

Special Report

Strengthening the capacity of the internal security forces in Niger and Mali: only limited and slow progress

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



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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
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.
CMC	Crisis Management Concept: the purpose of the CMC is to analyse and propose CSDP options, describe their aims and objectives, and frame the possible goals and scope of an EU CSDP Mission.
CMPD	Crisis Management and Planning Directorate: the department within EEAS responsible for the politico-strategic planning of civilian CSDP Missions. The CMPD's role is to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of the Missions and develop CSDP partnerships, policies, concepts and capabilities. It is in charge of the strategic planning of new CSDP Missions and carrying out strategic reviews of existing CSDP Missions.
CONOPS	Concept of Operations. This is a planning document which sets out a Mission's mandate and translates political intent into guidance by indicating what action is needed to accomplish the Mission.
COG	Centres Opérationnels de Gendarmerie (in Niger): permanent bodies set up to monitor what is happening in the region, provide resources to patrols, collect information, notify it to the relevant authorities and to respond to crisis situations.
COR	Centres Opérationnels Régionaux (in Niger); temporary bodies intended to bring together members of the Governorates and the Nigerien Defence and Security Forces, and bodies responsible for civil protection, firefighting, environmental protection and customs in order to deal with crises arising from terrorist attacks, organised crime and natural disasters.
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability: the department within EEAS which plans, directs, coordinates, advises, supports, supervises and reviews civilian CSDP Missions. The CPCC drafts the key design and planning documents for the Missions: i.e. CONOPS and OPLAN.
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
ECA	European Court of Auditors
EEAS	European External Action Service, which is the European Union's diplomatic service. It helps the EU's foreign affairs chief – the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – implement the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy.
EU	European Union

EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building
EUTM	European Union Training Mission: a multinational military training mission headquartered in Bamako, Mali, which trains and advises the Mali military.
FPI	Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. The core task of the FPI is to run a number of EU foreign policy actions. The FPI manages operations and their financing. The FPI is a European Commission department that works alongside the EEAS.
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH</i> (German Corporation for International Cooperation)
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
ISFs	Internal Security Forces: police, gendarmerie and national guard.
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, which focuses on duties, such as ensuring security, stabilization and protection of civilians; supporting national political dialogue and reconciliation; and assisting in reestablishing State authority, rebuilding the security sector, and promoting and protecting human rights within the country.
MIP	Mission Implementation Plan. This states which activities and projects are to be carried out so that a Mission may complete its tasks.
MMA	Mentoring, monitoring and advising. Mentoring: structured transfer of knowledge between a mentor and a mentee in accordance with a plan. Monitoring: observing, assessing and reporting on the performance of the mentee with regard to giving training courses in the ISFs. Advising: support aimed at making the mentees autonomous in providing training courses.
OPLAN	Operational Plan. This sets out a Mission's objectives and tasks.
PSC	Political and Security Committee. This Committee monitors the international situation, recommends strategic approaches and policy options to the Council, provides guidance to the CIVCOM and assures political control over and the strategic direction of crisis management operations. The PSC is composed of EU member states' ambassadors based in Brussels and is chaired by representatives from the European External Action Service.
RAP	Rules of Application. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union ("the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation"), as amended.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Insecurity in the Sahel region in West-Africa has a negative impact on both the development of its countries, and the interests of the European Union (EU). The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is an EU instrument intended to meet challenges stemming from armed conflict, political instability, terrorism, organised crime and illegal migration. Under the CSDP the EU runs civilian Missions in Niger and Mali that provide training, advice and equipment in order to strengthen the capacity of the national forces responsible for internal security.

II. The European External Action Service (EEAS) has set up EU Capacity Building (EUCAP) Sahel Missions in Niger (2012) and Mali (2014) on behalf of the EU member states and plans and manages their operations, whereas the Commission manages their budgets, funded by the EU (€69.46 million for Niger for the period 2012 to 2017 and €66.48 million for Mali for the period 2014 to 2017). Each Mission has its own Head of Mission, who is in charge of operations in the country concerned. Over half the staff have been seconded to the Missions and are paid by the EU member states. The remaining staff are paid for out of the Missions' budgets.

III. We examined how the EUCAP Sahel Missions were set up and managed, how they operated, and whether they succeeded in strengthening the capacity of the forces responsible for internal security in Niger and Mali. We interviewed the EEAS, the Commission, the two EUCAP Sahel Missions, the national authorities and the internal security forces (ISFs) in Niger and Mali, as well as a range of stakeholders.

IV. We concluded that the Missions contributed towards strengthening the capacity of the forces responsible for internal security but that progress was slowed by the challenging context in which they worked and by operational inefficiencies. We found that the Mission staff did not receive adequate practical guidance and, in the case of EUCAP Sahel Niger, pre-deployment training. The EEAS and the Commission did not provide enough support and in some cases applied procedures that were unsuited to the working conditions on the ground.

V. Both Missions had a high number of vacancies. On average only three-quarters of posts were occupied. Recruitment procedures were time-consuming and often unsuccessful.

Secondment of staff from EU member states generally lasted up to two years. The EUCAP Sahel Missions receive two-year mandates and annual budgets. All of this reduces the operational efficiency of the Missions because it does not encourage medium or long-term planning. At the same time, even though the Missions are not intended to become permanent bodies in the host countries, at present there is no clear path towards an exit strategy.

VI. We found that the Missions addressed sustainability in their activities, but with little success. This was partly due to lack of ownership by the host countries, and partly because the Missions did not devote adequate resources to ensuring sustainability and following up on the practical application and use of the training given and the equipment supplied.

VII. The Missions had weak performance indicators and during the period audited they did not adequately monitor and evaluate the achievement of tasks. The EEAS impact assessments were not linked to monitoring and evaluation.

VIII. We observed that the Missions played an important role in strengthening the capacity of the forces responsible for internal security in Niger and Mali, and also in supporting other activities of the EU and its member states. Other donors, EU member states, the national authorities and the beneficiaries of EUCAP support in Niger and Mali gave an overall positive assessment of the EUCAP Sahel Missions' activities.

IX. We make the following recommendations to the EEAS and the Commission:

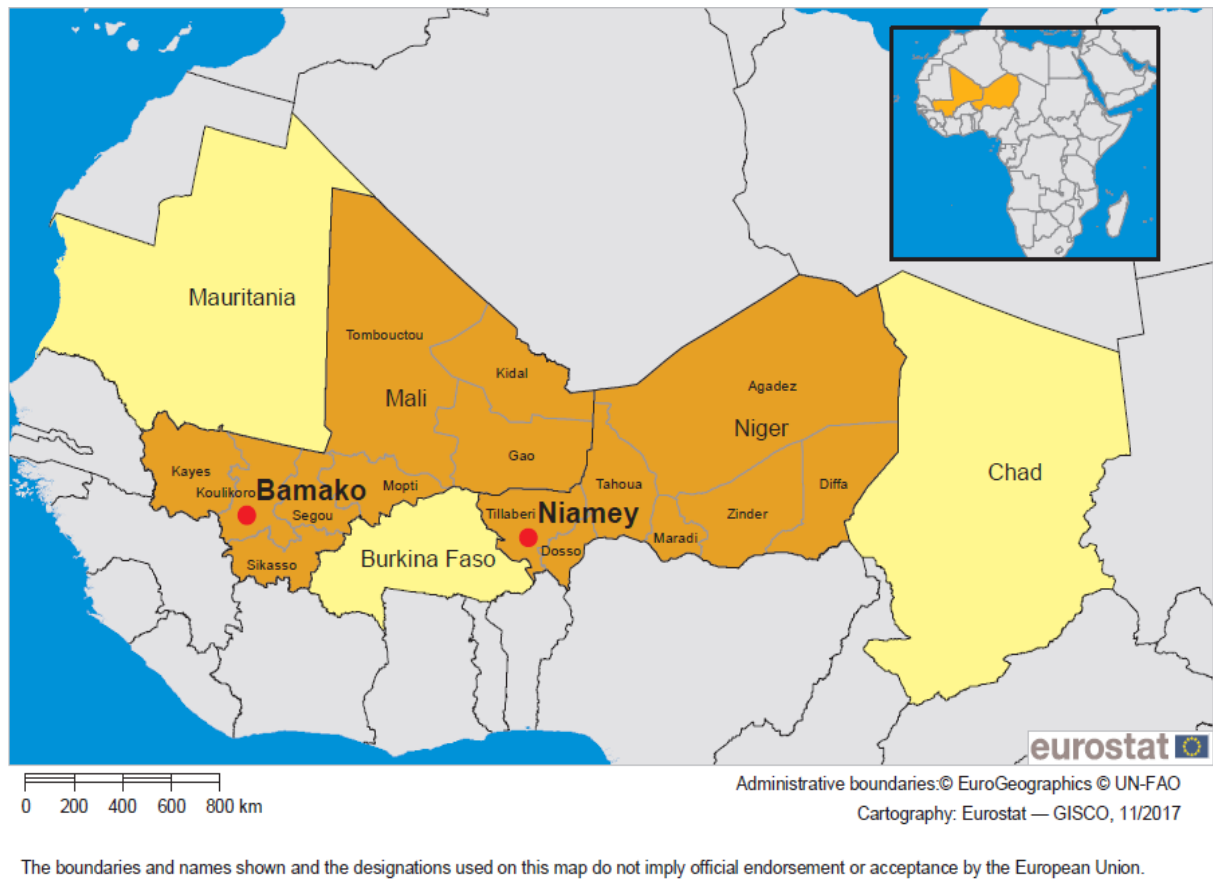
- to take measures to improve the operational efficiency of the Missions;
- to improve the occupancy rate of staff posts in the Missions;
- to set mandates and budgets to match operations and provide for an exit strategy;
- to increase the focus on sustainability;
- to improve indicators, monitoring and evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Niger and Mali in the Sahel region

1. Niger and Mali are fragile states in Western Africa. They are young parliamentary democracies with weak economies and developing public administrations. Ranking 187th and 175th out of the 188 countries ranked in the 2016 Human Development Index, they are home to some of the poorest people in the world. Niger and Mali are the sixth and eighth largest countries in Africa and are located in the southern part of the Sahara desert. Many migrants pass through these two countries on their way to their final destination.
2. Despite a peace agreement signed in June 2015 and the presence of foreign peacekeeping forces, extremist groups are still active in northern Mali, and the national security forces face a number of challenges. There continue to be a high number of casualties and numerous terrorist attacks. Niger's security is threatened by the instability in neighbouring Libya, Nigeria and Mali. The government faces challenges such as the fight against human traffickers and other illegal activities.
3. In March 2011 the EU adopted a Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel region, based on the premise that development and security are mutually supportive and the issues faced in the Sahel region require a regional answer. In 2014 Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Burkina Faso agreed to create a regional organisation, the "Group of Five" (G5), to strengthen cooperation in development and security in the Sahel region (see **Map**). The EU supports this initiative in areas of shared interest such as security, control of migration, counter-terrorism, the humanitarian situation and development.

