, an EEAS department that supports the Civilian Operations Commander (who is also CPCC Director) in exercising his/her responsibilities relating to the operational planning and the conduct of civilian CSDP missions.

CSDP: Common Security and Defence Policy. Formerly known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), it became the CSDP with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

EEAS: European External Action Service.

EGF: European Gendarmerie Force.

EUSR: European Union Special Representative.

FPI: Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, a Commission department reporting directly to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Among other things, the FPI manages expenditures on actions implemented under the Common Foreign and Security Policy — including civilian CSDP missions — and the Instrument for Stability.

GPPT: German Police Project Team in Afghanistan.

Headquarters: The EEAS and the Commission services in Brussels.

IPCB: International Police Coordination Board of Afghanistan.

ISAF: International Security Assistance Force, part of the combined international effort that was mandated by the United Nations Security Council. It worked to ensure that conditions were in place for the Government of Afghanistan to exercise its authority throughout the country.

LOTFA: Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan.

MIP: Mission implementation plan.

Mentoring: Structured transfer of knowledge, ideally based on trust and mutual respect, between a mentor and a mentee, aiming at achieving individual and/or organisational changes in accordance with a strategy and/or plan established at various levels — strategic, operational and tactical (*source:* EUPOL's Mentoring Handbook, April 2013).

Monitoring: Observing, assessing and reporting on the performance of relevant institutions and their staff (*source:* EUPOL's Mentoring Handbook, April 2013).

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

NTM-A: NATO Training Mission — Afghanistan.

OPLAN: Operation Plan, a document that further elaborates on the operational details necessary for implementation of the objectives set out in the Conops.

PSC: Political and Security Committee. According to Article 38 of the Treaty on European Union, the PSC exercises, under the responsibility of the Council and the High Representative, the political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations.

Tashkeel: A document/structure/system detailing all staffing positions and levels.

I
Following the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the European Union (EU) and its Member States committed themselves to support the Government of Afghanistan in establishing a stronger framework of rule of law in the country. The EU police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) is a civilian mission developed in 2007 in the context of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and aimed at contributing to the establishment of a sustainable and effective civilian police force under Afghan ownership.

II
The Court assessed whether EUPOL Afghanistan had been effective in delivering its mandate. The audit focused on whether EUPOL was well planned and well coordinated; whether it had received adequate operational support and guidance; whether EUPOL has contributed to the progress of the Afghan national police and, lastly, whether the phasing out of EUPOL has been adequately prepared. The audit covered the period from EUPOL's launch until end 2014, with a particular focus on its activities after 2012.

III
The EU has managed to establish a European civilian police mission in Afghanistan in a particularly insecure and tough environment. After a difficult start, EUPOL has gradually gained recognition from other actors for its expertise and its significant contribution to the ongoing reform of the police sector.

IV
The Court found that EUPOL Afghanistan has been partly effective in delivering its mandate. Improvements were more notable in two of EUPOL's three main lines of operations. The Court also examined EUPOL's results per type of activity and found that EUPOL has been largely successful in training-related activities but less so in mentoring and advising. Projects have had a limited contribution to the mission's objectives. While external factors may provide some of the explanations for this, other shortcomings can be attributed to EUPOL itself.

V

Regarding the planning of EUPOL, the Council's decision to launch the mission was preceded by a thorough analysis of Afghan needs. The audit found that EUPOL's objectives add value by focusing on strategic level training and advising in the field of policing, with linkages to the wider rule of law through the work of other international actors. However, EUPOL's deployment was complicated and it took significant time before the mission reached a certain staffing level, mainly due to the difficult operational context and to recruitment and logistical problems.

VI

As regards coordination, EUPOL did not manage to bring together all European actors under a single European framework to improve Afghan policing, but it has enhanced cooperation with the EU Member States on the ground and has genuinely sought to promote international cooperation.

VII

With respect to headquarters' support and guidance, the Court found that the EU Member States and the EEAS have regularly adjusted EUPOL's mandate in line with changing priorities and the situation on the ground. EUPOL's reporting meets basic accountability requirements but remains largely descriptive and without sufficient focus on the results achieved and value added. Support from headquarters has been relevant and useful overall but guidance should be more detailed in order to meet the specific operational needs of the mission. Work is currently being done to improve guidance, and the possibility of further centralising certain functions is being examined on a cost-benefit basis.

VIII

Concerning the results achieved and their sustainability, EUPOL has helped the Afghan national police to gain public trust by supporting the implementation of basic principles of civilian policing. Nevertheless, the police and justice sectors continue to suffer from systemic weaknesses. The long-term sustainability of EUPOL's outcomes and of the Afghan policing sector in general is at risk, as it will largely depend on the willingness of the Afghan authorities to take ownership of the outcomes, the security situation and on EU and other international stakeholder funding.

IX

Lastly, with respect to phasing-out, EUPOL and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have drawn up a plan for winding down EUPOL's activities by the end of 2016, but some concerns remain on how the EU can build upon EUPOL's achievements and whether maximum value will be obtained from the disposal of the mission's assets.

X

Besides being applicable to the EUPOL mission in Afghanistan, the Court's recommendations relate to the setting up, deployment and general aspects of improving preparatory measures and support functions for future CSDP missions. They also include practical measures to improve the effectiveness of each type of activity, measures to improve the sustainability of CSDP mission outcomes, and the preparation of an overall strategy to mitigate the risks inherent in the downsizing and closure of missions and the disposal of mission assets.

01

Following the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghan representatives participated in the UN talks held in Bonn to decide on a plan for governing the country. These talks led to the Bonn Agreement¹, which established an Afghan Interim Authority to run the country, and called for the deployment of an international military force² to assist the Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and the surrounding areas (see *Annex I*).

02

International donors meeting at the G8 conference held in Geneva in April 2002³ adopted a reform programme based on a lead nation framework to deal with security issues in particular. Under the framework, the security sector was divided into five pillars, with five lead nations assigned to oversee and support reforms for each pillar. The five lead nations were Germany (responsible for policing), Japan (disarmament, demilitarisation and reintegration), Italy (justice), the United Kingdom (combating drugs) and the USA (the army). In this context, the German Police Project Office commenced its work in April 2002. The framework was meant to ensure burden sharing, but there was no mechanism to provide an overarching and coordinated approach to the international community's security reform efforts.

03

By 2005, the lead nation approach had weakened and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) became the de facto leader within the international community for developing the security sector in Afghanistan. In a Joint Declaration⁴, the EU and its Member States committed themselves to supporting the Government of Afghanistan in establishing a stronger framework of rule of law in the country (see *Figure 1*).

- 1 Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending Re-establishment of Permanent Institutions, Bonn, 5 December 2001.
- 2 In response, UN Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, authorised the creation of an International Security Assistance Force. In 2011, 25 EU Member States had deployed about 33 000 troops to the ISAF.
- 3 The G8 is the name of a forum for the governments of a group of eight leading advanced economies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) and the European Commission.
- 4 EU Joint Declaration 'Committing to a new EU Afghan Partnership', 16 November 2005.

04

The 2006 Afghanistan Compact, launched at the London conference in January 2006, provided a new framework for cooperation between the elected government of Afghanistan and the international community. In this context, a joint EU assessment mission was carried out in autumn 2006 to assess Afghan needs in the rule of law

sector. It was followed in November 2006 by a fact-finding mission which proposed a joint EU intervention based around a strategic approach for building a functioning national police force with a country-wide remit. This proposal was supported by the Afghan government, which sent a letter on 16 May 2007 inviting the EU to launch a police mission (see **Box 1**).

Box 1**CSDP missions**

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) enables the EU to take a leading role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and the strengthening of international security. It is a part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets.

CSDP missions are of two kinds: civilian missions financed by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget, and military missions financed by the Member States. Civilian CSDP missions vary in scope (police, monitoring, judicial or security sector reform), in nature (executive or non-executive) and in size.

As at the end of 2014, the EU had deployed a total of 32 CSDP missions, 16 of which had been completed and wound up and 16 were still ongoing (11 civilian and five military missions).

05

On 30 May 2007, the Council decided to establish the EU police mission in Afghanistan⁵ (EUPOL). EUPOL was meant to build on the efforts of the German Police Project Office and to seek to harmonise the approaches and efforts of the various partners involved in police reform. The aim was to contribute to the establishment of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements, under Afghan ownership, that would ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system (see **Box 2**).

5 Council Joint Action 2007/369/CFSP of 30 May 2007 on establishment of the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) (OJ L 139, 31.5.2007, p. 33).

EUPOL

EUPOL started operations on 15 June 2007. It is a civilian CSDP mission supporting the reform efforts of the Afghan government in building an improved civilian police service operating within the framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The Civilian Operation Commander, who is also the Director of the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), exercises command and control of EUPOL at a strategic level, under the political control and strategic direction of the Political and Security Committee. The Head of Mission exercises operational control over EUPOL and assumes its day-to-day management.

EUPOL Afghanistan activities are principally carried out by police and rule of law experts seconded from EU Member States, as well as contracted international experts and local staff. The mission works through training and mentoring, advising and monitoring the senior leadership of relevant Afghan institutions (Ministry of the Interior, Afghan National Police, Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's Office). It has also carried out a number of projects.

EUPOL Afghanistan implements its mandate along three lines of operations:

- Line of Operation 1: Advancing institutional reform of the Ministry of the Interior.
- Line of Operation 2: Professionalising the national police.
- Line of Operation 3: Connecting the national police to the wider justice system.

At the time of the audit in late 2014, EUPOL had operations in Kabul, Herat and Mazar-e Sharif.

06

The total cost of EUPOL for the period May 2007 to December 2014 was close to 400 million euro. Security-related costs accounted for almost one third of that amount⁶ (see also **Annex II**).

6 This figure includes all commitments up to the end of 2014, thus it does not reflect the most recent commitment of 57.75 million euro for 2015 (Council Decision 2014/922/CFSP of 17 December 2014 amending and extending Decision 2010/279/CFSP on the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL AFGHANISTAN) (OJ L 363, 18.12.2014, p. 152)). The Council has approved 10 financing decisions (and extensions of financing decisions) amounting to 392.4 million euro of commitments and respective disbursements of 346.2 million euro. Staff costs (for seconded, international contracted and about 200 local staff) represent about 43 % of the EUPOL budget, while the security of personnel and premises accounts for 28 %.

07

The Court assessed whether EUPOL Afghanistan had been effective in delivering its mandate. The audit focused on the following questions:

- (a) Was EUPOL well planned and set up?
- (b) Has EUPOL been well coordinated with Member States, other international stakeholders and the Afghan authorities?
- (c) Has EUPOL received adequate operational support and guidance given its mandate?
- (d) Has EUPOL contributed to the progress of the Afghan National Police and are the results likely to be sustainable?
- (e) Has the phasing out of EUPOL been adequately prepared?

