

The European Peace Facility: A new tool in action

The European Peace Facility (EPF) has been operational since 1 July 2021. This off-EU budget instrument finances operations with military implications (previously financed by the Athena mechanism and the African Peace Facility), and provides support to the EU partner countries' armies with infrastructure, training and equipment, including with lethal weapons. So far, it has funded operations in places as diverse as the Western Balkans, the Eastern Neighbourhood, in particular Ukraine, and sub-Saharan Africa. As stated in the Strategic Compass process, the EU aims to strengthen its crisis management role, with the EPF playing a crucial role in this process.

EPF: A budget of nearly €6 billion and a key role in EU security

The [EPF](#) was set up by Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 (the [EPF Decision](#)) of 22 March 2021, and entered into force on the same day. The [EPF](#) has a financial ceiling of €5.692 billion (in current prices) for 2021-2027, with an annual ceiling that will gradually increase from €420 million in 2021 to €1.132 billion in 2027. Member States make yearly contributions to the facility in proportion to their GNI. Denmark opted out of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) on military matters (by a formal declaration made under Article 31(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)). The EPF has [two financing pillars](#), brought together in an effort to simplify decision-making and make EU actions more coherent. The operations pillar finances the common costs of CSDP missions and operations that have military or defence implications. The assistance measures pillar finances EU actions for third states and regional or international organisations, aimed at strengthening military and defence capacities and supporting military aspects of peace support operations (PSOs). The facility has two secretariats: one for CSDP operations, hosted by the Council, and another for assistance measures, hosted by the European Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments Service. Emerging external actors pose challenges to the EU's CSDP missions and operations. It is hoped that the EPF, which for the first time allows the EU to train and equip, including with lethal weapons, the armies of its partner countries, will help counter these challenges. In a rapidly evolving security context, the [Strategic Compass](#), expected to be formally adopted at the European Council meeting on 24-25 March 2022, will seek to strengthen the EU's role in crisis management, with the help of both civilian experts and military forces. It will also aim to make full use of the EPF, without any geographical limitations, to make the EU partners more resilient against [hybrid threats](#). The compass suggests forging closer links between CSDP missions and operations, on the one hand, and European-led ad-hoc coalitions, on the other, notably in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Strait of Hormuz; it also suggests that EPF-funded activities might help these ad-hoc coalitions.

A farewell to the African Peace Facility, but not to funding for military activities

The African Peace Facility (APF), which was created in 2003, is still de facto in force, but will no longer receive new funding. Through the APF, EU Member States have funded military activities in Africa, namely African Union (AU)-led or AU-supported PSOs, in places like South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Sahel, Gambia, and the Lake Chad Basin. The EPF has now taken the place of the APF to finance the military components of AU-led or AU-supported PSOs, while the Neighbourhood, Development and International Instrument – Global Europe ([NDICI-GE](#)) is used to finance the civilian components of those PSOs.

On 22 July 2021, the Council adopted an [assistance measure under the EPF](#) in the form of a general programme for support to the AU. With a budget of €130 million, the assistance measure will provide support to the AU Mission in Somalia ([AMISOM](#)) and the Somali national army. It will also help to finance: the military component of the [G5 Sahel Force](#) (covering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger); the PSO in Gambia ([ECOMIG](#)); and the Multi-national Joint Task Force ([MNJTF](#)) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (which supports the fight against Boko Haram in Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger).

Common costs of CSDP military missions and operations: Not a farewell to Athena

Observing the ban imposed by Article 41(2) TEU on paying operating expenditure arising from CSDP operations having military or defence implications from the EU budget, but using the possibility offered by this article to charge Member States for such expenditure, the Council established the [Athena mechanism](#) in 2004. This mechanism has financed the 'common costs' of CSDP operations, covering 5-10 % of the total cost of an operation. The EPF has maintained the Athena cost-sharing mechanism and its governance system, and currently contributes to the common costs of the seven [active CSDP operations and missions](#).

EPF-funded assistance measures

In December 2021, the Council adopted a €24 million EPF-funded [assistance measure](#) for [Mali](#), for a period of 30 months. Jointly with the [EU Training Mission in Mali](#), this measure will help strengthen the capacities of the Malian armed forces to conduct military operations aimed at restoring Malian territorial integrity and reducing the threat posed by terrorist groups. The [Malian minister](#) for foreign affairs has requested that the EU training mission evolve, possibly with the EPF, into both a more efficient training component (with 'train the trainers' programmes) and more combative components (with directly deployable equipment, lethal weapons, vehicles, aircraft and means of communications). On 2 February 2022, the [HR/VP](#) deeply regretted the expulsion of the French Ambassador to Mali by the country's transitional government.

On [12 July 2021](#), the Council set up a military training mission to [Mozambique](#) ([EUTM Mozambique](#)). Officially launched on 15 October, the mission seeks to help address the crisis in Cabo Delgado province, by providing the Mozambican army – more specifically the military units that will be part of a future quick reaction force – with training and capacity-building. The common costs of the mission are funded by the EPF, which also supports assistance measures to the mission. On 30 July 2021, the Council approved a concept note for a €4 million assistance measure under the EPF for the most urgently required equipment; on [19 November 2021](#), the Council decided to complement the former measure with a €40 million assistance measure, to enable the units trained by EUTM Mozambique to conduct security operations in Cabo Delgado province. EUTM Mozambique, which mainly consists of Portuguese special forces, will train a total of 11 companies of the Mozambican army and navy. The EU is providing these units with individual and collective equipment, ground mobility assets, technical tools and a field hospital. Moreover, a Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission, the [SAMIM](#), was deployed on 15 July 2021 to join forces with the Mozambican national army and other (South African but also Zimbabwean and Rwandan) foreign troops in combating the Islamic terrorists; the SADC decided on 12 January 2022 to [extend](#) the SAMIM mandate for three months. For comparison, the extension will cost almost €26 million for the SADC.

The EU is likely to respond favourably to possible requests from [Rwanda](#) (although it is not a SADC member state), Mozambique or the AU, to fund, through the EPF, the deployment of African troops in Mozambique.

On 4 November 2021, the Council adopted an [assistance measure](#) of €10 million to support the capacity building of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina ([BiH](#)), and to finance the delivery of 68 medical and transport vehicles and 150 metal detectors to the BiH humanitarian demining battalion, with the aim of helping the country become mine-free by 2027. EPF funds also support [EUFOR Althea](#), which has, with around 600 troops, an executive mandate to maintain a stable and secure environment in BiH.

On 2 December 2021, the Council adopted [assistance measures](#) to [Georgia](#) (€12.75 million) [Moldova](#) (€7 million) and [Ukraine](#) (€31 million), all for a period of three years and aimed at strengthening the capacities of the beneficiary countries in military and defence matters, as well as promoting domestic resilience and peace. The measure for Ukraine finances military medical units (including field hospitals), engineering units (including demining), mobility and logistics units, and support for cyber-defence. It is worth noting that, against the backdrop of renewed Russian threats on the [Ukrainian border](#), a cyber-attack was launched against the Ukrainian government's websites on 14 January 2022. The HR/VP intends to [propose](#) establishing an EU Military Advisory and Training Mission in Ukraine; the costs of such a mission, its possible participants, the Ukrainian needs and the modalities of EU help have already been evaluated; pending Member States' agreement, the [preparatory work](#) to deploy the mission is ongoing at an accelerated speed. On 24 January, the [Council](#) stressed that the EU is defining arrangements for support to Ukraine in the area of professional military education. So far, none of the EPF-funded active assistance measures that the Council has approved at the request of the countries concerned allows for the [controversial](#) supply of equipment designed to deliver lethal force.

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