Map – The G5 countries of the Sahel region



Source: Eurostat.

Civilian CSDP Missions

4. The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) determines the Union's defence and crisis management structures and capabilities, and constitutes a major part of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)¹. The CSDP, which is covered by Articles 42 to 46 of the Treaty on European Union, has resulted in the deployment of Missions² abroad for peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

¹ Under the 2014 to 2020 multiannual financing framework, the amount allocated to the CFSP is €2 076 million.

² "Mission" is the official term used by the EEAS to define non-permanent independent legal entities set up in crisis situations.

5. Since 2003³, the EU has carried out 22 civilian CSDP Missions in third countries across the world. The ten Missions still running in February 2018 focus mostly on building the capacity of and strengthening the rule of law in host states. Most of them provide support in the fields of security sector reform and good governance, for example, EULEX⁴ Kosovo⁵ and EUPOL⁶ Afghanistan⁷. Others also deal with the fight against organised crime, counter-terrorism and border management (EUCAP Sahel Mali), and more recently the management of illegal migration (EUCAP Sahel Niger). The EU is also currently running six military Operations, which are financed directly by the EU member states and not out of the EU budget. See **Annex I** for an overview of civilian CSDP Missions and military Operations.

6. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) is responsible for civilian CSDP Missions. Under her authority, the EEAS manages the Missions' work and the European Commission's service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) manages their budgets. The Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) within the EEAS carries out the political and strategic planning of the Missions and develops Crisis Management Concepts (CMCs) for new CSDP Missions. The EEAS unit responsible for setting-up and maintaining Missions is the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) structure, the director of which is also the Civilian Operations Commander.

7. The EU member states decide to set up and close civilian CSDP Missions via the Council. They set the Missions' objectives and mandates, approve their work plans and decide whether and for how long to renew mandates. Together with the European Parliament, the

³ The EEAS launched the first CSDP Mission in 2003 (EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

⁴ EU Rule of Law Mission.

⁵ The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a Special Report on EULEX in 2012 (Special Report No 18/2012 "European Union Assistance to Kosovo related to the rule of law" (<http://eca.europa.eu>)).

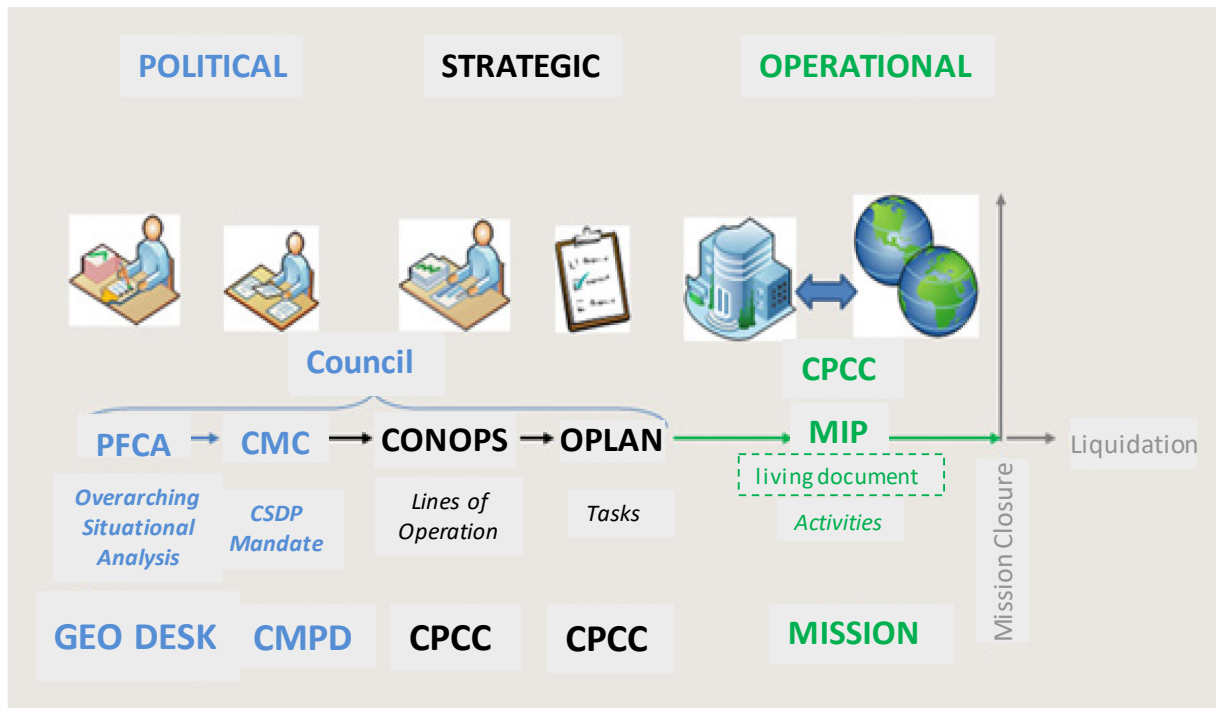
⁶ EU Police Mission.

⁷ The ECA published a Special Report on EUPOL in 2015 (Special Report No 7/2015 "The EU police mission in Afghanistan: mixed results" (<http://eca.europa.eu>)).

Council also sets Mission budgets. **Box 1** presents the procedure from identifying a crisis to setting up Missions and **Figure 1** illustrates how they are planned.

Box 1 – The procedure from crisis identification to setting-up civilian CSDP Missions

1. Once a crisis is identified by the EEAS and the EU member states, the Council develops a Political Framework for Crisis Approach (PFCA) in cooperation with the Commission, the EEAS geographical desks (GEO-DESKs) and the relevant EEAS departments. This document sets out the political context, explains the nature of the crisis, why the EU should act and which instruments are available and best suited for the EU's response.
2. The political guidance and direction received from EU member states (transmitted via the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the Council) are articulated via a number of planning documents and Council decisions guided by a process termed Crisis Management Procedures.
3. If the Council decides to set up a civilian CSDP Mission, the CMPD gathers facts from the crisis zone and draws up a Crisis Management Concept.
4. The CPCC then drafts the key design and planning documents for the Missions: the Concept of Operations (CONOPS), which sets out the Missions' mandates, and the Operations Plan (OPLAN), which defines the tasks of the Missions and the results expected. At operational level, the objectives and tasks stated in the OPLAN are translated into a Mission Implementation Plan (MIP). The MIP details the activities and projects to be carried out in order to achieve the tasks.

Figure 1 – Planning civilian CSDP Missions

Source: EEAS.

8. The CPCC plans and draws up the context of the Missions' work and defines activities and performance indicators. It also provides input to the FPI regarding the Missions' budgets and supports the CMPD in preparing periodic strategic reviews of progress. The CPCC has 68 staff at its headquarters in Brussels. A Head of Mission takes command at operational level on the ground. Many of the Missions' staff members are seconded from the EU member states. The seconding country pays the salaries of the staff they send, while the EU Mission budget funds an additional daily allowance and risk premium. Contracted staff members are employed directly by the Missions and work mostly in finance, logistics, security and administration.

EUCAP Sahel Missions in Niger and Mali

9. The EU uses civilian CSDP Missions and military⁸ Operations, as well as other EU instruments⁹ to implement its Sahel Strategy. The EU set up the Missions in Niger and Mali to respond to the threats to the development and internal security of the Sahel region, and to the security of the EU. The aim was to help strengthen the capacity of the national forces responsible for internal security by providing training, advice and equipment. The staff of the two EUCAP Sahel Missions provide this support in a non-executive capacity¹⁰. They build up the capacity of the internal security forces (police, gendarmerie, national guard) in the host countries. In Niger, this includes the army insofar as its role relates to internal security.

10. The Council set up EUCAP Sahel Niger in 2012 “to support the capacity building of the Nigerien security actors to fight terrorism and organised crime”¹¹. In 2015, the EU member states expanded the Mission’s mandate to include assisting Niger in exercising control and fighting, as well as gathering information about irregular migration. The main office and the majority of the Mission’s 169 staff posts¹² are located in the capital, Niamey. In 2016 the Mission opened up a field office in Agadez in the Sahara desert. The Mission’s main activities are:

- providing training in key sectors including forensics, tactical and technical intervention, and teaching staff in the internal security forces (ISFs) to deliver training themselves;

⁸ The European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) is a military training operation headquartered in Bamako, Mali, to train and advise Mali’s military forces.

⁹ Mainly the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, the European Development Fund, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and humanitarian assistance.

¹⁰ When the staff members of a Mission play an executive role, they have a mandate to act directly on behalf of the host country. In a non-executive Mission, staff supports the host country in an advisory role.

¹¹ Article 1 of Council Decision 2012/392/CFSP of 16 July 2012 on the European Union CSDP mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger) (OJ L 187, 17.7.2012, p. 48).

¹² Number of staff (seconded, international contracted and locals) budgeted in 2016/2017. In EUCAP Sahel Niger, more than half of the international staff comes from France (53 %), followed by Romania (15 %) and Belgium (8 %).

- advising the ISFs on how to design and organise courses;
- helping the ISFs to work together (interoperability) and to coordinate their work;
- providing equipment such as maps for remote areas, human resources software, all-terrain vehicles, police forensic kits and mobile garages;
- supporting the revision of Nigerien law on irregular migration and associated organised crime.

11. The Council set up EUCAP Sahel Mali in 2014 “to allow the Malian authorities to restore and maintain constitutional and democratic order and the conditions for lasting peace in Mali, and to restore and maintain State authority and legitimacy throughout the territory of Mali by means of an effective redeployment of its administration”¹³. The Mission’s 194 staff posts¹⁴ are in Bamako, the capital. Some of the activities of the Mission are:

- policy reform and capacity-building to reinforce border management skills;
- revision of training curricula and provision of training on operational and human resources management, professional ethics, public order, intelligence techniques, professional intervention, criminal policing, counter-terrorism and human rights and gender;
- launching mobile training and assessment teams to reach remote regions.

12. **Annex II** shows the mandate and objectives assigned to the two EUCAP Sahel Missions by the Council. **Table 1** provides an overview of the Missions’ key characteristics.

¹³ Article 2 of Council Decision No 2014/219/CFSP of 15 April 2014 on the European Union CSDP mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali) (OJ L 113, 16.4.2014, p. 21).