08

The audit covered the period from EUPOL's launch in 2007 until the end of 2014. It focused in particular on EUPOL activities after 2012.

09

The audit was carried out between July and December 2014. The Court gathered evidence for its assessment through various means:

- (a) documentary analysis and literature review;

- (b) an on-the-spot visit to Kabul in September 2014 to examine supporting documentation, to review EUPOL's procedures and systems and finally to interview national police officers, staff of the Ministries of the Interior and Justice, EUPOL staff (including trainers and mentors), the EU Special Representative in Afghanistan (EUSR), staff at the EU delegation in Kabul, ISAF and NATO personnel, the International Police Coordination Board of Afghanistan (IPCB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kabul and six EU representations in Afghanistan⁷;

- (c) interviews with key staff of the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), the geographical desk officers at the EEAS and the Commission; interviews were also held with representatives of five Member States⁸ participating in the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (Civcom) and, finally, NATO staff;

- (d) review of a sample of six monitoring, mentoring and advising activities and 11 projects which were planned and implemented between 2011 and 2014 (see **Annex III**).

7 Representations (either Ambassadors or Heads of Mission) of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

8 Representatives of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as well as the Chairman of Civcom.

A relevant mandate, yet a problematic start

10

The Court examined whether the setting up and deployment of EUPOL was preceded by a comprehensive assessment of Afghan needs. It also assessed

whether operational challenges in connection with the deployment of EUPOL had been given due attention.

Photo 1 EUPOL's offices



Source: ECA.

Shaping EUPOL

11

The Council's decision to launch EUPOL was preceded by a joint EU assessment mission which recommended, inter alia, that the EU consider contributing

further to support the Afghan police through a police mission. This was confirmed by the subsequent fact-finding mission⁹ in late 2006, which proposed that the EU could provide added value by contributing to a civilian policing mission with linkages to the wider to rule of law.

⁹ Council of the European Union, Report on the Fact Finding Mission on possible ESDP Mission to Afghanistan, 18 December 2006.

12

The two missions were carried out by large and diverse teams of experts in the fields of policing and the rule of law. This preparatory work leading up to the launch of the mission ensured that EUPOL's objectives were aligned with the priorities stated in the 2006 Afghan Compact and with the security pillar of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy for 2008–13. Given the situation on the ground, security was essential for creating the conditions for stability, economic growth and poverty reduction.

13

The preferred approach was to foster the achievements of the German Police Project Office (GPPO), which was already well established on the ground, by providing a reinforced and coherent European presence in the security sector, in particular in civil policing. The German police mission was successful in training higher echelons of the hierarchy — through providing strategic advice to the Ministry of the Interior and the national police and improving cooperation with international actors rather than training the national police rank and file. EUPOL was welcomed by Afghans and international actors as it provided the building block hitherto missing from ongoing international efforts as a whole.

14

However, EUPOL faced a laborious task in delivering its mandate owing to the almost complete lack of a functioning police force. Other crucial issues included illiteracy rates among police staff of up to 80 %, meaning that many police officers were unable to process evidence or read and write reports. Pervasive corruption in law enforcement and judicial institutions was an additional challenge to the effective delivery of EUPOL's mandate.

Deployment difficulties

15

The EU has managed to set up a civilian police mission in a very tough and hostile environment. However, at the time of EUPOL's launch in June 2007, only 2 months after the Council decision setting it up, it was far from ready given the difficult operational context: it had only four staff in Kabul at the time, and they had no access to the Internet and no vehicles. The majority of EUPOL staff were in fact hastily rebadged seconded police officers from missions of individual EU Member States¹⁰. Few had received instructions on how the new 'European' mission differed from their previous bilateral arrangements.

16

The deployment process was further hampered by leadership problems which seriously affected operations during the first phase: within the first 18 months, EUPOL's Head of Mission changed three times. Logistic problems linked to the procurement of equipment or finding accommodation for EUPOL staff were other major practical issues that further slowed down operations.

¹⁰ Centre for European Reform, Policy Brief, April 2010.

Observations

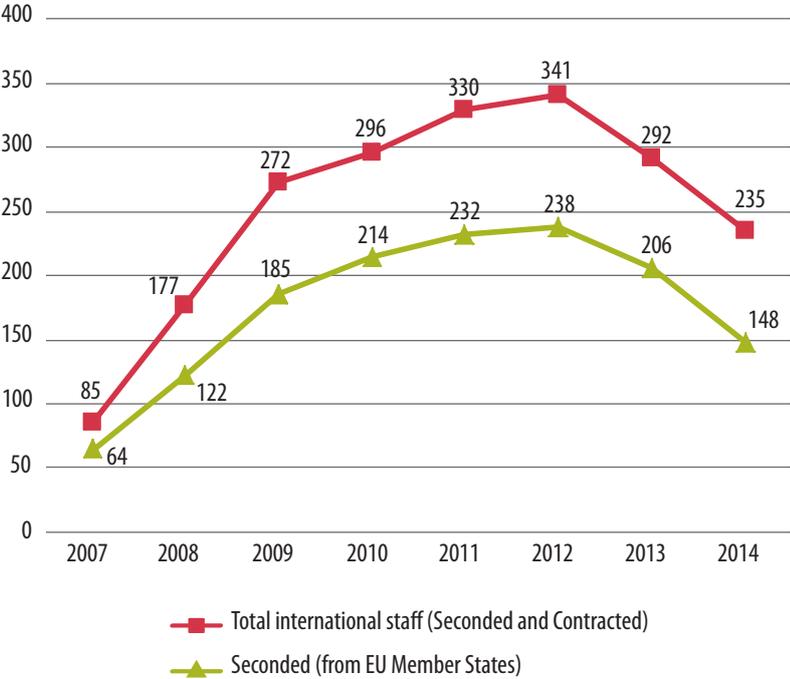
17

Another factor was the reluctance of Member States to second personnel to the mission, in part because of the difficult start-up EUPOL was experiencing (see also paragraph 25). The idea was for the mission to be fully operational and present in Kabul and in specific provinces by the end of March 2008. However, this was not achieved. Its mandated establishment plan, comprising 200 international staff, was not achieved until February 2009 — almost 2 years after the EU intervention began.

18

Although the Council acknowledged as early as 2008 that the original staff complement should be doubled to 400, EUPOL had still not reached the threshold of 300 staff (75 % of the planned capacity) by the end of 2010, and it achieved a peak of 350 staff only in January 2012 and then declined (see *Figure 2*).

Figure 2 Total international (seconded and contracted) and EU seconded staff in EUPOL on 31 December of each year from 2007 to 2014



Source: EEAS (CPCC).

Observations

19

There are a number of reasons why the mission did not achieve the planned capacity:

- (a) EUPOL had difficulties in finding volunteers owing to the security situation in Afghanistan;
- (b) EUPOL was in competition with other CSDP missions in recruiting seconded (and, to a lesser extent, contractual) experts; in this respect, Afghanistan was a less attractive option. EUPOL also had to compete with other international missions, such as the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) and United Nations missions;
- (c) certain seconded positions, such as those requiring knowledge of project analysis and reporting, legal expertise or a rule of law background, were difficult to fill because of low numbers of applicants;
- (d) owing to the nature of EUPOL's tasks, some positions required experts with experience in national ministries; police mentoring positions seconded to the Ministry of the Interior were the most difficult to fill.

20

EUPOL is mandated to address police reform at central, regional and provincial levels. However, deployment to the provinces was problematic owing mainly to inadequate security conditions, logistical challenges and the lack of proper accommodation.

21

In this context, EUPOL deployed field offices in 11 provinces¹¹ in 2008 (see **Annex IV**) and increased the number to 16 in 2009. EUPOL was unable to deploy throughout specific provinces of Afghanistan as planned, because the US and Turkey have not signed Technical Agreements with EUPOL in the provinces where they were present. In addition, most field offices were poorly manned and only two of them (in Herat and Mazar-e Sharif) were consistently staffed by more than 10 persons. This was confirmed by an internal EEAS assessment carried out by the CPCC in 2011¹² which concluded that delivery of the mission in the provinces to that point in time had been 'rather poor and its impact marginal'. The drastic reduction of EUPOL's field offices was finally dictated by the de facto closure of the European Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the Afghan provinces. By 2013, the number of field offices beside Kabul had been cut to only two.

11 Out of the 34 provinces in all.

12 CPCC 13077/11, EUPOL Afghanistan operational assessment report, 11 October 2011.

Observations

Difficulties with coordinating international efforts

22

The Court examined whether EUPOL was well coordinated with other EU efforts, other international stakeholders and the Afghan authorities.

A European effort, but no overarching European approach

23

The report of the fact-finding mission noted that a crucial factor for the mission's success was that it should provide a single framework for the Member States by promoting a 'European' voice on police reform in Afghanistan. Similarly, the Council Joint Action establishing EUPOL¹³ stipulated that the mission should, as appropriate, coordinate, facilitate and provide advice on projects implemented by Member States and third states under their responsibility. This proved challenging for the following main reasons:

24

Firstly, coordination between EUPOL, the EUSR and the EU delegation was initially very weak, although from 2010 the revised mandate further clarified their respective roles and responsibilities. An additional reference to the responsibility of the Head of Mission was included: the HoM was to 'coordinate with other EU actors on the ground and [...] receive local political guidance from the EUSR'. Intra-EU coordination further improved with

the creation of the EEAS in 2011 which provided a structured coordination mechanism and led to a 'double-hatted Ambassador (both EUSR and Head of EU Delegation).

25

The second challenge was the fact that EU Member States continued their individual actions in parallel to contributing seconded staff to EUPOL. Member States had their preferred activities in the police, law enforcement and rule of law sectors in Afghanistan. Joining EUPOL, rather than maintaining bilateral efforts, was sometimes seen as losing national influence and visibility on the ground.

26

Over time, EUPOL has made extensive efforts to coordinate its activities with EU Member States in the context of specific projects. One example has been close cooperation between EUPOL and the German Police Project Team (GPPT).

27

Some Member States¹⁴ have also participated in parallel joint European efforts, such as the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF)¹⁵. EU Member States with a 'gendarmerie' model therefore had more in common with the EGF, or NATO's NTM-A¹⁶ approach, than with the kind of civil policing that EUPOL was trying to achieve. Some EU Member States interviewed also expressed the view that the 'gendarmerie' training model was more suitable to the Afghan situation on the ground.

