EU military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
(Operation EUFOR ALTHEA)

Mission background
The military operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was launched on 2 December 2004 and has contributed to the maintenance of the safe and secure environment in BiH. The decision to launch Operation ALTHEA followed the decision by NATO to conclude its SFOR-operation and the adoption by the UN Security Council of resolution 1575 authorising the deployment of an EU force in BiH. In the framework of Operation ALTHEA, the EU deployed 7000 troops, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton/Paris Agreement and to contribute to a safe and secure environment in BiH. Operation ALTHEA is carried out with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities, under the "Berlin Plus" arrangements.

Mandate and objectives

FACTS AND FIGURES

Theatre: Bosnia and Herzegovina
Headquarters: Sarajevo (Camp Butmir)
Starting Date: 2 December 2004
Head of Mission: The EU Operation Commander is General Sir Richard Shirreff (UK). The EU Force Commander is Major General Bernhard Bair (Austria).
Troop strength: around 1400
Operation budget: The common costs of the operation are EUR 23 million. These costs are paid through contributions by EU member states to a financial mechanism (Athena) based on GDP
Contributing states: 21 EU member states, Albania, Chile, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Switzerland and Turkey

The main objectives of Operation EUFOR ALTHEA are:

- to support BiH efforts to maintain the safe and secure environment in BiH; and
- to provide capacity-building and training support to the BiH Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces.

EUFOR also supports the implementation of a number of tasks that have been transferred from the operation to local authorities, such as: countermine activities, military and civilian movement control of weapons and ammunition, as well as the management of weapons and ammunition storage sites.

EUFOR actively continues to provide support to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in pursuit of persons indicted for war crimes, while noting that the responsibility for full cooperation with ICTY rests with the BiH authorities. It also contributes to defence reform in BiH.

A multinational manoeuvre battalion is based in Sarajevo and EUFOR also retains its presence throughout the country through the liaison and observation teams (LOTs). The Multinational manoeuvre battalion, based in Camp Butmir, is made up of troops from Austria, Hungary and Turkey. EUFOR retains its capacity to react throughout the country to any possible security challenges.

The Operation Commander is General Sir Richard Shirreff (UK). The EU's Political and Security Committee exercises the political control and strategic direction of the operation, under the responsibility of the Council of the EU.

In the context of the EU's overall commitment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in November 2009, the Council of the EU reconfirmed that Operation ALTHEA remained an important part of EU’s comprehensive efforts in BiH to support a political process aimed at enabling BiH, on the basis of necessary reforms, to continue to move forward in the EU integration process. The Council noted that the security situation in BiH continued to remain stable, despite the challenging political environment.

On 25 October 2010, the Council of the EU confirmed the EU's commitment to a continuing executive military role to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to maintain the safe and secure environment, under a renewed UN mandate; and, building on Althea's achievements, to the continuing provision of non-executive capacity-building and training support in order to contribute to strengthening local ownership and capacity. The Council agreed to keep the operation under regular review, including on the basis of the situation on the ground.

On 21 March 2011, the Council of the EU underlines the EU's CSDP missions, namely the EU Police Mission (EUPM) and EUFOR Althea, as important elements of its overall strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council reiterated its agreement to keep these missions under regular review, including on the basis of the situation on the ground, with a view to assessing in the future EU engagement in this area.