¹⁴ Number of staff (seconded, international contracted and locals) budgeted in 2017. In EUCAP Sahel Mali, the international staff mainly comes from four EU member states: France (30 %), Romania (19 %), Belgium (13 %) and Germany (10 %).

Table 1 – Similarities and differences: EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali

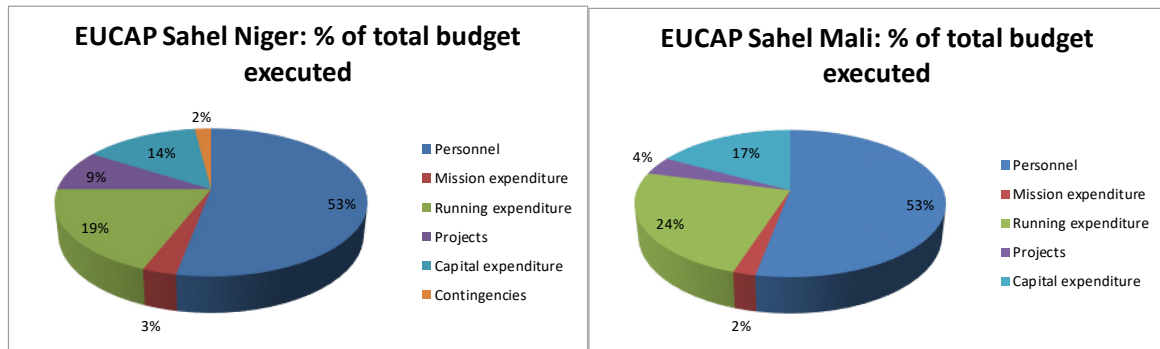
	<u>Both</u>	<u>Niger</u>	<u>Mali</u>
Start of operations		2012	2014
Length of mandate	2 years renewable		
Main beneficiaries	Internal Security Forces: - Police - Gendarmerie - National Guard	Also Nigerien Armed Forces in relation to internal security	
HQ	Capital city	Niamey	Bamako
Field office		Agadez	
Staff posts available		169	194
Security challenges which are the main focus for EUCAP	- Presence of terrorist groups - Insecure borders - Irregular migration - Expansion of radicalisation	- Return of Nigerien nationals from Libya - Availability of arms - Illegal trafficking and smuggling networks - Boko Haram/repentant terrorists	- Weak state and loss of control of some parts of Malian territory - The presence of traffickers - Corruption - Organised crime - Insufficient trust between population and ISFs

13. The Council approved €69.46 million for EUCAP Sahel Niger between July 2012 and July 2017 and €66.48 million for EUCAP Sahel Mali between April 2014 and January 2017. Of this total amount, each Mission spent 53 % on staff costs and 19 % (Niger) and 24 % (Mali) on running costs, such as rent, insurance, security costs and cars (see [Graph 1](#)). The Missions used up respectively 77 %¹⁵ and 67 %¹⁶ of these cumulated budgets.

¹⁵ Source: Draft financial reports for the first three years. The audit for the fourth year took place in January 2018 and the audit for the fifth year in spring 2018. No financial reports were available at the time of the audit.

¹⁶ Figures are based on draft financial reports for the first two years.

Graph 1 – Type of expenditure for EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali



Source: European Commission.

Recent developments

14. Since 2015, civilian CSDP Missions have engaged in an increasingly broad range of tasks in response to the changing security environment. One example is their increased focus on building capacity in counter-terrorism, and the addition of activities related to information gathering and exchange in the field of migration. In presenting the “EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy” in 2016 the HR/VP, emphasised the key importance of strengthening civilian capacity in third countries¹⁷.

15. In the “Implementation Plan on Security and Defence”¹⁸, the HR/VP asked the EU member states “to agree to review the structures and capabilities for the planning and conduct of CSDP Missions”¹⁹. The Council invited her, in November 2017, to “present the next steps in the development of civilian capabilities so that a civilian CSDP Compact²⁰ can

¹⁷ EU Global Strategy on Security and Defence, p. 50.

¹⁸ EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, 17.11.2016.

¹⁹ Ibid p. 5.

²⁰ Confirmed in the Council conclusions on 22 January 2018: “The added value of civilian CSDP within EU's Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises and throughout the entire conflict cycle should be defined and the requirements concerning civilian capabilities should be met in the CSDP Compact in 2018”.

be agreed by 2018”²¹. This is the third of a three step process which starts with a forward looking Concept Paper, followed by the Civilian Capability Development Plan and, in the Compact, allows all stakeholders (primarily EU member states) to commit to the process of strengthening civilian CSDP Missions.

16. The Council invited the HR/VP to establish a “core responsiveness capacity” by May 2018²², consisting of a reinforced Mission Support Platform²³ as well as resources placed in existing Missions.” The raised importance of civilian CSDP Missions has resulted in the allocation of additional resources to EEAS from 2018 to reinforce support for civilian CSDP Missions.

AUDIT SCOPE AND APPROACH

17. This audit covered the two civilian CSDP Missions set up by the EU to strengthen the capacity of the forces responsible for internal security in Niger and Mali²⁴. We asked the following questions:

- Did the EEAS plan and implement the EUCAP Sahel Missions well?
- Have the EUCAP Sahel Missions strengthened the capacity of the security forces in Niger and Mali?

18. The audit covered the period from the Missions’ set-up and included visits to Niger and Mali in September 2017.

²¹ “Council conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy, 13.11.2017”, p. 9.

²² Ibid point 15.

²³ The Mission Support Platform consists of staff members at EEAS headquarters and aims to centralise the provision of support functions to civilian CSDP Missions (e.g. information technology, finance and human resources).

²⁴ The ECA has published two special reports on civilian CSDP Missions, one in 2012 (EULEX in Kosovo) and the other in 2015 (EUPOL in Afghanistan). The recommendations made in both reports are also applicable to the EUCAP Sahel Missions in Niger and Mali. The EEAS stated in their reply to the recommendation that they accepted them.

19. We began our work by reviewing strategies, policies, plans and implementation reports. Following this, we met staff responsible for managing the Missions from Brussels: the EEAS' CPCC and CMPD, and the Commissions' Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development and FPI. We also interviewed representatives of the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) from four of the EU member states²⁵, the EU Special Representative for the Sahel and the former Head of Mission of EUCAP Sahel Niger.

20. We visited both Niger and Mali, where we interviewed staff from both Missions (including those at the field office in Agadez, Niger), representatives of the national authorities and of internal security forces. We also met with the respective EU Delegations and the representations of four EU member states²⁶ to both Niger and Mali, as well as the United States, Japan and Canada. We interviewed international organisations and donors involved in the security sector, such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the EU Training Mission in Mali, CiviPol, Expertise France, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the International Organisation for Migration.

21. We reviewed documents and carried out on-the-spot checks on 46 of a total of 446 training courses given in Niger and 16 of a total of 135 training courses given in Mali, 12 projects set up to purchase equipment or refurbish training rooms of the ISFs in Niger and nine projects in Mali. We also reviewed the work done by the Missions' staff providing advisory services in the host countries.

²⁵ Belgium, Germany, Spain and France.

²⁶ Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

OBSERVATIONS

The EU's response to the security forces' capacity-building needs suffered from operational inefficiencies

22. We examined how the Council, EEAS, Commission and staff in Niger and Mali set up, managed and operated the two Missions. We assessed whether the EEAS:

- (a) had taken into account lessons learnt from earlier CSDP missions;
- (b) allocated sufficient human and logistical resources to the Missions;
- (c) provided sufficient practical guidance and pre-deployment training to Mission staff;
- (d) followed suitable administrative procedures;
- (e) planned the Missions appropriately.

The EEAS made use of the lessons learnt from EUCAP Sahel Niger when setting up EUCAP Sahel Mali

23. The EEAS and the Commission visited Niger and Mali to assess the capacity-building needs of the internal security forces before setting up the Missions. The assessment of Niger's needs began in January 2012 and the EEAS completed a detailed proposal in the form of a Crisis Management Concept by March 2012. Due in part to the haste with which it was set up, the Mission experienced logistical and operational problems in the first 18 months of its existence (see **Box 2**).

Box 2 - Legal difficulties encountered by EUCAP Sahel Niger during its first mandate

1. It took 18 months for the Mission to become a legal entity, meaning that the Head of Mission signed all documents in his own name and bore the financial and legal responsibility.
2. The Mission did not have a budget specifically allocated for the set-up phase and received only little administrative and logistical support from Brussels. It was also unable to recruit security staff. This meant a slow start to carrying out activities, weakened the credibility of the Mission and exposed staff to greater security risks. In the first six months staff were accommodated in and worked from hotels. They had no computers, offices or mobile phones. In the first financial year, contracts covering accommodation and running costs were signed without proper procurement procedures for an estimated amount of €554 000²⁷.

24. The EEAS set up the EUCAP Sahel Mission in Mali as a legal entity in 2014²⁸, which allowed the new Mission to avoid many of the problems encountered by EUCAP Sahel Niger. Drawing on its experience in Niger, the EEAS ensured that:

- staff received privileges granted to diplomats as soon as the Mission was set up, and
- the Council approved an initial set-up budget for the Mission to enable the employment of administrative and security staff and the purchase of equipment before operations began.

Insufficient pre-deployment training and support from EEAS headquarters led to delays

25. We found that many of the staff responsible for identifying projects and preparing technical specifications were not sufficiently aware of EU procedures and rules before they arrived at the Missions in Niger and Mali. This led to delays in procurement procedures and cancelled contracts.

²⁷ The final amount depends on the outcome of the contradictory procedure with EUCAP Sahel Niger. None of the financial years of the Mission had been closed by the date of the audit.

²⁸ In Special Report No 18/2012 on EULEX in Kosovo, the ECA recommended that the Council and the Commission ensure that future CSDP Missions had a legal personality.

26. In Niger, for example, this was not limited to the set-up phase (see **Box 2**), but continued in the subsequent years of the Mission's operation. In the case of six projects audited equipment purchased arrived long after the training courses for which it had been intended had taken place. In five other cases, staff that had defined equipment needs or drawn up the specifications for a contract had left by the time the goods arrived. Newly recruited staff had to take over projects and procedures without having the necessary training, leading to delays in implementing the Mission's operations.

27. In recognition of the weaknesses observed in setting up CSDP Missions, the EEAS and the Commission stated in their reply to our report on EUPOL Afghanistan that they would develop "a shared service centre for all CSDP Missions" and optimise "the use of the CSDP warehouse to manage the assets of ongoing Missions". This was not in place at the time of our audit. However, on 13 November 2017 the Council approved the set up of a reinforced Mission Support Platform that is to be completed by May 2018. This Platform will make "rapidly deployable assets and planning elements from EU member states, as well as, where agreed, specialised teams and multinational formations such as the European Gendarmerie Force" available to new civilian CSDP Missions. The EEAS is also preparing to set up a central warehouse to hold a centralised stock of items for rapid distribution and so reduce the number of procurement procedures conducted by existing Missions.