- 13 The Joint Action establishing the EUPOL mission stipulated that: 'The Council and the Commission shall, each in accordance with its respective powers, ensure consistency between the implementation of this Joint Action and external activities of the Community in accordance with Article 3 of the Treaty. The Council and the Commission shall cooperate to this end'.
- 14 France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland and Spain.
- 15 The European Gendarmerie Force (Eurogendfor) is a multinational police force constituted only by elements of police forces with military status. The EGF mostly focused on training and advising. Though its experts were part of the national missions, they performed their tasks under the NTM-A chain of command. The EGF mission deployment peaked at about 400 staff in May 2011 and has declined ever since.
- 16 The NTM-A delivered a large-scale police training initiative which was specifically tailored to the security situation on the ground. At the end of 2011, the NTM-A was operating 23 training sites in Afghanistan, with a staff of 778 trainers and 2 825 contractors providing support services.

Despite its efforts, EUPOL has had limited scope for influencing major actors

28

In terms of EUPOL's objective to improve cohesion and coordination among international actors, the mission's limited size was one restricting factor when it came to taking the lead in this area. Compared to the NATO-led NTM-A, EUPOL was a minor player. It was difficult for EUPOL to exert much influence over this major international entity.

29

Another adverse factor was the largely unsuccessful work carried out by the International Police Coordination Board of Afghanistan (IPCB)¹⁷. Over the past 13 years, more than 37 different international donors have been involved in supporting Afghan police development, most of them by contributing to the NTM-A, to EUPOL, or to both. To ensure coherence, the IPCB was established in 2007 to act as the main body for coordinating police-related efforts. Although EUPOL has provided significant capacity and administrative support to the IPCB, the latter has achieved very limited results in terms of promoting cooperation among the international community. International stakeholders have been unwilling to be coordinated and have perceived the IPCB as an ambitious effort on the part of the EU to take the lead in the policing sector. Additionally, IPCB's inadequate results were definitely linked to poorly designed processes which put an additional burden on the involved parties without much quantifiable outcome.

30

The Court found that cooperation with NATO-led efforts has gradually improved over time. Tangible results of this cooperation extend to security arrangements for EUPOL staff and the agreement to jointly set up the Professional Training Board for the development and accreditation of police training curricula.

Headquarters' support functions and guidance have improved over time

31

The Court examined whether EU Member States and the EEAS have made the appropriate adjustments to EUPOL's mandate during the operational phase, whether EUPOL reporting gives a fair account of its achievements and what support and guidance it has received.

Planning and reporting capabilities have improved, but shortcomings remain

32

The Court found that EU Member States and the EEAS were reasonably flexible in adjusting EUPOL's mandate in line with changing priorities and conditions on the ground.

¹⁷ EUPOL has been a major contributor to the International Police Coordination Board of Afghanistan (IPCB) for example by ensuring the functioning of the IPCB Secretariat. The IPCB was established in 2007 with the purpose to act as the main international body for coordinating police-related international organisations.

Observations

33

Since the Council approval of the first Operational Plan (OPLAN) in 2007, key planning documents have been revised four times:

- (a) in 2008, a revision was necessary in response to the Council's new commitment to double (to 400) the number of international experts assigned to the mission;
- (b) in 2010, a revision was mainly the consequence of a reprioritisation decided by the new Afghan Minister of the Interior and the corresponding request to EUPOL, leading to some alignment of the mission's focus with Ministry priorities¹⁸;
- (c) the main driver for the 2013 revision was the international community's pledge to support strong anti-corruption measures and strengthen the rule of law. The revision included much emphasis on the professionalisation of the Afghan Police in line with the 'Ten-Year Vision'¹⁹ document;
- (d) most recently, the revision of July 2014 was proposed so that the necessary operational details could be drawn up for the phasing out of EUPOL by the end of 2016, following the Council Decision of 23 June 2014.

34

Regarding the operational planning of its activities, EUPOL translates strategic objectives set by the EU Member States in the OPLANs into a mission implementation plan (MIP), which lays down specific tasks for each objective, milestones for each task and objectively verifiable indicators for each milestone.

35

The Court found that, before 2013, each MIP included too many milestones (up to 600). This made it impossible for the mission's management to use the MIP for steering the mission in an efficient manner. The Court analysed the most recent MIPs (covering the period 2013 and 2014) and noted major improvements compared with older plans, including, in particular the addition of background information on activities, as well as clearer links between objectives, tasks and milestones and cross-references between similar activities. In addition, results indicators have not been sufficiently based upon a thorough needs assessment or linked to EUPOL operational milestones. Some indicators have focused on outputs rather than outcomes²⁰.

36

The Court noted that there have also been gradual improvements in the accuracy and fairness of EUPOL reporting. However, by the end of 2014, EUPOL did not produce a single and comprehensive monitoring table for tracking milestones to related activities, state of progress and corrective actions²¹.

- 18 In particular, emphasis was put on developing intelligence and criminal investigative capacity.
- 19 The 'Ten-Year Vision' is a document produced by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior which set strategic goals and describes the desired state of the Afghan Police in 10 years.
- 20 Outputs are the goods and services that an activity or a project produce, and outcomes are the benefit for a target group as a consequence of the activity's or project's output.
- 21 However, this tool is currently applied by other CSDP missions.

Observations

Headquarters' guidance and support functions: weaknesses are being addressed

37

The EEAS and the Commission²² are tasked with producing guidance for CSDP missions. This guidance should be sufficiently comprehensive and detailed in order to assist missions in delivering their mandate and ensure that personnel with little previous experience of mission procedures can work efficiently.

38

While the EEAS has produced about 50 concept papers and guidelines relevant to EUPOL activities, EUPOL staff in Kabul expressed concerns that, although the documentation provides basic guidance (definitions and theoretical aspects), it is not particularly helpful for practical purposes. For example, the guideline on the implementation of benchmarking does not discuss in detail how to proceed at each stage, e.g. how to carry out a proper needs assessment or situation analysis. Nor does it give examples or templates that would facilitate the implementation of the methodology proposed.

39

Of particular interest is EUPOL's mentoring handbook. Despite mentoring being one of EUPOL's key activities, the mission had to develop its own mentoring handbook. However, this was done only in April 2013, as a compilation of existing concepts, methodologies and best practices adapted to the realities faced by EUPOL mentors. The handbook was later used by the EEAS to draft a detailed mentoring guideline that was distributed to all CSDP missions.

40

The lack of standardised CSDP guidance obliged the mission to spend time developing guidelines and procedures rather than focusing on its core activities. The EEAS is now working to remedy these shortcomings.

41

The EEAS and the Commission are also considering the potential for obtaining greater efficiencies by centralising support functions under a single shared service centre. It is also currently working on the idea of developing centralised and integrated information management systems in the areas of human resources, IT and logistics encompassing all CSDP missions. Decisions are also pending on bringing the Warehouse for civilian crisis management missions, which was established in 2012²³, within such a system. This has the potential to improve management of the assets of existing civilian missions.

22 For budgetary aspects relating to mission implementation.

23 Council Decision 2012/698/CFSP of 13 November 2012 on the establishment of a warehouse for civilian crisis management missions (OJ L 314, 14.11.2012, p. 25) aimed at ensuring the rapid deployment of equipment to existing and future civilian crisis management missions, strengthening its capabilities, in particular by seeking to ensure quick and continuous access to key assets.

Observations

EUPOL's footprint: local success but general concerns about sustainability

42

The Court examined whether EUPOL has contributed to the progress made by the national police, the Ministry of Interior and selected criminal justice institutions, under each line of operation, whether monitoring, mentoring, training and advising activities have produced the intended results²⁴ and to what extent those results will be sustainable.

Improvements were more notable in two of the three lines of operation

43

Improvements were more notable in the first two of EUPOL's three lines of operations. With regard to Line of Operation 1 (advancing institutional reform of the Ministry of the Interior), the national police have made significant steps towards the development of civilian policing but they remain a highly militaristic organisation. While the Ministry of the Interior has produced many internal policy statements, to date few have been implemented countrywide. It has set up and maintains an electronic database to manage its vast human resources (Tashkeel), but it has limited capability to fully exploit this tool and the flexibility of deployment planning could

be further improved. There is a shortage of professional civil servants with a relevant administrative background. Despite EUPOL's support, gender and human rights concerns have recently surfaced as issues within the Ministry of the Interior. For example, women still account for only 2 % of national police officers. Corruption within the ministry and the police remains a significant problem and adversely affects public trust.

44

With regard to Line of Operation 2 (professionalising the national police), a community policing concept, which focuses on police building ties and working closely with the citizens, has been partially implemented at a basic level in some areas and the concept is generally accepted as the desired model for future policing in Afghanistan. Intelligence-led policing has also been accepted as an effective tool to professionalise the national police but it is not used countrywide. Examination of crime data indicates that Afghan criminal police investigators have limited capacity to investigate and detect crime. The technical capacity and leadership ability of the criminal investigation department remains underdeveloped due to lack of information sharing and inadequate training records. The relationship between police officers and prosecutors is often weak and ineffective. The national police and the Attorney General have been encouraged and supported by the international community to cooperate both institutionally and

²⁴ The criteria used in the assessment are based on EUPOL's indicators on mandate delivery and, to the extent possible, on an existing third party survey on the public's perception of the Afghan national police.

Observations

operationally. Overall, the level of cooperation has improved but the number of cases referred by the Police to the Attorney General remains low. The police have shown that they are able to carry out large-scale operations in a professional manner (providing a secure environment to hold the recent elections was a great achievement), but further assistance is needed with everyday policing, particularly the efficiency of response. The existence of national police call centres linked to operational centres is widely acknowledged as a significant milestone towards improving police command and control. Training capacity, finally, is assessed to be effective, but many challenges remain in this area, including that of establishing the recently transitioned colleges as specialised centres of excellence.

45

The Line of Operation 3 (connecting the national police to justice reform) has been the most challenging area for EUPOL to show results. However, it must be viewed through the prism of the limited support received from the international community. Although the overall capacity of the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Attorney General has increased, their institutional development is hampered by the security situation and insurgent attacks²⁵, a lack of professionalism, inadequately trained prosecutors and corruption. Cooperation between police and prosecutors remains limited, and there are many challenges and gaps at institutional and individual level, especially in connection with the prosecution of corruption among high ranking officials. It is still difficult to

protect and to enforce the rights of defendants and suspects in Afghanistan. With regard to the drafting, adoption and enforcement of criminal legislation, there has been some progress but basic international requirements in the areas of rule of law, anti-corruption and human rights have still not been met.

EUPOL has been largely successful in training-related activities but less so in mentoring and advising; projects have made little contribution to the mission's objectives

46

EUPOL's contribution to police training has been multifaceted. It has developed a 'train-the-trainer' approach and delivered training courses to the national police, while also mentoring the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and national police leadership on training issues. Finally, it has initiated the Police Staff College, a permanent purpose-built training facility, and delivered training curricula²⁶.

25 In 2012, 57 prosecutors were killed.

26 To the Police Staff College and the Crime Management College.

Observations

47

In late 2008, EUPOL started to intensify and develop the training component into what was to become a cornerstone of its activity. By late 2014, it had developed and delivered roughly 1 400 training courses for about 31 000 trainees. The Court's visit to Kabul provided evidence that EUPOL's training-related activities have contributed to the professionalisation of the national police. Courses were relevant and addressed major educational gaps. By targeting higher-ranking police officers, who were not covered by other international bodies, EUPOL provided real EU added value through the embedding of elements of civilian policing in the training of national police chiefs. Furthermore, the 'train-the-trainer' approach has promoted Afghan ownership and improved the sustainability of training activities.

48

The establishment of the Police Staff College was a milestone in the transfer of the police education system to Afghan leadership. In 2010, EUPOL initiated discussions with the Ministry of the Interior, in coordination with the NTM-A and GPPT, on the concept of a Police Staff College. All those concerned agreed that the Police Staff College should be established as a platform for the delivery of further training for police officers at a strategic, operational and tactical level. In August 2010, following a feasibility study, the EU proposed a coordinated action whereby (a) EUPOL, in line with its mandate, would develop training curricula and courses for the new college, and (b) the EU delegation and the FPI would finance the training facilities and provide project management under the Instrument for Stability regulation²⁷. The project was undertaken as a matter of urgency, and the College was completed in January 2014 at a final cost of 7.3 million euro.

²⁷ Regulation (EC) No 1717/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an Instrument for Stability (OJ L 327, 24.11.2006, p. 1.)

Photo 2 EUPOL and Afghan Police



Source: EUPOL.

Observations

49

On the matter of training curricula, the national police trainers were committed to working with the existing curricula and to developing them further. Nevertheless, some trainers pointed out the need for curricula more closely tailored to the Afghan context and including such topics as Islamic law and local customs, with practical examples from everyday life in Afghanistan. Some trainers also admitted that they skipped certain subjects, such as corruption, human rights and gender which they described as ‘unnecessary’ or ‘sensitive’.

50

EUPOL has not carried out a comprehensive evaluation of the results obtained from its mentoring and advising activities. However, the audit found evidence that EUPOL’s mentoring and advising did contribute to improving the professional skills of individuals employed at the relevant Afghan institutions (national police, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice). With a few exceptions, EUPOL’s coverage of positions within the Afghan ministries and the national police was found to be in line with and relevant to the mission mandate.

51

Box 3 provides examples of typical EUPOL mentoring, advising and monitoring activities.

Box 3

Examples of mentoring, advising and monitoring activities

Example 1 — EUPOL advising at the Ministry of Justice

In the context of the Line of Operation 3 (connecting the national police to the wider justice system), a EUPOL expert provided support to the Head of the Criminal Law Division at the Legislative Department of the Afghan Ministry of Justice, in an effort to improve capacity and deliver results in the following areas:

- legislative drafting;
- support the mentee’s role in the Secretariat for combating crimes of abduction and human trafficking;
- analyse the mentee’s departmental needs and organise trainings and workshops;
- give presentations on international laws and comparative studies with foreign legal systems.

Example 2 — EUPOL mentoring at the Police Staff Training College

The management of the Police Staff College, which provides and develops training for the Afghan national police, is still highly lacking in management skills. At the time of the Court’s audit, a EUPOL staff member was advising and mentoring the Commander of the Police Staff College with a view to improving strategic management and planning skills.

Observations

52

However, there were also significant shortcomings. The selection of mentoring positions was not duly documented in the mentoring files. In none of the six files reviewed did the audit find a structured explanation giving the arguments for selecting the particular mentee. It is therefore difficult to establish with any certainty whether EUPOL targeted the most relevant positions for its mentoring, monitoring and advising. Neither was there an analysis of the perceived Afghan capacity gap or, consequently, a plan for addressing specific weaknesses.

53

Achieving tangible results in mentoring and advising is a complex and lengthy process that is also shaped by external factors — such as the tough security situation, the frequent turnover of Afghan officials and the rotation of EUPOL mentors²⁸ (see **Box 4**).

54

Despite the regular rotation of EUPOL mentors, EUPOL has not put in place, on a systematic basis, clear and consistent handover procedures to ensure the smooth continuation of activity and avoidance of gaps and digressions that could jeopardise the mentoring relationship. The Court found that handover depended very much on the individual mentor and was often hampered by the late arrival of the new mentor and the absence of procedural consistency.

28 According to EUPOL statistics, the average time of deployment of a EUPOL mentor was 12.5 months during the period 2008–13.

Box 4

Typical challenges faced by EUPOL advisors

Example 1 — rotation of national staff

One of EUPOL's key objectives is the promotion of Afghan efforts to improve criminal investigations techniques and procedures. However, the Court's auditors found sustained efforts to have been seriously compromised by the rapid turnover of staff in the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) at the Ministry of the Interior. At the time of the Court's audit, EUPOL's 15 mentees in the Ministry of Interior had been replaced, in short succession, for various reasons, including politically motivated staff movements.

Another example is the mentoring provided to Kabul Police District 4 within the framework of the Phoenix project, one of EUPOL's flagship undertakings aimed at promoting Afghan acceptance of civilian policing principles and practices. In this Police District, the Commanding Officer has been replaced five times in 1.5 years.

Example 2 — keeping the topics of mentoring and advising in line with the mission's objectives

The audit confirmed the difficulties that EUPOL mentors faced in keeping sessions on track with the MIP objectives. While the objectives were properly stated in the individual mentoring plans, mentoring sessions frequently strayed off topic owing to the mentee's workload, personal issues, requests for services or favours, complaints about different issues or just lack of interest or time.

Observations

55

The detailed logging of mentoring sessions is one of the main tools for ensuring accountability and measuring the effectiveness of monitoring, mentoring and advising activities. The audit found that logbooks had been systematically kept by EUPOL mentors, but not in a consistent way. Moreover, the logbooks were not structured around time-bound milestones which would allow a real measurement of progress.

56

In this context, EUPOL's Mentoring Handbook, introduced in April 2013, contains provisions which may lead to increased transparency, accountability and consistency if applied correctly. At the time of the audit however, it was too early to see any real progress on needs assessments and mentee selection, progress reporting, monitoring, handovers or evaluation.

57

The projects carried out by EUPOL were mostly small-scale supply and refurbishment contracts, conferences and workshops. The Court found that while most of the projects examined were broadly aligned with and in principal beneficial to the mission mandate, it was common practice for individual EUPOL mentors to propose projects in a particular field of interest without applying an approach based on a systematic needs assessment.

58

However, individual projects contributed in only a small way to the mission objectives. When designing projects, EUPOL paid insufficient attention to the need for a comprehensive approach under which projects would contribute to the delivery of the mission objectives via a strong link to individual MIP milestones. Furthermore, EUPOL did not develop projects based on the logical framework which makes it easy to identify goals, objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts (see **Box 5**).

Box 5

Examples of project activities

Example 1

To address the problem of frequent violations of children's rights and maltreatment by the national police, EUPOL initiated the production of a training package on children's rights and policing, consisting of a booklet and an educational video. The aim of the package was to embed the basic principles of human rights with practical examples on how to respect and protect children, in the training of national police staff throughout the country. The booklet was published in Dari-Pashto (90 000 copies) and in English-Dari (10 000 copies). The 1-hour video was based around four stories in Afghanistan. The overall cost was 100 000 euro.

Example 2

In January 2014, EUPOL organised a conference and workshops on intelligence-led policing. The activity targeted management staff at district police offices in Kabul city. The topics addressed were chosen in order to create awareness and to incorporate intelligence-led policing strategies into daily police practice. The budget for this activity was 12 000 euro.

59

The implementation of projects has suffered owing to internal factors, in particular fragmentation, cumbersome procurement procedures, a lack of project management expertise, inaccurate technical specifications and the rapid rotation of EUPOL personnel. External factors, such as the unreliability of contractors, unstable market conditions and a volatile local context and security situation, have also detracted considerably from the effectiveness of projects. As a result, over the period 2011 to 2014, budget implementation rates were low (around 43 %) and many tenders were cancelled because of inaccurate technical specifications. EUPOL has implemented an average of 45 projects each year at a budget of around 40 000 euro each. Recently, the CPCC and EUPOL have examined a number of projects and identified lessons to be learned, which has led to methodological improvements²⁹.

60

In order to simplify procurement, the FPI authorised the use of flexible procedures from 29 January 2013 onwards. This allows a negotiated procedure with one tender only to be used as standard³⁰. The change led to a marked increase in the percentage of procedures brought to contract finalisation, which rose from 61 % in 2012 to 74 % in 2013. Nevertheless, an analysis of the procurement statistics shows that the percentage of cancelled procedures remained stable at 24 %, mainly because of cases where no tenders were received, the amounts bid exceeded the budget or tenders were not technically compliant.

The prerequisites for sustaining achievements to date are not yet in place

61

The national police had made visible progress in the period covered by the audit. Undoubtedly, part of this progress can be credited to EUPOL as a major international contributor on the ground. However, according to the EEAS's own strategic review³¹, the police and justice sectors continue to suffer from systemic weaknesses, including inadequate institutional development, a partially ineffective legal framework and the limited capacity of individual members of staff. Political influence, corruption and the inevitable focus on counter-insurgency policing to address the bad overall security situation, continue to hinder further institutional development of the criminal justice sector as a whole. This can affect the sustainability of the progress achieved so far.

62

Afghanistan's 2014 budget was about 7.6 billion USD, with donor grants expected to provide about 4.8 billion USD — around 60 % of the total. The authorised size of the Afghan army and police is 352 000 staff. To reduce the cost of sustaining this force, NATO plans to cut numbers to 228 500 by 2017, if security conditions permit. However, analysts³² believe that 'in the likely 2015–18 security environment, the Afghan Army and Police will require a total security force of about 373 000 personnel'.

- 29 As the methodological changes were introduced relatively recently, the Court is not yet able to assess their effectiveness.
- 30 In its Special Report No 18/2012 'EU assistance to Kosovo related to the rule of law', the Court recommended that the EEAS and the Commission review procurement procedures to ensure that they were responsive to the CSDP mission's operational needs (<http://eca.europa.eu>).
- 31 EEAS, Strategic review of EUPOL Afghanistan, 13 December 2013.
- 32 Centre of Naval Analyses, Independent Assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces, Washington, January 2014.

Observations

63

According to the EEAS³³, 86 % of the budget of the Ministry of the Interior and the national police is provided by international donors, which makes the sustainability of the whole policing sector heavily dependent on support from the international community.