Commission rules and procedures not adapted to conditions in Niger and Mali

28. The Commission allowed Mission staff in Niger and Mali to apply flexible procurement procedures²⁹ because of the difficult context in which they had to operate³⁰. Although these procedures were used, staff carrying out procurement in the Missions considered that FPI

²⁹ When Missions are allowed to use flexible procedures (i.e. negotiated procedures without prior publication pursuant to Articles 266(2) and 134(1) point (c) RAP), it also relieves them pursuant to Article 128(3) point (b) RAP of the necessity to negotiate with several potential contracting parties, as required by usual European Commission rules (see Article 128 RAP). Applying flexible procedures makes purchasing simpler and quicker. The Commission allows this in crisis situations (see for a definition Article 190(2) RAP) after adopting a crisis declaration.

³⁰ Following ECA's Special Report on Kosovo, the EEAS and the Commission undertook to "review Commission programming and procurement procedures to ensure they are responsive to EULEX's operational needs".

rules and procedures were often applied in a way that was unsuited to working conditions in landlocked West African countries. In particular:

- The budgetary period of one year made it difficult to prepare and complete contracts within the regulatory deadlines in view of the paucity of local suppliers and long delivery times. In addition, the requirement (only applied from 2017) to hand over equipment to the beneficiary within the budgetary year had put additional pressure on the Missions, especially in Niger, where equipment is often destined for regions to which transport is not easy to organise.
- Strict application of rules and procedures by the FPI had resulted in the cancellation of contracts because of minor inaccuracies in equipment specifications, or slight budget overruns.
- The requirement to group similar items (both for the Missions and for beneficiaries) into a single contract caused delays as purchases occurred less frequently.
- The obligation to use the Commission's framework contracts had led to problems. In one case, EUCAP Sahel Niger ordered equipment but the purchase ceiling of the framework contract had been reached. As a result, the Mission had to launch procurement procedures for these items locally. In other cases, supplies for equipment purchased under the framework contract could not be procured locally.

29. The EUCAP Sahel Missions require the Commission's prior authorisation for purchases over €20 000. This process takes longer than when the Missions make purchases directly. The Commission accepted the recommendation in the ECA's 2013 Annual Report that the FPI should accredit all civilian CSDP Missions in accordance with the 'six-pillar assessment'³¹. This means that once the Missions have strengthened their systems to meet the requirements of the assessors, Heads of Mission receive delegated powers to authorise

³¹ An assessment of key processes by an independent auditor (internal control; accounting; external audit; grants; procurement; financial instruments). The assessment of these processes aims to provide assurance to the Commission that the Missions have the capacity to manage EU funds on their behalf.

purchases, with the Commission continuing to carry out checks *a posteriori*. Shortly after our visit to the Missions, both began to undergo the process of six-pillar assessment³².

Lack of guidance from EEAS headquarters resulted in weak procedures

30. We looked at the guidance available to the Missions and found it to be inadequate since it related mainly to administrative procedures³³. There was little operational guidance, with examples of good practice, or standard templates from the previous civilian CSDP Missions, that could be used to train newly recruited staff. Each EUCAP Sahel Mission spent considerable time and resources on defining and setting up its own procedures, which were not always operationally efficient.

The EU member states did not provide enough staff to fill the posts available

31. The most important resource of the EUCAP Sahel Missions is their staff, both those seconded and paid for by the EU member states and those contracted locally by the Missions and funded out of the EU budget. The Missions consistently experienced problems filling vacancies for seconded staff. The EEAS invites the EU member states to provide candidates for secondment through calls for contributions, which are time-consuming and expensive to organise. 24 calls for contributions were made for EUCAP Sahel Niger between 2012 and 2016 and 14 for EUCAP Sahel Mali between 2014 and 2016. These calls for contributions only resulted in filling half of the vacant posts published for Niger, and only two-thirds for Mali (see **Tables 2 and 3**). The CIVCOM decides which posts are published exclusively for seconded staff and which are also open to contracted staff. Contracted staff can only be recruited to posts for seconded staff if two consecutive calls for contributions fail to produce suitable seconded candidates.

³² EUCAP Sahel Mali complied with the criteria of the six-pillar assessment in March 2018 and EUCAP Sahel Niger is expected to achieve this status by July 2018.

³³ Replying to the ECA's Special Report on EUPOL, the Commission and the EEAS agreed to work on "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".

Table 2 – EUCAP Sahel Niger: results of calls for contributions (2012-2016)

EUCAP Sahel Niger	Ordinary Calls for Contributions		Extraordinary Calls for Contributions	
Total number of posts published	276		59	
Published as 'Seconded'	132	48%	20	34%
Published as 'Seconded/Contracted'	144	52%	39	66%
Posts Filled	163	59%	29	49%
Posts Not filled	113	41%	30	51%
Posts for which no applications were received	33	12%	9	15%
Posts for which only one application was received	71	26%	9	15%

Source: EUCAP Sahel Niger.

Table 3 – EUCAP Sahel Mali: results of calls for contributions (2014-2016)

EUCAP Sahel Mali	Ordinary Calls for Contributions		Extraordinary Calls for Contributions	
Total number of posts published	198		21	
Published as 'Seconded'	127	64%	5	24%
Published as 'Seconded/Contracted'	71	36%	16	76%
Posts Filled	139	70%	14	67%
Posts Not filled	59	30%	7	33%
Posts for which no applications were received	7	4%	0	0%
Posts for which only one application was received	26	13%	1	5%

Source: EUCAP Sahel Mali.

32. The difficulties faced by the Missions in Niger and Mali in obtaining seconded staff from EU member states are similar to those faced by previous civilian CSDP Missions³⁴. The reasons include the fact that the qualifications and level of expertise required of such staff are high, and they need to be able to work in French³⁵. Potential candidates also have to consider the precarious safety and living conditions. Lastly, staffing civilian CSDP Missions is not always a high priority for EU member states. As a result, the occupation rates of staff

³⁴ See ECA Special Reports No 18/2012 (paragraph 109) and 7/2015 (paragraph 81).

³⁵ In 2016 the CIVCOM lowered the level of French required for some posts, resulting in an increase in the number of applications.

posts in the EUCAP Sahel Missions in Niger and Mali averaged 72 % and 77 % respectively in the relevant periods.

33. The length of secondment of staff from EU member states is two years on average or just one year for some EU member states. This is not enough time for individuals to build up sufficient knowledge of the various procedures and working conditions. We found that in addition to the shortness of the secondments, the high vacancy rate had a negative impact on the extent to which the Missions carried out their activities (see **Box 3**).

Box 3- Vacancies at the beginning of 2017

- EUCAP Sahel Niger: at the beginning of 2017, the Mission had 39 vacancies (35 %³⁶) in key posts in the operational units as well as in the monitoring, evaluation and procurement departments. Other vacancies included those for armed protection officers, and a press and public information officer. As a result:
 - fewer tender procedures were launched than planned meaning the equipment to carry out activities was not available;
 - there was no evaluation of training or projects;
 - the Mission was unable to start implementing activities related to arms and drugs trafficking and did not succeed in making activities sustainable.
- EUCAP Sahel Mali: at the beginning of 2017, the Mission had 50 vacancies (37 %³⁷), mainly for advisors and trainers in key areas. Implementation of some activities was delayed, but the Mission redistributed the workload between existing staff.

³⁶ In January 2017, 110 posts were available for seconded and contracted staff. This was raised during 2017.

³⁷ 134 posts were available for seconded and contracted staff in January 2017. This was an increase of 30 posts compared to December 2016, hence the high number of vacancies.

Uncertain lifetime for the Missions made it difficult to plan an exit strategy

34. Based on the proposal of the EEAS (see paragraph 7), the Council set up the two Missions in the Sahel region to strengthen the capacities of the forces responsible for internal security. The Council decisions defined the objectives of the Missions' work, but gave no indication of how long the Missions might exist. The Missions currently operate within two-year mandates, which are renewable. The EEAS is required to prepare an exit strategy for when the EU member states decide to end the Missions. The EEAS described the end state of the Missions. However, they did not set out a detailed plan towards reaching a transition or exit strategy.

35. Stakeholders³⁸ we interviewed were of the opinion that the Missions would exist in at least the medium-term in order to achieve the objectives set for them. Greater certainty regarding the lifetime of the Missions would allow the Missions to improve the way in which they are run and how they plan operations. It would also make it easier to draw up a meaningful exit strategy.

The EUCAP Sahel Missions strengthened the capacity of the security forces, but results were not sustainable

36. We examined how the EUCAP Sahel Missions in Niger and Mali carried out the activities planned, how they delivered, monitored and evaluated results, and whether the results were sustainable. We assessed:

- (a) whether the Missions had strengthened the capacity of the internal security forces;
- (b) whether the Missions' results were sustainable;
- (c) whether indicators for monitoring the Missions' results were appropriate;

³⁸ E.g. national ministries in Niger and Mali, embassies of some EU member states and donor organisations, such as GIZ, Civipol and Expertise France.

- (d) whether monitoring and evaluation procedures within the Missions were focused on impact;
- (e) how the other stakeholders in both countries perceived the Missions' performance.

Working in a challenging context, the Missions strengthened the capacity of the security forces, albeit slowly

37. The capacity-building needs of the forces responsible for internal security in both Niger and Mali are high. The EUCAP Sahel Missions deliver training, equipment, advice and exercise a coordination function over the internal security forces through a range of tasks and activities. The EU also provides support to the internal security sector through instruments such as the European Development Fund and the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

38. Living and working in countries on the edge of the Sahara desert with poor infrastructure and weak public administrations presents EUCAP staff with considerable challenges. Travel is complicated and staff must constantly be vigilant against the threat of terrorist attacks. In Niger some of the border regions are too insecure to visit, and the centre and the north of Mali are entirely out of bounds.

39. To meet their objectives, the Missions carry out activities, which are mostly ongoing and rolled over from one Council mandate to another and from one budgetary year to the next. We compared how the Missions carried out the activities planned with results reported and confirmed in interviews we held in Niger and Mali. See [Annexes III and IV](#) for details of our findings. In some cases, the Missions made good progress, such as on providing training to fight terrorism and organised crime in Niger. In other cases, there was little or no progress, such as on setting up internal control and audit services in the ISFs in Mali.