64

Training activities can be expected to be sustainable in the medium term, provided that local conditions do not substantially worsen. EUPOL has made a serious effort to involve the Afghan leadership progressively in developing training courses and managing the police colleges. As a result, although EUPOL is still involved in monitoring the training provided in the colleges, the Afghan authorities have largely taken over the planning, conduct and follow-up of training activities. Nevertheless, the sustainability of training mostly depends on further developing genuine ownership on the part of the Afghan authorities. The audit found that, unless the administrative capacity and financial autonomy of the police colleges are reinforced, the long-term sustainability of college activities will be jeopardised. Despite signing a Memorandum of Understanding in which it agreed to bear the operational costs for running the two colleges³⁴, the Ministry of the Interior is reluctant to allocate sufficient financial resources, leading to difficulties in handling the required logistics and running costs.

65

The sustainability of the outcomes of EUPOL's mentoring activities and projects is also heavily dependent on Afghan ownership, the development of synergies among the various activities, and finally follow-up and evaluation efforts. The audit found that these issues were not sufficiently accounted for in mentoring plans or addressed systematically in the early stages of activity planning.

EUPOL's legacy: phasing-out — what comes next?

66

The Court examined whether the EEAS and the Commission have adequately prepared the phasing out of EUPOL according to a comprehensive plan that firstly, takes into account the overall strategy of the EU and of other actors/donors and secondly, addresses issues relating to the liquidation of assets.

33 EEAS, Revised Concept of Operations for EUPOL Afghanistan, June 2014.

34 The Police Staff Training College and the Crime Management College.

Exit strategy planning is well advanced, but further work is needed

67

In June 2013, the EEAS and the Commission produced a joint staff working document³⁵ in which they presented the EU's activities and the remaining related challenges, as well as a number of options to be considered for EU support post-2014. In December 2013, the EEAS issued a strategic review³⁶, which was essentially a synthesis of the self-assessment carried out by EUPOL in November 2013³⁷. The mission assessed that, by the end of 2014, the average implementation rate for objectively verifiable indicators could be expected to be 60 %³⁸. Regarding the progress made by the national police, the assessment concluded that some of the tasks carried out under EUPOL's three lines of operation could be transferred to the Afghan authorities, in particular training-related activities, but most should be taken over or built upon by EU bodies or other actors.

68

In June 2014, the Council undertook³⁹ to extend the EUPOL mandate until the end of 2016. It also reiterated the EU's commitment to a comprehensive approach, including an implementation plan to be followed by both the EU institutions and the Member States.

69

In this context, on 23 June 2014, the Head of the EU delegation in Kabul (also EU Special Representative in Afghanistan) and the Head of EUPOL produced a joint paper⁴⁰ on reinforcing the office of the EU Special Representative with a view to building upon EUPOL's achievements in the sectors of justice and rule of law. The paper identified areas in which the office of the EU Special Representative could be involved after the end of EUPOL's mandate. The main proposal concerned the appointment to the office of a number of international and national experts with duties limited to the level of strategic/political dialogue.

70

In parallel, in the Multiannual Indicative Programme for 2014–20, the EEAS and the Commission proposed policing and rule of law as one of four focal sectors. The audit highlighted two key concerns in relation to this planning document. Firstly, although the Multiannual Indicative Programme rightly states that '... the EU can build on groundwork established by the CSDP Mission (EUPOL) in the sector...'; the proposed result indicators are not related to EUPOL's civilian policing outcomes, but instead are mostly influenced by external factors (such as the security situation and military conflict). For example, the indicator 'number of deaths in armed conflict — civilian casualties' is a very generic means of measuring the expected result of reinforcing the 'capacity of the Afghan police to sustain and maintain security in Afghanistan'. It could be argued that deaths in armed conflict also result every day from mainly military operations which may continue to exist in Afghanistan in the future and do not constitute an accurate indicator of the national police's civilian policing capacity.

35 EEAS, EU action to support efforts in strengthening civilian policing and rule of law post 2014, 14 June 2013.

36 EEAS, Strategic review of EUPOL Afghanistan, 13 December 2013.

37 EUPOL, CMPD tasking paper, 11 November 2013.

38 According to the document, at the end of 2014 the implementation rate for objectives and tasks is expected to be on average 60 % and to range from 31 % to 85 %.

39 Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on Afghanistan, 23 June 2014. The EUPOL mandate was official extended on 17 December 2014 by Council Decision 2014/922/CFSP.

40 'Reinforcement of the EU Special Representative Office with a view of building upon EUPOL Afghanistan achievements in the sectors of Justice and rule of law', 23 June 2014.

71

Secondly, in principle the EEAS has limited alternatives for financing development assistance to Afghanistan for the coming period. On the one hand, using the budget support instrument cannot be an option for Afghanistan at present. On the other hand, the EEAS considers the project-based approach to be sub-optimal owing to difficulties in finding beneficiaries and because of the significant administrative burden of managing projects. The EEAS therefore intends to use trust funds, predominantly LOTFA⁴¹, as a preferred instrument in the rule of law sector in Afghanistan. However, using LOTFA as the main vehicle for financing the Afghan rule of law sector would entail two shortcomings that have to be taken into account: (a) LOTFA has been strongly criticised in the past for mismanagement of funds and lack of transparency by all donors involved — including the EU, which decided to temporarily suspend its payments to the fund; and (b) so far, LOTFA has had very limited experience of capacity building in the sector. Even though in 2011, Phase IV of LOTFA included a pillar on capacity development of civilian policing, throughout its life, the trust fund has been used almost exclusively as a payroll mechanism. For example, in 2013 out of a budget of 524 million USD, an amount of 506 million USD concerned police salaries. In fact, less than 3.5 % has been committed on capacity building and other projects. Even in the case that, in the future, the proportion of capacity building budget in LOTFA is increased, the fund is still structured around covering the running cost of the national police rather than building capacity.

Liquidation: a coordinated and structured approach is needed

72

The EEAS and the Commission have developed a procedure and guidelines for the closure of CFSP operations. According to these guidelines, EUPOL does not need to submit closure plans, for approval by the Commission, until 3 months before the mandated end of operations. To submit these documents so late entails risks. The period between 2014 and the end of 2016 will be very important for two reasons. Firstly, the mission will downsize considerably during 2015 and 2016. As also pointed out also by the European Commission's Internal Audit Service⁴², downsizing the mission because of the phase-out, entails a higher risk for the control environment — due mainly to the reduction of staff in key control functions, staff demotivation, loss of expertise and pressure to spend the remaining procurement budget before the end of the mandate. Secondly, the value of the assets involved is considerable. Thus it is important that EUPOL's liquidation planning should be properly coordinated and start well in advance⁴³.

- 41 LOTFA is a trust fund established by UNDP in 2002. It was almost exclusively used as mechanism for coordinating contributions from donors for paying salaries of the Afghan national police.
- 42 Internal Audit Service Audit Report on FPI — Control Strategy 24/07/2014.
- 43 As early as September 2013, EUPOL obtained FPI approval to sell two used power generators, and it has also donated six vehicles to the EU delegation and two to the office of the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection in Afghanistan.

Observations

73

EUPOL uses cash-based accounting; its assets, valued at acquisition price, total 49.6 million euro. In terms of value, its most important assets are armoured vehicles (25.2 million euro) and IT communications and security equipment (15.4 million euro) followed by the buildings in the EUPOL compound (4.8 million euro). Obviously, presenting assets of this type (cars, IT, etc.) at acquisition prices does not reflect their real value.

74

According to EUPOL's inventory data, there are 146⁴⁴ armoured vehicles in Afghanistan of which only a few were in use. The average mileage of these vehicles was 22 700 km. EUPOL's inventory classifies only seven vehicles as 'not operational' and 11 as 'used'. The rest are either 'in good condition' or 'new'.

75

EUPOL is responsible for exploring the various possibilities for transferring vehicles to EU bodies or embassies of the Member States, or for donating them to other international organisations deployed in Afghanistan. It is also responsible for carrying out the necessary administrative procedures for the export of assets that cannot be transferred within Afghanistan. It is essential, therefore, that the CPCC work closely with the mission — and well in advance of the end of the mandate — to ensure that assets are disposed of smoothly and do not accumulate, in a way that entails risks.

76

The audit found that, although there is coordination between the relevant EU departments (CPCC and FPI), they have not agreed on common, proactive and comprehensive rules with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

44 19 cars were bought in 2006, 1 in 2007, 124 in 2008 and 10 in 2012.

Conclusions and recommendations

77

The European Union has managed to establish a European civilian police mission in Afghanistan in a particularly insecure and tough environment. After a difficult start, EUPOL has gradually gained recognition from other actors for its expertise and its significant contribution to the ongoing reform of the police sector.

78

The Court found that EUPOL has been partly effective in delivering its mandate. Improvements were more notable in two of EUPOL's three main lines of operation. Concerning its activities, EUPOL has been largely successful in training but less so in mentoring and advising. Projects have had a limited contribution to the mission's objectives. While external factors may provide some explanation for this, other shortcomings can be attributed to EUPOL itself.

79

In the area of planning, EUPOL's mandate was preceded by a thorough assessment of Afghan needs. Objectives were aligned with the 2006 Afghan Compact and the priorities set out in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

80

The mandate which was to provide strategic advisory services to the higher echelons of the police hierarchy in the field of policing with linkages to the wider rule of law, ensured EU added value by providing a building block hitherto missing from the ongoing international efforts at the time. However, EUPOL faced a laborious task in delivering its mandate owing to the almost complete lack of a functioning police force, high illiteracy rates and widespread corruption.

81

Deployment of the mission was beset with difficulties and EUPOL suffered from inherent limitations relating to the recruitment of staff and logistical problems. Member States found it hard to supply qualified staff in sufficient numbers and this led to serious delays in reaching the required operational strength. Deployment in the provinces was equally complicated, mainly due to logistical issues and insecurity. In most provinces, EUPOL was unable to deploy sufficient staff to ensure the proper delivery of its mandate (see paragraphs 11 to 21).

Recommendation 1

The EEAS should work with the Member States to ensure that future CSDP missions receive sufficient logistic, technical and human resources to be able to operate at close to full authorised capacity.

Conclusions and recommendations

82

As regards coordination, EUPOL did not manage to bring together all European actors under a single European framework to improve Afghan policing; it also faced competition from other European bilateral missions and other European and international efforts, such as the EGF. However, EUPOL has made a valiant effort and played an important role in helping to promote cooperation with EU Member States and it has genuinely sought to promote wider international cooperation.

83

Coordination among the various EU bodies was initially poor. Nevertheless, in 2011 the Council's strategy and the creation of the EEAS cleared the way for improved coordination involving the Member States, the EEAS, the Commission, the EU Special Representative in Afghanistan, the EU delegation in Kabul and EUPOL.

84

EUPOL's comparatively limited funding and staff numbers meant that it was difficult, especially in the early stages of the mission, for it to be heard among major actors like the NATO-led NTM-A. International actors were unwilling to be coordinated by the IPCB, which was supported by EUPOL. The IPCB was therefore largely unsuccessful in improving coordination and oversight in the sector. In the last few years, coordination with the main international actors has nevertheless improved considerably (see paragraphs 23 to 30).

85

In the area of operational support and guidance from headquarters, the Court found that EU Member States and the EEAS were reasonably flexible in proposing revisions to EUPOL's mandate and adapting it to the changing situation and needs. Prior to 2013, the operational planning arrangements and indicators were not entirely suitable for steering the mission in an efficient way. However, since 2013 these issues have been extensively addressed. EUPOL's reporting meets basic accountability requirements, although results indicators could be further fine-tuned. Guidance from headquarters has improved over time. The EEAS and the Commission are examining ways of centralising certain support functions through the establishment of a shared service centre, a CSDP warehouse for all ongoing missions and a centralised IT function (see paragraphs 32 to 41).

Conclusions and recommendations

Recommendation 2

The EEAS and the Commission should develop support functions to assist with the rapid, efficient and consistent deployment of CSDP missions. Measures should involve:

- (a) pre-deployment training for all staff on EU procedures and policies;
- (b) comprehensive guidelines on operational tasks (such as needs assessments, planning and monitoring of tasks and reporting) and guidelines in administrative areas (such as information technology, finance and asset management and human resources) making maximum use of the lessons learned from previous missions;
- (c) setting up, on a cost-benefit basis, a shared service centre for all CSDP missions, and optimising the use of the CSDP warehouse to manage the assets of ongoing missions.

86

As regards the results achieved and their potential for sustainability, the audit found that the national police have made progress in terms of gaining public trust, but systemic weaknesses persist. Improvements were more notable in the first two of EUPOL's three lines of operation: Line of Operation 1 (advancing institutional reform of the Ministry of the Interior) and Line of Operation 2 (professionalising the National Police). Line of Operation 3 (connecting the National Police to the wider justice system) has been the most challenging area and has seen least progress. The Court also

examined EUPOL's results per type of activity and found that EUPOL has been largely successful in training-related activities but less so in mentoring and advising. Projects did not follow the logical framework structure and were not sufficiently linked to other activities to create synergies (see paragraphs 43 to 60).

Recommendation 3

The EEAS and CSDP missions should work together to further improve the effectiveness of each activity:

Training

- (a) the 'train-the-trainer' approach has proved its merit and should be the preferred mode of training in difficult circumstances ensuring ownership and sustainability;
- (b) while respecting EU values, curricula should take greater account of local culture, customs and religion and include practical examples from everyday life in the country.

Monitoring/mentoring/advising

- (c) the mission should periodically carry out a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of the results obtained from mentoring and advising activities;
- (d) the mentee selection process should be based on a needs assessment which is properly documented in the mentoring files. Mentoring logbooks should be standardised, structured around time-bound milestones and systematically kept by mentors;

Conclusions and recommendations

- (e) in view of the regular rotation of seconded staff, clear and consistent handover procedures should be established to ensure the smooth continuation of activity and avoid gaps and digressions that could jeopardise the mentoring relationship.

Projects

- (f) when designing projects, CSDP missions should ensure that they follow the logical framework, create synergies with mentoring activities and contribute to the delivery of the mission objectives via a strong linkage to individual MIP milestones.

87

The sustainability of the security sector in Afghanistan depends on support from the international community and faces significant challenges. The prerequisites for a sustainable police force are not yet in place. The long-term sustainability of EUPOL's training and mentoring outcomes is therefore at risk (see paragraphs 61 to 65).

Recommendation 4

In order to improve the sustainability of CSDP mission outcomes, the EEAS should ensure that sustainability aspects are embedded in the operational planning of all mission activities by systematically assessing the local needs and capacity to sustain outcomes.

88

EUPOL has prepared a comprehensive plan for phasing out its activities by the end of 2016. However, there are concerns as to whether the arrangements in the Multiannual Indicative Programme for 2014–20 will allow the EU to build upon EUPOL's achievements after 2016. There is coordination between the relevant EU departments, but they have not agreed on common and comprehensive rules that clearly define roles and responsibilities. Given the considerable total value of the assets concerned, procedures are not sufficiently or proactively coordinated by headquarters (see paragraphs 67 to 76).

Recommendation 5

To ensure that the CSDP missions are phased out and related assets liquidated smoothly:

- (a) the EEAS and the Commission should work out a common and comprehensive strategy defining roles and responsibilities for the downsizing and closure of CSDP missions. The strategy would provide for sufficient mission support from headquarters and would highlight measures to mitigate specific risks inherent in the downsizing and closure process;
- (b) the EEAS and the Commission should work closely with CSDP missions from well before the end of the mandate, to avoid assets being accumulated in a way that entails financial risks.

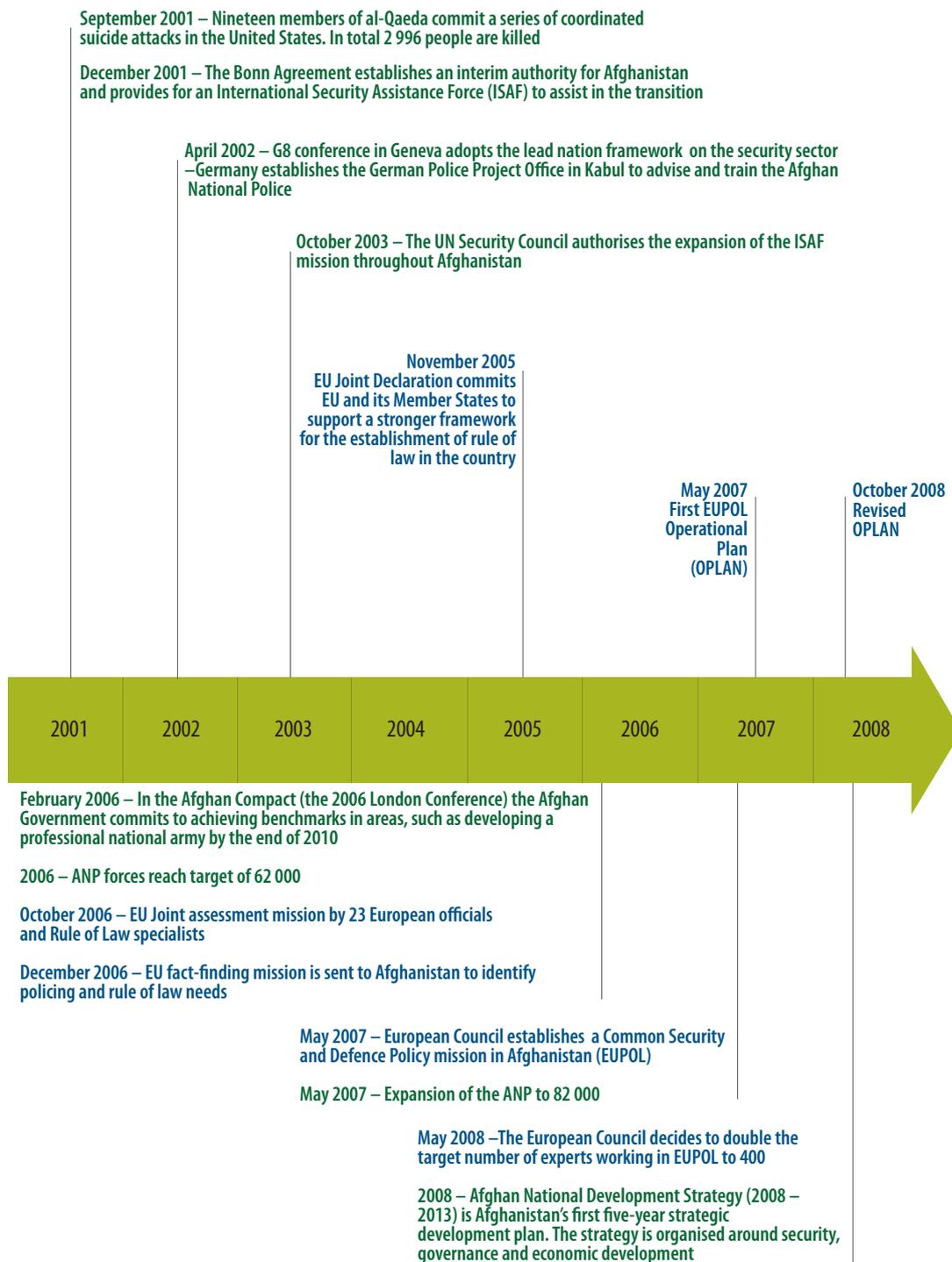
This report was adopted by Chamber III, headed by Mr Karel PINXTEN, Member of the Court of Auditors, in Luxembourg at its meeting of 19 May 2015.