Training courses

40. We examined a sample of training courses for each of the Missions. The principal beneficiaries of the courses were the police, the gendarmerie and the national guard. The training courses covered areas such as arrest techniques, crime scene management, forensic evidence analysis, criminal investigation, vehicle maintenance and detention of irregular

migrants. In Niger, magistrates, the municipal police and the armed forces (see **Box 4**) also attended courses, for example those concerned with human rights.

Box 4 - The armed forces in Niger

Given the key role played by the armed forces in internal security, notably in the northern half of Niger, EUCAP Sahel Niger's mandate allowed for their participation in relevant capacity-building activities. The Mission stopped training the Nigerien armed forces in 2016, partly due to doubts as to whether or not they were eligible for support, and partly because of difficulties filling vacant posts within the Mission.

41. We found that training provided addressed key areas of weak capacity in the security forces and that they were in line with the objectives of the EUCAP Sahel Missions. However, due to weak administrative procedures, EUCAP Sahel Niger was unable to provide us with full documentation for the training courses we audited in Niger. For half of the training courses they could not provide proof of attendance and course evaluation forms completed by the participants. Although the majority of training courses were given in Niamey, trainers only reported on those given in the regions. Data on where the participants worked was incomplete and no check was made by the Mission of whether they had been trained previously. EUCAP Sahel Mali performed well in most of these respects (see **Box 5**).

Box 5 - Examples of good practice by EUCAP Sahel Mali

- The Mission's trainers verified the competences of the trainees proposed by the ISFs for courses run by EUCAP Sahel Mali. The staff registered trainees in a database and checked whether they had already attended similar training courses with either EUCAP or other organisations, and whether the training proposed was relevant to their current job.
- Both the trainees and trainers evaluated training courses that had taken place. The trainees were then registered in a database organised by training course, year and security force.
- EUCAP staff prepared training reports on each training course given, describing training content and objectives, the trainees, the competences they acquired and any lessons learnt. The report also highlighted candidates for further training as trainers.

Providing equipment

42. The amounts budgeted for buying equipment and services for the Mission and beneficiaries were €3.3 million for EUCAP Sahel Niger and €2.9 million for EUCAP Sahel Mali (2016/17 figures). Purchases were in support of the Missions activities, for example, training courses, and grouped into projects. Examples include vehicles, detection equipment, computers and printers, generators, the renovation of training and operational centres, and the construction and equipment of mobile garages. See **Box 6** for an example of a useful project supported by training which, despite complications during implementation, was a success.

Box 6 - Mobile garages for security force vehicles in the desert

The forces responsible for internal security in Niger often travel huge distances across rough terrain in the Sahara desert. Two of the projects in our sample were for the purchase of mobile garages for internal security forces operating in various regions. One of them could not be delivered (to Tillabéry) due to a deterioration in the security situation. We visited another in Agadez. Despite initial problems, it provided a valuable service, allowing vehicles and equipment to be repaired in the field.

EUCAP Sahel Niger also taught ISFs staff to operate the garages. One such training course was in our sample.



Mobile garage in Agadez (national guard)

Source: ECA.

43. We examined a sample of projects (see [paragraph 21](#)) and found that they addressed key areas of weak capacity in the security forces and that they were in line with the objectives of the EUCAP Sahel Missions. Partially due to the issues reported in [paragraph 28](#), there were delays in implementation for seven of the 21 projects examined. There were also

issues affecting sustainability, for example the failure to maintain the equipment provided, to repair it when damaged, or to buy consumables to ensure that it could be used.

Advice

44. One of the Missions' main tasks is to advise the ministries and the ISFs of the host countries. In Niger, the Mission appointed advisors to the Ministries of the Interior and Justice, complemented by the constant availability of Mission staff in other areas. EUCAP Sahel Mali provided advisors who were integrated into key national ministries and the ISFs.

45. Encouraging the ISFs to work closely together on combatting terrorism and organised crime ("interoperability") was a key objective for both Missions. In Mali, although the three ISFs met weekly, they did not allow EUCAP staff to be present. This limited the input of the latter. In Niger, despite investing significant resources in improving interoperability, the Mission did not achieve, and eventually abandoned tasks such as encouraging information sharing between the security forces.

46. Since 2012, one of EUCAP Sahel Niger's primary objectives has been to assist the Nigerien authorities in preparing a National Security Strategy. Five years later, largely because it was a condition for receiving budgetary support³⁹, the Nigerien authorities adopted a National *Internal* Security Strategy. In the absence of an *overall* national strategy which also deals with external security (control of borders, etc.), the impact of an internal security strategy is limited.

47. The Mission's staff also worked hard to bring the internal security forces together by setting up eight *centres opérationnels régionaux* (CORs). These are temporary bodies intended to bring together both members of regional governments and the Nigerien security forces and bodies responsible for civil protection, firefighting, environmental protection and customs in order to deal with crises arising from terrorist attacks, organised crime and natural disasters. The COR in Niamey works well and provides an example of good practice.

³⁹ State Building Contract financed by the European Development Fund. The target set by 30.9.2017 for receiving budget support was related to 'Approval of a decree related to the national security strategy as well as an action plan from the Government.'

However, CORs do not have a status that allows staff to be assigned to them, or a budget to be earmarked for expenditure incurred during crises, e.g. for the purchase of fuel for vehicles. The Mission also helped to strengthen *Centres Opérationnels de Gendarmerie* (COGs)⁴⁰ in Niamey, Agadez and Zinder. Neither the CORs nor the COGs were operating properly at the time of our audit. For example, the radio network was not working – what little communication there was took place using mobile phones.

48. Both Missions carried out activities to strengthen the management of human resources in the ISFs. For example in Niger, GIZ introduced information systems for the police and EUCAP Sahel Niger assisted the other two forces. In Mali, advisors from the Mission and the United States Embassy drafted job descriptions. Other tasks have proved less successful, for example, including data on transfers of staff and promotions into the new information systems, which the national authorities have not accepted to do so far. The two Missions also proposed to create training departments, review training curricula and draw up annual training plans within the ISF. This worked well in Mali. In Niger progress was limited, although in 2017 the police force drew up its first training plan.

Both Missions addressed sustainability, but with little success

49. Since the two EUCAP Sahel Missions provide support to Niger and Mali for only a limited time, addressing how to make their activities sustainable is of key importance⁴¹. Both Missions did this by giving courses on how to train other staff, helping draw up training plans and design training courses, introducing human resource management systems, creating job descriptions and encouraging the ISFs to work together in a structured way. In Niger, the Mission also planned to support the national authorities to prepare a National Security Strategy, to advise ISF staff using Monitoring, Mentoring and Advising (MMA) and to equip the forces with mobile garages and train them how to use them. Although the EEAS reported

⁴⁰ COGs are permanent bodies set up to monitor what is happening in the region, provide resources to patrols, collect information, notify it to the relevant authorities and to respond to crisis situations.

⁴¹ One of the five objectives in the Council decision required explicitly the Mission in Niger to carry out activities to ensure the sustainability of its actions.

achievements in these areas⁴², we found that the Missions had not succeeded in making their activities sustainable.

50. Both Missions ran train-the-trainer courses for the security forces. In Niger, the Mission built up a pool of Nigerien trainers in all ISFs over four years. However, even though ISF staff had begun to provide training themselves, Mission staff continued to do so as well. From 2014, with the aim of reducing the dependency of the ISFs on EUCAP trainers, the Mission focused on MMA. The idea was to assign a mentor within the Mission to follow and support ISF trainers that it had trained. However, this did not work well in practice: experts from the Mission provided advice on request, but had no procedure for either following up or providing systematic support to individual trainers. We only saw evidence of such advice given to 20 individuals over the three years up to March 2017. In neither country were the ISFs autonomous in any area of training.

51. The rate of progress on activities to promote sustainability often depended on the extent to which the authorities in the host countries agreed that they were priorities. For example, the national authorities in Niger and Mali did not grant official recognition or financial reward to staff from the ISFs who became trainers. This meant that there was little incentive for staff trained by EUCAP to train other staff because they were likely to earn more working in an operational unit. Both Missions helped to draft legislation to give trainers a separate status, but neither host country had adopted it at the time of the audit.

52. The failure to ensure the sustainability of many activities was partially due to lack of ownership by the national authorities and the ISFs. Despite their positive view of EUCAP, the Nigerien and Malian governments were not always ready to adopt appropriate legislation and pass some of the reforms necessary for the results of capacity-building to be sustained. The situation was exacerbated in Mali by the lack of political stability and organisational deficiencies at government level. This undermined the Missions' efforts to make the results of their activities sustainable.

⁴² 2016 CSDP Annual Report, p. 17.

53. The Missions were also responsible for their own weak performance in ensuring sustainability. For example, neither Mission verified the success of support provided by checking ex-post the use made of knowledge gained on training courses or of equipment received (for an example see **Box 7**). During the period audited, the Missions did not collect information on whether ISF staff continued to work in the area for which they were trained after the courses or assess whether trainees had understood and went on to apply the knowledge acquired during the training. This was the case for all types of participants, including those trained to be trainers. The Mission in Mali took a first step at the end of 2017 by writing to the Malian ISFs proposing to follow up on training courses given by EUCAP to assess their impact and learn lessons for future training courses.

54. After creating the CORs, the Missions aimed to make them sustainable. However, they did not succeed due to the absence of a national security strategy, and the high rotation of staff within the ISFs and within the Mission. For example, they did not carry out the courses planned to teach ISFs staff to train others, create a national coordination centre to integrate all CORs or draw up national emergency and intervention plans.

Box 7 – Centre opérationnel régional (COR) in Agadez

We visited the COR in Agadez. EUCAP Sahel Niger had supplied equipment to this COR, but we observed that it was not operational because the equipment was not in place:

- There were no chairs in the COR's room, half of the tables were missing and the air conditioning was not working.
- The beneficiaries could not show us the computers provided, the printer did not function because there was no toner and the equipment installed for radio communications was not working.
- The two vehicles which should have been at the disposal of the COR to enable it to respond quickly to emergencies had hardly been used and one of them was irreparably damaged, and had been so since 2014.

The EEAS did not set appropriate indicators for monitoring the Missions' results

55. We examined the Missions' six-monthly reports to the EEAS, which record the progress made towards completing tasks and achieving objectives in relation to indicators laid down in the OPLANs. Most of the "indicators" fixed for EUCAP Sahel Niger simply listed the activities set for each task and were therefore not RACER⁴³ and not an appropriate base for measuring progress. The one exception to this comprises indicators for the fifth objective on combatting irregular migration, which was added to the Mission's mandate in 2015. They were better because they defined target outputs for each task. The indicators set for EUCAP Sahel Mali also specified the expected outputs. However, they were not sufficiently robust to use to measure progress because no quantified targets were set⁴⁴.