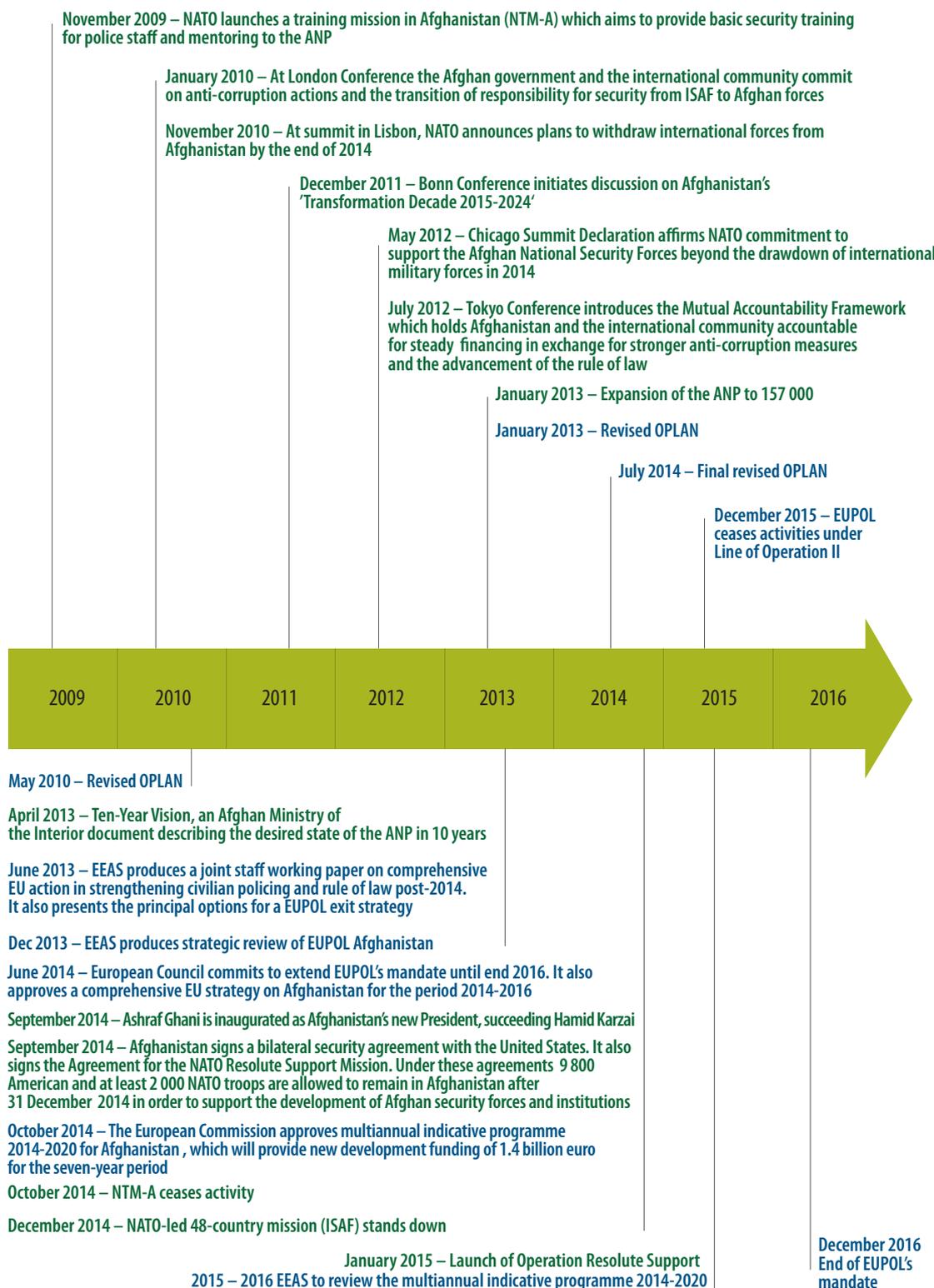
For the Court of Auditors



Vitor Manuel da SILVA CALDEIRA
President

EUPOL timeline





EUPOL commitments and disbursements by budgetary period

Budgetary period	Commitments (euro)	Disbursements as at 31.12.2014 (euro)	Implementation rate
June 2007–November 2008	43 600 000	43 099 416	99 %
December 2008–May 2010	81 400 000	71 056 597	87 %
June 2010–July 2011	54 600 000	49 274 871	90 %
August 2011–July 2012	60 500 000	51 918 127	86 %
August 2012– May 2013	56 870 000	46 179 558	81 %
June 2013–December 2014	95 433 790	84 645 305	89 %
Totals	392 403 790	346 173 874	88 %

Source: EUPOL.

EUPOL project and mentoring activity files reviewed

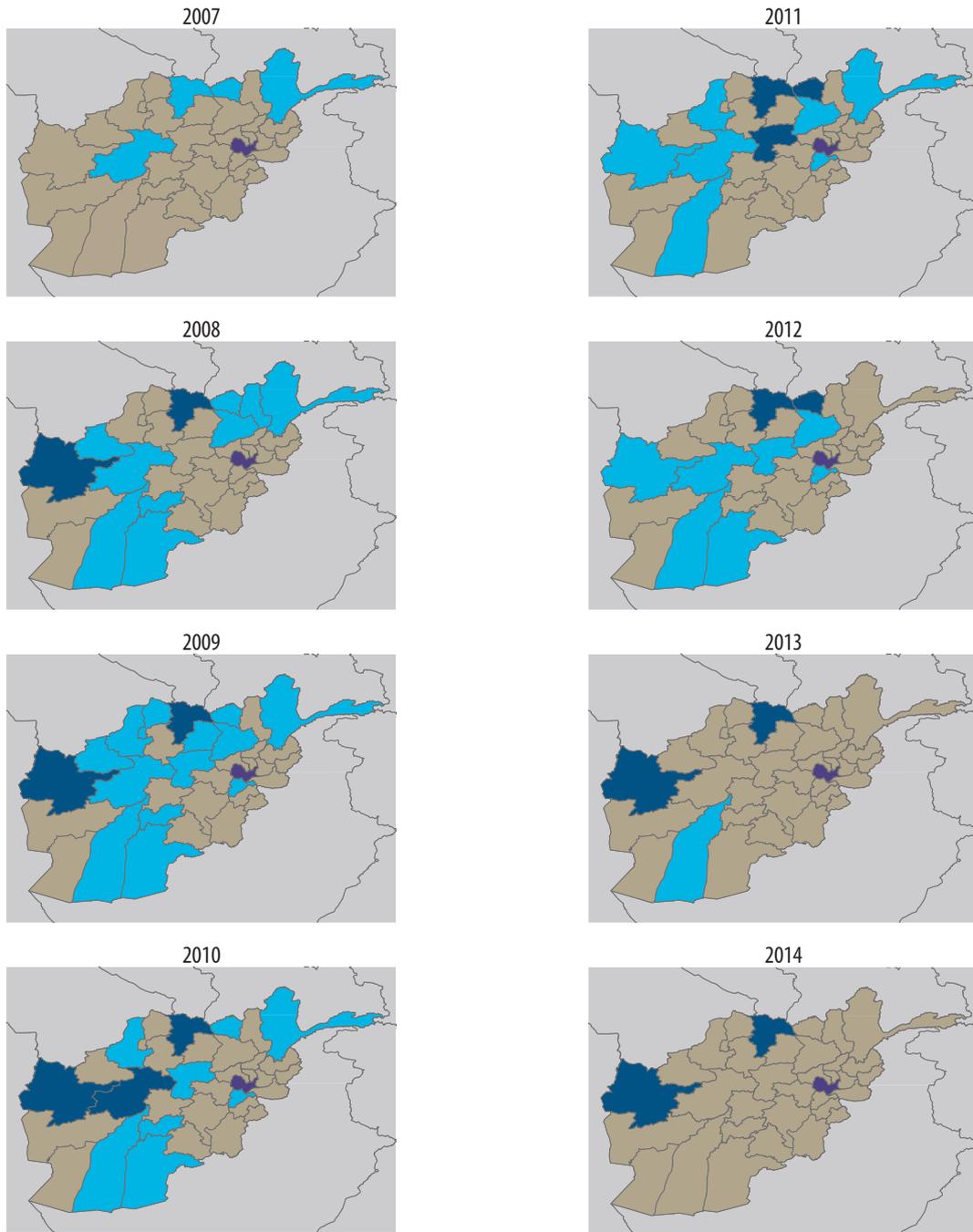
Projects

- 1 Support to Community Policing — POL-14
- 2 Project Phoenix Kabul — 1.3.0.0
- 3 Provision of surveillance system in Kabul Police HQ — POL-13
- 4 Restructuring the Surveillance unit POL-8
- 5 A self-sustainable Tashkeel database — 1.2.2.0_26
- 6 ILP Conference — 2.1.2.0
- 7 Anti-corruption symposium — ROL-6
- 8 Coordination of Police and Prosecutor Project (CoPP)
- 9 Children's Rights Booklet — ROL-1
- 10 Rights of Children and Juveniles in Criminal Investigation — PC -09
- 11 Increase of Police Women in ANP — POL 6

Mentoring

- 12 M03 — Head of Criminal Investigations Department, Ministry of the Interior
- 13 M01, M02 — Commander of the Police Staff Training College
- 14 M04 — Deputy Minister of Administration of the Ministry of the Interior
- 15 M04 — Director of Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) within the Attorney General's Office
- 16 M05 — Head of Criminal Law Division at the Legislative Department of the Afghan Ministry of Justice
- 17 M06 — Head of Human Rights, Gender & Children Rights Department

EUPOL field offices from 2007 to 2014



- Field office with staff < 10 (at 31 December)
- Field office with staff > 10 (at 31 December)
- EUPOL headquarters in Kabul

Source: EUROSTAT.

Executive summary

IV

The initial context of justice institutions and international support were very weak and limited (compared to support provided to the Afghan national police and Ministry of Interior).

Providing direct training has been used mainly in the first years of the mission's mandate, as well as train-the-trainers support, which also significantly reduced during the recent years. For several years now, EUPOL has mainly implemented its mandate by providing advice and mentoring to its Afghan counterparts.

The EEAS considers that projects managed by the mission's Project Cell do represent now an important complementary tool for the mission to achieve its objectives comparing to insufficient alignment during the first years of the existence of the Project Cell.

VI

EUPOL strongly supported the establishment and functioning of international coordination structures, like the International Police Coordination Board. However it was not in its mandate to bring together all EU actors under a single European framework.

VII

During the last years, the system of EUPOL's reporting has been refined and evolved from a more descriptive way to an analytical way. Since 2013, the Mission has Objectively Verifiable Indicators both for its own progress and Afghan progress.

IX and X

EUPOL's phasing out plans have been developed as much as possible at this moment in time, taking into account expected Afghan progresses, international actors/mechanisms existence and evolution.

The EEAS in close cooperation with the Commission, responsible for the financial management, and EUPOL have been assessing how to get the best value of EUPOL's assets according to the Financial Regulation.

Observations

16

As for the leadership problems, indeed the Head of Mission had changed three times but this is to be considered an exceptional and unfortunate circumstance.

28

The EEAS considers that EUPOL's mandate was limited to certain fields (civilian policing, MoI reform, criminal justice); the Mission therefore had no mandate for an overall lead on the (coordination of the) entire MoI/ANP reform/strengthening support. Other actors, such as NTM-A, also had full legitimacy to provide support to the Afghan authorities within the scope of their respective mandates. The IPCB was established to coordinate the overall international support to the Afghan national police and Ministry of Interior. Within the remit of its mandate, the Mission coordinated its activities with the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan and other international actors very well.

36

EUPOL has developed and is using a monitoring mechanism to track progress and decide on corrective actions if and where needed.

40

CSDP guidance is referred to as 'guidance on horizontal issues'. After identifying these shortcomings, the EEAS is actively working to provide CSDP missions with clearer horizontal guidance where considered needed.

45

Indeed, the criminal justice sector has been a traditionally very weak sector, subject of lesser international support than the Afghan national police or the Ministry of Interior. Examples of EUPOL's achievements are the development of human rights informed policies and legislation (e.g. Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code) and the introduction of the police/prosecutor cooperation training, already running under full Afghan ownership.

48

The establishment of the Police Staff College is a good example of the use of the comprehensive approach in EU foreign policy (coherence, coordination and complementarity).

EUPOL has been supporting the Afghan training institutions covering issues like indeed training curricula development, but also, both, the Police Staff College's and the Crime Management College's management and organisation, including linkages with ANP human resources policy/organisation, as well as the support to ANP HQ General Training Command.

The Police Staff College and the Crime Management College are firmly established within the General Training Command structure and have become extremely effective educational institutions in their own right with over 13 000 Afghan national police students having graduated from training courses since late 2010.

50

EUPOL's evaluation/assessment process has improved since the introduction of the so-called Mid-Term Reviews (MTR) (renamed as Quarterly Reviews (QR) following the introduction of revised OPLAN in the beginning of 2015) as well as Monthly reviews in the beginning of 2014.

52

The Mission has achieved deployment/use of advisors/mentors as per its OPLAN and in agreement with its Afghan counterparts. Afghan capacity gap analysis derived from the OPLAN (which was itself based on discussion with the Afghan authorities).

53

One of the most difficult issue is to achieve tangible progress/impact on strategic level issues such as the development and management of ANP human resources or mainstreaming of human rights within the ANP (issues which usually require support via mentoring/advising). Other external factors could also be mentioned, such as reprioritisation on the Afghan side.

58

The use of Project Cells is a relatively new feature in civilian CSDP. For various reasons, Project Cells do not exist in all missions, although considered a very useful capacity for civilian CSDP missions to achieve their objectives. Thus, civilian CSDP missions had little references when the first Project Cells were established within their structure. This was the case for EUPOL AFG. The Mission has therefore gone through a learning process in managing its Project Cell. The Project Cell is now well established within the Mission, coordination with other Mission's components is ensured, as well as internal procedures to make sure projects proposed are fully in line with the Mission's objectives. Projects under the Project Cell are endorsed by EU Member States (RELEX) in the framework of the annual discussion on the Mission's budget.

59

Even before the introduction of the flexible procurement procedures, FPI agreed to most requests from the mission to carry out simplified procurement procedures (negotiated procedures with a single tender) in cases where normal tender procedures would be unsuccessful due to the difficult local market situation or for urgent purchases of goods and services.

60

The introduction of the generalised use of flexible procedures simplified and accelerated the use of the negotiated procedure with a single tender since the mission did not need to obtain prior approval anymore from FPI to carry out such procedures.

70

The Commission would like to point out that any intervention in the area of support to the Afghan police to be financed from the DCI would need to demonstrate that the assistance is fully "DACable" (following the definition made by Development Assistance Committee of the OECD) and in line with the DCI regulation which puts some restrictions on the kind of activities to be financed and implemented.

In the current political context, the security-related indicators remain most relevant for our support of the Afghan national police (ANP) under the Development Cooperation Instrument.

Providing durable and lasting security in Afghanistan is as much the responsibility of the Afghan national police (ANP) as the Afghan national army. It remains one of the most important objectives of EU cooperation, as do the contributions to the ANP sustainment and development. In addition, it remains a precondition for Afghan authorities to put greater emphasis on developing civilian policing capacities.

Concerning the ANP's improved capacity as a civilian police force under civilian control (over the lifetime of the MIP 2014–20), the MIP proposed a second, distinct set of two indicators relating to Ministry of Interior gender statistics and the share of security costs within the national budget (including salary data).

71

As regards the implementing modalities for the rule of law support and the use of the LOTFA trust fund for contributions under the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Commission and the EEAS would like to underline that, for the time being, the use of the UN-managed Law and Order Trust Fund remains the preferred option if the necessary improvements can be agreed in the current revision process.

The EU acts here in close consultation with the international community at large. In line with the New Deal for engagement in fragile states, the Commission and the EEAS consider a project-based approach as sub-optimal in terms of aid effectiveness. In due course, budget support may become an option covering also the rule of law support if the relevant conditions are fulfilled and the political and governance risks allow.

72

The EEAS and the Commission are aware of the issues raised by the Court regarding downsizing and the time needed to prepare for the liquidation of assets and closure of the mission and closely follows the downsizing process. The downsizing is preceded by the preparation of the budget for the period when the downsizing will take place and this applies to the liquidation phase as well. Whilst a formal downsizing or closure plan is not submitted at this stage, the main elements, and in particular those with a financial impact, are discussed and agreed with the mission during the budget preparation.

The EEAS and the Commission are planning to develop guidelines on downsizing.

73

The missions are entrusted entities tasked under indirect management, therefore whilst recognising that this does not reflect the actual value of the assets, the Commission does not require the missions to report this value, only to report the equipment purchased and the changes in the inventory.

74

The mission is in the process of transferring and disposing of surplus armoured vehicles. Thirteen armoured vehicles will be transferred to the CSDP mission in Kiev, Ukraine.

The transfer of surplus armoured vehicles could be facilitated in the future if the role of the CSDP warehouse would be expanded to include the logistics related to taking over, refurbishing and redeploying surplus armoured vehicles (and other equipment).

76

One of the essential tasks of the planned shared service centre (mission support platform) will be the elaboration of comprehensive rules and guidelines.

Conclusions and recommendations

78

Mentoring, advising and training are all methods/tools to implement specific objectives. In the last stage of the Mission, the assessment of EUPOL's achievements by separating between 'training' activities and 'mentoring/advising' activities is not the most appropriate. Most of the time, all these different tools are used in parallel to support local counterparts. In the last years of the Mission, mostly mentoring and advising were used to provide this support, training (in particular direct training) to a lesser extent, and during the last years not at all. Most achievements under LO1, LO2 and LO3 during the last years are due to EUPOL's mentoring and advising activities only.

Even if sometimes limited in size/scope, the projects (implemented by the Mission's Project Cell) have constituted important enablers for other mission's activities.

Recommendation 1

EEAS accepts this recommendation. Contributions from Member States have a major impact on the implementation and continuity of the Mission as the current system mainly relies on the force generation provided by Member States.

In this regard, EEAS considers that ways could also be explored to enable greater flexibility in the advertisement of positions, in particular when it refers to seconded/contracted staff.

82

It is not the EEAS understanding that EU Member States were expecting EUPOL to bring together all EU actors under a single European framework when establishing EUPOL AFG. EUPOL however strongly supported the establishment and functioning of international coordination structures, like the International Police Coordination Board.

Recommendation 2(a)

The EEAS and the Commission accept this recommendation. This is already the case for some aspects of predeployment. Further work on this subject is being processed by the EEAS. However, some legal and financial aspects need to be addressed as the costs for predeployment training can be eligible under CFSP budget only for staff already being Mission members. Otherwise the sending state would pay for the seconded, whilst there would no possibility to pay for the staff recruited but not contracted yet by the Mission.

Recommendation 2(b)

The EEAS and the Commission accept this recommendation. This is already the case for some of these subjects. Further work on additional subjects is being conducted by the EEAS.

Moreover, the lessons learned are a fundamental part of the conduct of operations led by the CPCC. They are shared with other EEAS services, Commission and Member States, and have already proved their added value for the improvement of the Missions.

As for the administrative guidelines in place, EEAS and Commission are continuing to work on a daily basis to make them more useful and responding to the concrete needs of the Missions in the field.

The planned shared service centre (mission support cell) will, under the supervision of EEAS and the Commission, establish comprehensive guidelines on finance, accounting and asset management.

Recommendation 2(c)

The EEAS and the Commission accept this recommendation.

Following the finalisation of the cost-benefit analysis in 2013 and discussions held in the RELEX working group, a decision on the creation of a shared service centre for the benefit of civilian CSDP missions is now expected.

The management of assets of ongoing missions could be facilitated in the future if the role of the CSDP warehouse would be expanded to include the logistics related to taking over, refurbishing and redeploying of surplus equipment. The functioning and role of the CSDP Warehouse is currently under review and one of the possible scenarios is an expanded role, which would include handling all the logistics for storing and/or redeploying surplus equipment from missions that are downsizing or closing.

86

Regarding the Mission's delivery under the Line of Operation 3, the EEAS considers that improvements can also be noticed. EUPOL's mandate delivery and impact can only be judged in the light of the Afghan progress in those fields covered by the Mission's mandate.

Regarding the assessment of Mission's delivery/achievements as per 'type of activity' (MMA vs 'training'), see EEAS reply to paragraph 78.

Regarding projects run under the Project Cell, while deficiencies had indeed been identified in the early years of the Mission's mandate, more structured mechanisms are now in place to allow for a stricter alignment of projects with Mission's planned activities and objectives.

Recommendation 3(a)

The EEAS accepts this recommendation.

While the train-the-trainers approach is appropriate under some circumstances (to create a local initial training capacity), it needs to be considered as only one (initial) element of the required approach when supporting local authorities to establish/professionalise their own training capacity. Only support through advising and mentoring on more structural aspects of training capacity building (as done by EUPOL) could have a possible sustainable impact.

Recommendation 3(b)

The EEAS accepts this recommendation.

The EEAS considers that EUPOL's developed curricula did take into account local culture to the greatest extent possible. However on some occasions, local counterparts were reluctant to use some (aspects of) curricula developed with the support of the Mission. These (aspects of) curricula were however rightly considered essential from a Mission/EU point of view as they referred to EU essential values related to human rights, corruption a.o.

Recommendation 3(c)

The EEAS accepts this recommendation. Such evaluation is now carried out by the Mission.

Recommendation 3(d)

The EEAS accepts this recommendation. For EUPOL such assessment has been conducted in the framework of the last Mission's mandate revision. Mentoring logbooks have been standardised, better structured and updated by the Mission.

Recommendation 3(e)

The EEAS and the Commission accept this recommendation. Ways will also be explored to enable increased possibilities of handover periods between incoming and departing staff.

Recommendation 3(f)

The EEAS accepts this recommendation. For EUPOL projects run under the Project Cell are now fully integrated in the Mission Implementation Plan, following a stricter Mission's internal procedure allowing for a coherence with Mission's operational activities.

Reply of the Commission and the EEAS

Recommendation 4

The EEAS accepts this recommendation.

The EEAS considers that sustainability aspects are already embedded in the operational planning of the Mission's activities, in the sense that all Mission's activities are aiming at reinforcing the local counterparts' capacities to a level where they are 'good enough' to further develop themselves in a sustainable manner.

Where the Mission's assessment leads to the conclusion that local capacities won't be strong enough, and in the case where the Mission's mandate is coming to an end, the Mission, as per its OPLAN, is actively engaging with other (international/local) actors in order to identify some which could provide follow-up support to the local counterparts as required, building upon the Mission's achievements.

Recommendation 5 (a)

EEAS and the Commission accept this recommendation. As already done in the past for previous missions, the EEAS and the Commission have been working in close coordination with EUPOL for 2 years, *id est* well in advance to the end of mandate, in order to prepare the liquidation phase in the most appropriate way, taking into account the challenges and the complexity of the Afghan scenario.

The Commission and the EEAS are planning to develop guidelines together on downsizing of missions.

Concerning closure of missions, the Commission already issued instructions on closing missions.

Recommendation 5 (b)

The EEAS and the Commission accept this recommendation. See also reply to recommendation 5(a).

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The Court's assessment of EUPOL Afghanistan, a civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission, found that it had been partly effective in delivering its mandate. While external factors may provide some explanation for this, other shortcomings can be attributed to EUPOL itself.

The Court makes a number of recommendations, applicable not only to EUPOL Afghanistan, but also to other CSDP missions aiming to improve their effectiveness and the sustainability of the outcomes achieved.



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