⁴³ Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy and Robust.

⁴⁴ For example: 'meetings (without stating the number of meetings required)', 'extension of...', 'improvement of...', 'modalities have been agreed', 'exchange and distribution of information...', 'the capacity is reinforced', 'coordination mechanisms are put in place...', 'update regularly...', etc.

56. None of the indicators used in the EUCAP Sahel Missions mentioned the relevance of the tasks to accomplishing the objectives⁴⁵. There were also no indicators on which to base an assessment of the outcomes or impact of tasks.

The monitoring and evaluation of the Missions' activities were inadequate and not focused on impact

57. EUCAP Sahel Niger did not have procedures in place to systematically document and monitor the planning and implementation of its activities. Only during 2017, while the audit was ongoing, did the Mission in Niger take steps to simplify the MIP so as to facilitate monitoring of overall progress. It developed project fiches and planned to keep systematic records of trainees who had already attended courses, monitor presence lists and collect and assess participants' course evaluations. EUCAP Sahel Mali created appropriate procedures for documenting and monitoring activities and outputs during its first mandate.

58. The EEAS requires the Missions to provide the following information:

- weekly and monthly reports with information on budgetary implementation, human resources and general events that have occurred;
- six-monthly reports to compare the progress made in tasks with the baseline set in the OPLAN as well as with the progress reported in previous six-monthly reports;
- around six months before each mandate ends, strategic reviews of the security situation in the country, the EU's and other stakeholders' involvement, the Missions' results and their future approach;
- special reports on specific topics.

⁴⁵ In its 2012 Special Report on EULEX, the ECA recommended that the Missions' objectives be "linked to concrete benchmarks against which progress can be assessed and take into account EU internal security objectives".

59. We analysed these documents and observed that:

- reporting on outputs is not clearly linked to indicators and benchmarks set in advance, and
- the EEAS and the Missions did not systematically assess the impact of the Missions' activities.

60. Neither Mission operated good systems for evaluating activities during the period audited. During its second mandate, the Mission in Mali developed an evaluation system with an increased focus on outputs, outcome, impact, sustainability and efficiency. As this system had only recently been put in place, it was too early to assess its results. The Mission in Niger recruited staff to start on evaluation work in May 2017. Furthermore, neither of the EUCAP Sahel Missions has been subject to an independent external evaluation.

Stakeholders and beneficiaries had a positive view of the Missions' activities and of their coordination role

61. We interviewed beneficiaries of the EUCAP Sahel Missions' training, advice and equipment, and a variety of stakeholders in internal security in Niger and Mali. The overall assessment of the activities carried out by the EUCAP Sahel Missions was positive. Stakeholders and beneficiaries appreciated the availability of the Missions' staff to give advice or provide services that were not available from national sources. In Niger, the security forces and government representatives pointed to the value of the EUCAP Sahel Missions' longer-term presence compared with that of many other donors. Both Missions also provided information and advice in support of other EU instruments and the wider activities of the EU and its member states. For example, the Missions contributed to the design of EU Trust Fund for Africa projects, gathered information on migratory flows, and mapped EU activities connected with migration.

62. Donors and other stakeholders in Niger and Mali highlighted the important role played by both EUCAP Sahel Missions in coordinating activities in the security sector. Both Missions set up bodies to improve coordination with the national authorities, which experienced problems initially but were broadly successful. They also set up good mechanisms for

coordination and cooperation with other donors and stakeholders. In Mali, this included formal donor mapping, which gives full details of proposed (but not yet financed), planned, ongoing and completed projects in the security sector in Mali.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

63. The Council created EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali to address the weak capacity of the forces responsible for internal security. Working in a challenging context, the two Missions contributed to strengthening capacity, but each encountered difficulties, which reduced the efficiency and sustainability of their operations.

64. In both countries, the staff of the Missions did not have access to adequate operational guidance and training. Each EUCAP Sahel Mission spent considerable time and resources on setting up its own systems and procedures, which were often not adapted to the local conditions. The EEAS and the Commission, responsible for managing civilian CSDP Missions, did not provide enough support and in some cases applied procedures that were unsuited to the working conditions on the ground (see **paragraphs 25 to 30**).

Recommendation 1 – Take measures to improve the operational efficiency of Missions

The EEAS should:

- provide the Missions with practical guidance on operational procedures, standard templates that can be adapted to local circumstances, examples of best practice from earlier Missions and training;

The Commission should:

- move towards delegating the power to authorise purchases to the Head of Mission, subject to ex post checks by the Commission;

The EEAS and the Commission should:

- improve support to the Missions by providing equipment from the common warehouse and expanding the role of the Missions Support Platform.

Target Date: End of 2018.

65. The most important resource of the Missions is their staff, yet only three-quarters of posts were occupied on average. Recruitment procedures were time-consuming and often unsuccessful. The posts most difficult to fill were those reserved for staff seconded from EU member states (see **paragraphs 31 to 33**).

Recommendation 2 – Improve the occupancy rate of staff posts in the Missions

The EEAS should find solutions that will allow Mission vacancies to be filled quickly and efficiently, for example proposing longer secondments to the Missions from the EU member states, using contract staff more widely and preparing general calls for contributions which can be used to draw up reserve lists of potential staff to speed up deployment when vacancies arise.

Target Date: End of 2018.

66. The Missions' two-year mandates encourage short-term planning and the annual budgets often make the equipment and services procurement cycle unmanageably short. Other stakeholders in the Sahel and the beneficiaries of support consider that the scope of the tasks in Niger and Mali means that the Missions are needed for the medium to long-term. At the same time, even though the Missions are not intended to become permanent bodies in the host countries, the EEAS has not made a provision for a clear exit strategy (see **paragraphs 34 and 35**).

Recommendation 3 – Set mandates and budgets to match operations and provide for an exit strategy

The EEAS should propose mandates for the Missions that allow them to meet their objectives, and define a clearer path towards an exit strategy.

The Commission should set budgetary periods that match operational necessities.

Target Date: End of 2019.

67. The EUCAP Sahel Missions strengthened capacity in the internal security forces through providing training courses, equipment and advice. Both Missions worked to make their activities sustainable, but with little success. This was partly due to lack of ownership or political will in the host countries, and partly because the Missions did not devote adequate resources to ensuring sustainability and following up on the practical application and use of the training given and the equipment supplied (see **paragraphs 37 to 54**).

Recommendation 4 – Increase focus on sustainability

The Missions should focus resources on making activities sustainable, by withdrawing, as appropriate, from successful activities as soon as feasible to encourage autonomy in the ISFs and avoid over-reliance, focusing instead on providing support and back-up, and by following up the use made of training given and equipment provided.

Target Date: End of 2018.

68. The Missions made only limited and slow progress towards achieving their objectives. However, the indicators defined for measuring the Missions' progress were inadequate. Most of the indicators drawn up for Niger could not be used to measure progress because they simply listed activities set for the tasks. The indicators for Mali were better, but did not include quantified targets. The indicators did not provide a good basis for measuring the effectiveness of the tasks or the contribution made towards achieving objectives (see **paragraphs 55 and 56**).

69. Neither Mission operated good systems for evaluating activities during the period audited neither had they been subject to an independent external evaluation (see **paragraphs 57 to 60**).

Recommendation 5 – Improve indicators, monitoring and evaluation

The EEAS should:

- set RACER (Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy and Robust) indicators that focus on quantified outputs and on outcomes of the Missions' activities and that are linked to the relevance to the Missions' mandates;
- set targeted benchmarks which can be set to demonstrate progress towards achieving objectives;
- provide guidance and training to the Missions on monitoring and evaluation;
- make external evaluations of the Missions and more comprehensive assessments of their impact.

Target Date: End of 2018.

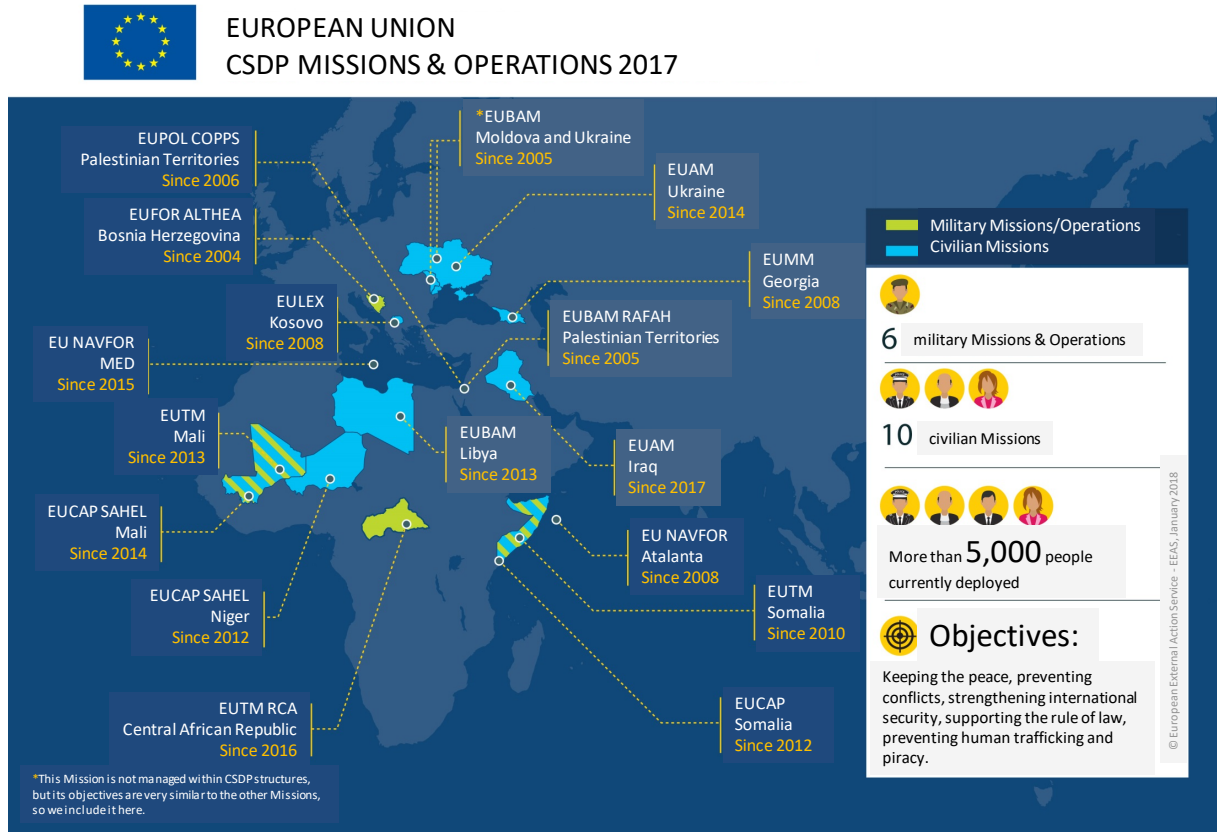
This Report was adopted by Chamber III, headed by Mr Karel PINXTEN, Member of the Court of Auditors, in Luxembourg at its meeting of 24 April 2018.

For the Court of Auditors

Klaus-Heiner LEHNE

President

Ongoing CSDP Missions and Operations



Source: EEAS.

ANNEX II**Extracts from Council Decisions (CFSP) 2016/1172 (Niger) and 2017/50 (Mali)**

	EUCAP Sahel Niger	EUCAP Sahel Mali
Mandate	To support the capacity building of the Nigerien security actors to fight terrorism and organised crime.	To conduct a civilian Mission in Mali in support of the Malian internal security forces (ISFs) (police, gendarmerie, national guard).
Aim	<p>-enable the Nigerien authorities to define and implement their own National Security Strategy;</p> <p>-contribute to the development of an integrated, multidisciplinary, coherent, sustainable, and human-rights-based approach among the various Nigerien security actors in the fight against terrorism and organised crime;</p> <p>-in addition, assist the Nigerien central and local authorities and security forces in developing policies, techniques and procedures to better control and fight irregular migration.</p>	<p>- allow the Malian authorities to restore and maintain constitutional and democratic order and the conditions for lasting peace in Mali;</p> <p>- restore and maintain State authority and legitimacy throughout the territory of Mali by means of an effective redeployment of its administration.</p>
Most recent Objectives	<p>In order to fulfil the objectives set out in Article 2, EUCAP Sahel Niger shall:</p> <p>(a) reinforce Nigerien command and control, interoperability and planning capacity at strategic level, while supporting the development of a National Security Strategy and related border management strategies in coordination with other relevant actors;</p> <p>(b) strengthen the technical skills of the relevant security forces that are necessary to fight terrorism and organised crime;</p> <p>(c) through the engagement at both strategic and operational level, encourage the internal security forces, and if appropriate the armed forces, to strengthen the human resources, logistics and training policies related to the fight against terrorism, irregular migration and organised crime to ensure the sustainability of EUCAP Sahel Niger's actions, including by providing technical support through the projects;</p> <p>(d) reinforce the coordination at national, regional and international level in the field of counter-terrorism, the fight against irregular migration and organised crime, and explore a possible contribution to regional cooperation, such as the G5 Sahel, as appropriate;</p> <p>(e) in support of the Union's objectives in the area of migration, assist the Nigerien central and local authorities and security forces in developing policies, procedures and techniques to better control and manage migration flows, to fight against irregular migration and to reduce the level of associated crime.</p>	<p>EUCAP Sahel Mali shall assist and advise the ISFs in the implementation of the security reform set out by the new Government, with a view to:</p> <p>(a) improving their operational efficacy;</p> <p>(b) re-establishing their respective hierarchical chains;</p> <p>(c) reinforcing the role of judicial and administrative authorities with regard to the management and supervision of their Missions;</p> <p>(d) facilitating their redeployment to the north of the country.</p>

ANNEX III**ECA overview of progress made by EUCAP Sahel Niger towards achieving tasks**

Tasks	Progress
Objective 1: Interoperability	
1.1 Support for National Security Strategy	
1.3 Exchange of information between the ISFs	
1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 Support to CORs (former joint command posts)	
1.6 Support to COGs	
Objective 2: Technical competencies	
2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 Advice and training to fight terrorism and organised crime	
2.5 Training trainers in the security forces	
2.6 Supporting closer links between police and magistrates in criminal enquiries	
2.7 Improving of the security forces' databases	
2.8 Training in legal and penal procedures and human rights for officers in the armed forces	
2.9 Raising the ISFs' awareness of the principles of law, human rights and gender equality	
2.10 Bringing together the ISFs and civil society in the spheres of human rights and gender equality	
Objective 3: Sustainability	
3.1, 3.8, 3.9 Support to ISFs: equipment and infrastructure, and advice on and training in sharing and maintenance	
3.2 Work with EUCAP Sahel Mali on developing human resources management in the ISFs	
3.3 Operational evaluation of EUCAP activities with the ISFs	
3.4, 3.5 Support the development of human resources management within the ISFs	
3.6 Setting-up of training directorates and plans within the ISFs	
3.7 Integrate training manuals into national curricula; train, advise and mentor trainers	
Objective 4: International Coordination	
4.1, 4.6 Management of international cooperation by Niger	
4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7 Coordination between donors in Niger	
4.8 Support for Nigerien participation in regional cooperation initiatives	
4.2, 4.9, 4.10 Develop regional dimension of EUCAP actions	
Objective 5: Migration	
5.1 Support for National Strategy for Control of Territory	
5.2, 5.11 Map stakeholders, collect data on migration flows, define needs	
5.3 Acceptance of new law on illegal migration, training for ISFs in illegal migration	
5.4 Awareness-raising in population of irregular migration	
5.5, 5.7, 5.8 Training and advice to the ISFs for the prevention and control of irregular migration	
5.6. Reinforcement of Agadez COR	
5.9 Support in legal procedures for police and magistrates in Agadez	
5.10 Executive secretariat of the platform on migration coordination	
5.12 Coordination with other stakeholders in migration present in Agadez	
5.13 Crossborder actions with EUCAP Mali and EUBAM Libya	
5.14 Development of a migration strategy with the EU delegation for communication	
	Good progress
	Slow progress/ Difficulties encountered
	No progress/ Significant difficulties encountered

Source: 2016-2018 OPLAN, except in the case of task 1.3 (OPLAN 2014).

ANNEX IV**ECA overview of progress made by EUCAP Sahel Mali towards achieving tasks**

Decision points (DP) - Based on 2016 OPLAN		Progress
1. Advice		
DP 1.1 Through strategic advice, the Mission is inserted at director level in the ISFs and the Ministries		
Excluding task 1.1.2.1: Enhance the internal control structures in the ISFs		
DP 1.2 The ISFs have put in place the structures needed to coordinate their activities and increase their operational efficiency		
DP 1.3 Human Resources - legal texts have been drafted and are applied in practice		
DP 1.4 Human Resources - procedures and structures have been reformed (e.g. a database)		
DP 1.5 The Malian capacity with regard to border management has been reinforced		
DP 1.6 The ISFs capacity to fight against terrorism and organised crime has been reinforced		
2. Training		
DP 2.1 The Mission has been incorporated into the training structures of the ISFs and the Ministries		
DP 2.2 The training courses and programmes, including their content, have been drawn up and are being implemented		
Excluding task 2.2.1.1: job descriptions are drafted		
Excluding tasks 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.2.1: creating a training catalogue and training programmes		
DP 2.3 The number and quality of trainees from the ISFs are in line with the needs identified and training is subject to evaluation		
DP 2.4 Train-the-trainers courses are organised to ensure sustainability of the Mission's actions		
DP 2.5 A framework for training was identified within the directorates of the ISFs		
3. Coordination		
DP 3.1 Coordination with MINUSMA allows joint actions to be reinforced and optimised and overlap of the actions to be avoided		
DP 3.2 Coordination with other EU partners/instruments and EU member states is continuous and effected on the basis of regular exchange of information and the development of joint actions		
DP 3.3 Actions carried out by local and international stakeholders, third countries, and NGOs in the same sphere as the Mission's (more specifically, training and evaluation) are identified and coordinated with the Mission's activities		
	Good progress	
	Slow progress/ Difficulties encountered	
	No progress/ Significant difficulties encountered	
	Not yet possible to evaluate	

Source: 2016 OPLAN.

REPLIES OF THE COMMISSION AND THE EEAS TO THE SPECIAL REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

"Strengthening the capacity of the internal security forces in Niger and Mali : only limited and slow progress"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

I.

The EEAS and the Commission wish to highlight that EU Member States and local authorities and partners have consistently commended the efforts and progress of EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali since their launch in 2012 and 2014 respectively, despite the challenging context.

Both EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali Missions' mandates are focusing on structural efforts to support at their request the institutions of Mali and Niger. Such efforts require a long-term commitment from the international community. The current security situation in Sahel is extremely challenging. The western borders of Niger with Mali and Burkina-Faso as well as its Southern borders are frequently subject to attacks from terrorist groups. In Mali the security situation in the Central regions has deteriorated in 2017. The migratory pressure is an additional challenging element for Niger, which had to cope with a sudden influx of migrants in the country. However, even under those difficult circumstances, both Missions have substantially enhanced the security resilience of Mali and Niger, in close cooperation with the international community and within the EU wider integrated approach.

IV.

The EEAS recognises that in the case of Niger, the Member States accepted the additional risk linked to the fast-track launch of the Mission, which had consequences on the level of preparedness of the Mission staff. However, in Mali, the Core team was duly trained for ten days in Brussels and accompanied by the EEAS during the first phase of the Mission.

V.

The EEAS wishes to highlight that staffing rates are a constant point of attention for the EEAS and the Commission. As part of the work on responsiveness of civilian CSDP, a conscious effort is being taken forward to increase the manning rate.

VI.

The EEAS appreciates that the ECA recognises, in this context, the importance of devoting adequate resources to ensuring sustainability in Civilian CSDP Missions.

VII.

The EEAS agrees with this observation. Establishing relevant and quantifiable indicators to assess progress in the mandate delivery and the possible impact is indeed a challenge. There are some limitations due to the specificity of the CSDP context and the Member States' approach towards CSDP Missions – see comments on paragraph 55- .

OBSERVATIONS :

23.

The set-up of the Core Responsiveness Capacity, which includes a reinforced Mission Support Platform (MSP), shall provide the legal and financial means to enable a smooth and rapid set up of future Missions.

Box 2. The ineligible amount for the first year mandate has indeed not been established, as this depends on the results of the contradictory procedure with the EUCAP Sahel Niger Mission.

25.

Regarding the guidance given, the Commission provides written guidance on all features of the Mission's mandate (budget, finances, procurement), and monitor on a daily basis the implementation of the mandate through the desk officers.

Written guidance includes a Procurement Guidelines to Missions covering (together with the Procedures and practical guide –PRAG-) the procurement aspects and templates to the Missions. The Commission is also issuing a CFSP Vademecum on financial and contractual issues, which will replace separate instruction notes and provide one coherent source of information and guidance to Missions on financial and contractual topics.

26.

A longer secondment from Member States and specific trainings on project implementation are necessary to overcome these shortfalls.

27.

The EEAS and the Commission services welcome the positive assessment of the Court.

The MSP and the CSDP Warehouse will address the Court's concern regarding the provision of a critical mass of resources, boosting its ability to ensure rapid reaction to crisis situations, and at the same time achieving economies of scale by centralising critical mission support services and reducing the administrative burden of CSDP Missions.

28.

Both CSDP Missions benefit from the most flexible procurement procedures allowed by the Financial Regulation deriving from crisis situation in their country of operation as declared by the responsible authorising officer by delegation, and can use negotiated procedures without prior publication of a contract notice.

The budgetary period of the mandate must be aligned with the applicable legal basis (i.e. the Council Decision). The FPI will explore the possibilities offered by the new Financial Regulation as regards multi-annual financing decisions and the signature of delegation agreements with longer duration.

Longer mandates would have the advantage of providing Missions with a longer timeframe to perform their procurement.

Procurement procedures to be applied by CSDP Missions are defined in the Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application (RAP). They are further explained in the Practical Guide for Procurement and Grants for European Union external actions (PRAG). FPI as a service of the Commission, while enforcing as a mitigating measure an ex-ante control on procurement procedures launched in non-

pillar assessed CSDP Missions, is applying the above mentioned rules and regulations on public procurement.

Homogenous items of a supply procurement procedure should be tendered in a single Lot, to avoid artificially splitting the tender procedure, leading to the circumvention of the procurement thresholds set in the Financial Regulation.

The threshold for the use of the framework contract for computer hardware was reached and therefore no longer applied. Pending the implementation of the centralised Warehouse in 2018, FPI informed Missions that the purchase of computer equipment has to follow the standard procurement rules applicable to the Missions.

The creation of the Mission Support Platform and the Common Warehouse should remedy this gap.

The setting up of a central Warehouse will provide a centrally managed stock of critical items that are readily available to CSDP Missions, greatly enhancing the ability to rapidly deploy new Missions, and reducing the number of procurement procedures in existing Missions.

29.

For EUCAP Sahel Mali, the follow-up of the pillar-assessment audit report took place in October 2017. The results are positive and EUCAP Sahel Mali was declared compliant with the criteria related to all six pillars as of 1 of March 2018. It means that the Head of Mission received delegated powers to authorise purchases, with the Commission continuing to carry out ex-post checks.

A similar follow-up for EUCAP Sahel Niger is planned for mid-2018.

30.

The EEAS considers that both Missions were provided with a number of instructions, Standard Operating Procedures, templates in many fields (Operations, logistic, finance, human resources, security etc.). There is, however, room for improvement in standardising procedures and guidelines. This is currently addressed through the set-up of the Mission Support Platform and the development of Operational Guidelines on topics relevant to Missions' activities

31 and 32.

The EEAS would like to point out that the force generation process is almost entirely depending on Member States contribution. To enable early force sensing, improve recruitment procedures and to assist Member States with their own forward planning in terms of providing personnel to the Missions, the EEAS drafted a Human Resources Handbook that details the 77 general and specific functional profiles that will be required by the Missions. Seconding authorities can develop their own pool of persons who are ready to apply for positions in the Civilian CSDP Missions. It is hoped that this Guide will also enable the fine-tuning of national selection processes, ensuring that those candidates proposed by Member States are a good match for the positions advertised.

33.

The EEAS appreciates that the ECA recognises in this context the importance of the length of the secondment from Member States.

The EEAS is exploring all possible ways to overcome the vacancies issue, including repeated appeals to the Member States to fulfil their commitment in terms of manning in line with the OPLANs.

Box 3.

In order to improve the rapid deployment of qualified experts when needed, the EEAS has advocated (jointly with the Commission) the setting-up of a core responsiveness capacity as part of a multi-layer approach. The Council approved recently (conclusions of 13 November 2017) the setting-up by May 2018 of such a structure which will "consist of a reinforced Mission Support Platform as well as resources placed in existing Missions which can be complemented through rapidly deployable assets and planning elements from Member States, as well as, where agreed, specialised teams and multinational formations such as the European Gendarmerie Force". The implementation will require in particular the increase by 1 or 2 % of the current manning in CSDP Missions for operational tasks (deployed as double-hatted positions). It will be one tool among other possible additional efforts to improve the manning rate.

34 and 35.

Progress towards the end state and therefore the exit strategy, and its timeline, is often difficult during the conduct of a Mission for political and security reasons.

37.

The EEAS appreciates that the ECA recognises in this context the challenging context especially when only EUCAP Niger existed as the unique EU instrument, focused on strengthening the capacity of the security forces.

41.

The EEAS recognises that the administrative procedures were not in place as from the beginning of the Mission. Despite the lack of HR software to track the previous and ongoing internal mobility of the trainees, the Mission managed to restore, after the audit visit, a substantial amount of data and documents related to the training samples requested by the ECA.

The Mission follows a pool of more than 100 trainers who were trained in different topics by the Mission and the Mission experts regularly carry out evaluation-advice actions with the Nigerien trainers put in real training situations with their colleagues.

42.

The EEAS and the Commission appreciate that the ECA recognises, in this context, the importance of providing equipment as a way of supporting the achievements of the Civilian CSDP Missions' end state.

43.

The EEAS agrees with the observation. To ensure sustainability in this context, it is necessary to dedicate specific budget lines in the Missions' budget.

53.

The EEAS would like to highlight that both Missions do not have an executive mandate to control staff assignments and movements after the training is performed. However, Trainee monitoring and assessment is a constant concern of the Mission. Control operations are conducted at the end of training in document fraud, or during targeted operations with the ISFs (with the Anti-Traffic Unit and the police force at the airport on arrivals and departures of aircrafts; roadside checks by the 3 forces at the gates of Niamey or in the provinces for example).

In terms of forecasting and sustainability, human resources management software has been made available to the 3 ISF in 2016. The primary purpose of this tool is to enable the ISF to improve the quality of their management, especially forecasting. At the same time, this archiving tool enables the ISF to trace the whole career of civil servants. As a result, the software provided by the Missions to the ISF allows more effective tracking of assignments and trainings of each staff member or trainer, trained by the Mission.

For internal budgetary reasons, the Nigerien authorities do not have a sufficient number of staff to perform all the monitoring and evaluation tasks that fall to them and therefore redeploy, according to emergencies and contingencies of the moment.

Box 7.

The EEAS would like to highlight that the COR of Agadez was operational for the national celebration in 2016. The Mission did deliver the necessary equipment, including radios. However, as mentioned in the hand-over documents, local authorities are responsible for the proper management, monitoring and maintenance of this material.

The Mission took note of a damaged vehicle and is seeking for solutions.

54.

The crisis management training was provided by the Mission to 110 security and defence forces staff, of which some are no longer in charge of the COR.

This situation is well known in all CSDP Missions in which some counterparts are trained for a specific need but then transferred due to normal rotation of staff.

Eucap Sahel Niger, as part of its non-executive mandate, tries to promote the sustainability of the delivered trainings but cannot interfere in the Human Resources Management.

55 and 56.

The Missions are already striving to improve their methodology and the EEAS acknowledges that there is possible room for improvement. The EEAS will contribute to the upcoming development of guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluating applicable to both CSDP and Commissions activities in the Security Sector Reform area (in line with the 2015 Joint Communication on "Capacity Building in support of Security and Development" and the 2016 Joint Communication 'Elements for an EU-wide Strategic Framework for supporting Security Sector Reform').

60.

The EEAS agrees with this observation. It underlines the relative weakness of the EEAS in performing a proper evaluation of the Missions' operational impact. The Strategic Review process of the Missions already provides a good basis for evaluating the performance of Missions. The EEAS, however, is aware that the measure of Missions' performance can be improved and already started tackling this issue, notably by establishing operational evaluation functions within the Missions.

61.

The EEAS and the Commission services appreciate that the ECA recognises in this context the role of EUCAP Sahel Missions to the design of the EU Trust Fund for Africa projects.

63 and 64.

The EEAS and the Commission services agree with Recommendation 1 and are already taking the appropriate measures to enhance efficiency, sustainability and the manning rate (notably through the Regional Coordination Cell, the Mission Support Platform, the Core Responsiveness Capacity, the development of Operational Guidelines on topics relevant to Missions' activities and the establishment of the CSDP Warehouse).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS :

Recommendation 1:

The EEAS and the Commission accept the recommendations, insofar as they are concerned.

Recommendation 2:

The EEAS accepts the recommendation.

Recommendation 3:

The EEAS and the Commission accept the recommendation insofar as they are concerned. The budgetary period of the mandate must be aligned with the applicable legal basis (i.e. the Council Decision). The Commission will explore the possibilities offered by the new Financial Regulation as regards multi-annual financing decisions and the signature of delegation agreements with longer duration.

Recommendation 4:

The EEAS accepts the recommendation and invite the ECA to take into consideration the context of the CSDP Missions. The Mission's mandate is agreed by the Council which determines the mandate, the budget and the lines of operations. The presence of external evaluators is also subject to Member States approval.

The draft Strategic Review of EUCAP Sahel Niger has already addressed the issue of making Mission's activities sustainable inter alia by introducing sustainability as an underlying principle of the Missions' work in the upcoming mandate. Sustainability will no longer be linked only with the training and advice as one of the five objectives, but should be mainstreamed to facilitate transition.

Recommendation 5:

The EEAS accepts the recommendation and invites the ECA to take into consideration the specificity of the CSDP Missions.

The EEAS will contribute to the upcoming development of guidelines on a Monitoring and Evaluating applicable to both CSDP and Commission activities in the Security Sector Reform area (in line with the 2015 Joint Communication on "Capacity Building in support of Security and Development" and the 2016 Joint Communication 'Elements for an EU-wide Strategic Framework for supporting Security Sector Reform').

The proposal to carry out external evaluators of the Missions will be subject to the Council decision.

Event	Date
Adoption of Audit Planning Memorandum (APM) / Start of audit	2.5.2017
Official sending of draft report to Commission (or other auditee)	2.3.2018
Adoption of the final report after the adversarial procedure	24.4.2018
Official replies of the Commission and the European External Action Service	13.6.2018

Niger and Mali are fragile states in Western Africa, whose security is threatened by the presence of terrorist groups, insecure borders and irregular migration. In order to respond to these threats, the EU set up CSDP Missions, respectively in 2012 and 2014, to strengthen the capacity of internal security forces by providing training, advice and equipment. Between 2012 and 2014, respectively and 2017, the EU allocated €69 455 000 to EUCAP Sahel Niger and €66 475 000 to EUCAP Sahel Mali. We concluded that the Missions had some success but that progress was slow. This was due to the difficult context in which the Missions worked, but also because of operational difficulties. We make a number of recommendations for improving operational efficiency, sustainability and monitoring.



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