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# EUFOR Althea: Appraisal and Future Perspectives of the EU's Former Flagship Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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# **EUFOR Althea: Appraisal and Future Perspectives of the EU's Former Flagship Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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## About the Author

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## **Abstract**

On 2 December 2004 the European Union launched the operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was its hitherto largest CSDP operation. The fundamental strategic objective has been the contribution to a 'safe and secure environment' in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. Throughout its deployment the operation has been evolving with regard to its size, its structures and its precise tasks and objectives. Today, the force level has, on the one hand, reached a critical number and it seems questionable whether an effective intervention would still be possible if large-scale and violent conflicts re-emerged. On the other hand, the EU has increased its efforts in the capacity-building and training of the Bosnian authorities and, in particular, the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The present paper undertakes an analysis and evaluation of this operation with regard to the development of its tasks, size and structure and draws conclusions suggesting three possible future scenarios. Besides the conclusion that the operation can generally be considered a success, the analysis and the evaluation of the future prospects highlight that the operation is still evolving and might be in a crucial phase right now. When looking at the conditions on the ground and the perceived (lack of) willingness of the contributing nations concerning continued commitments, the current structure no longer seems appropriate. The author therefore recommends an adaptation of the mandate and a restructuring of the whole operation with regard to its composition and focus. This restructuring should, on the one hand, imply the continuation and further strengthening of the capacity-building, training and monitoring dimensions. On the other hand, the purely military dimension of the operation should, at least, be reconsidered and eventually terminated.

## Introduction

“C’est le Club Med ici.”<sup>1</sup> This was the answer given by a French soldier deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) under the aegis of EUFOR Althea when asked about his conditions of life on the ground. This statement seems to be in strong contrast with the fact that EUFOR Althea is regularly referred to as “the first major military operation”,<sup>2</sup> which to a certain degree evokes the presumption of a military operation at gunpoint.

This contrast is one of the *raisons d’être* of this brief appraisal of the EUFOR Althea operation. The leading question is whether and why EUFOR Althea can so far be considered as a success, both from the military and the strategic point of view. It is argued that, despite the fact that the operation is still on-going, with regard to its defined objectives it can be considered as a success since the security situation in BiH has remained stable. However, due to the conditions on the ground and the changing commitments of the participating states, a continued re-evaluation and adaptation seems necessary and overdue.

The importance of such an evaluation and possible adaptation of the EUFOR Althea operation is demonstrated by the fact that while the number of troops on the ground is continuously reduced and has reached a level that might no longer guarantee the full operability and appropriate continuation of the operation, prominent experts like Paddy Ashdown keep on reminding the international community that the current situation in Bosnia does not allow a complete withdrawal of its military presence and that such a step might result in a resurgence of fighting.<sup>3</sup> The fact that violent clashes between the different ethnic communities in this region are still possible has recently been illustrated by the July 2011 incident at the checkpoint in Jarinje, Kosovo.<sup>4</sup>

This paper briefly explores the background of the operation, analyses its developing structure and composition, takes a look at its changing mandate and tasks and, finally, puts forward three future scenarios.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in N. Ragaru, “The French Contingent of the MNTF SE in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, in N. Leonhard *et al.* (eds.), *Military Co-operation in Multinational Missions: The Case of EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Strausberg, Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2008, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> P.H. Matthiesen, “EUFOR follows SFOR – risk or chance for Europe?”, *South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs*, no. 4, 2004, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> P. Ashdown, “We must stop Bosnia becoming another Libya”, *The Times*, London, 12 April 2011.

<sup>4</sup> “EU deplors Kosovo attack on Serbia borders”, *EurActiv*, 27 July 2011.

## Key facts regarding the deployment of EUFOR Althea

EUFOR Althea was deployed to BiH on 2 December 2004.<sup>5</sup> It took over responsibilities from the 'Stabilisation Force' (SFOR), which, in 1996, had itself replaced the 'Implementation Force' (IFOR) that had been on the ground since 1995.<sup>6</sup>

In order to evaluate the progress and the success of the EUFOR operation it is important to understand under which circumstances it was originally deployed. The following gives a brief overview of the situation in BiH at the time of deployment before taking a closer look at the operation as such.

### *Political, societal and security situation in BiH at the time of deployment*

Nearly ten years after the signing of the 'Dayton Agreement' on 14 December 1995, the political situation in BiH was still difficult and challenging.<sup>7</sup> The federal structure with the 'Inter-Entity Boundary Line' (IEBL) that divides BiH into the 'Federation of Bosnia and Hervegovina' and the 'Republika Srpska' was (and is) still upheld.<sup>8</sup> Both entities disposed of strong and proper governmental, legislative and security systems, while at the same time contributing to a centralised government of BiH.<sup>9</sup>

However, at the end of 2004, the political and ethnic tensions and conflicts between the Croat, Serb and Muslim communities had already substantially decreased as compared to the immediate post-Dayton period.<sup>10</sup> The then EU Special Represen-

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<sup>5</sup> Council of the European Union, "Council Decision (2004/803/CFSP) of 25 November 2004 on the launching of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 353, Brussels, 27 November 2004, Art. 1; Council of the European Union, "Council Joint Action (2004/570/CFSP) of 12 July 2004 on the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 252, 28 July 2004.

<sup>6</sup> D. Keohane, "The European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Althea)", in G. Grevi, D. Helly & D. Keohane (eds.), *European Security and Defence Policy – The First 10 Years (1999-2009)*, Paris, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> *The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Agreement)*, initialled in Dayton on 21 November 1995 and signed in Paris on 14 December 1995.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*; J. Finci, "The Federal Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina", in C. Solioz & T.K. Vogel (eds.), *Dayton and Beyond: Perspectives on the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 2004, p. 62; Keohane, *op.cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>9</sup> "Former US ambassador calls for Bosnia's dissolution", *EurActiv*, 3 November 2010; T. Donais, *The Political Economy of Peacebuilding in Post-Dayton Bosnia*, London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 49 *et seq.*

<sup>10</sup> T. Bertin, "The EU Military Operation in Bosnia", in M. Merlingen & R. Ostrauskaite (eds.), *European Security and Defence Policy*, London, Routledge, 2008, p. 62.

tative (EUSR) and High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Paddy Ashdown, described the situation as follows:

Bosnia was reaching the end of the road from Dayton and was now at the beginning of the road to Brussels. Put another way, BiH was out of 'emergency surgery' following the end of its war, with a major emphasis on NATO's military stabilisation to create the conditions for civilian reconstruction. It was now in 'rehabilitation', with the main emphasis on civil institution building supported by a military and security reassurance. Nevertheless, a robust international military presence was still necessary to guarantee Bosnia's stability.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the political and security situation had already been widely stabilised in the foregone years.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the subliminal ethnic conflicts had not been conclusively solved and continued more or less overtly.<sup>13</sup> Since 2004 the situation was, therefore, rather "characterised by mutual obstructions to building a common future and a quasi-feudal allegiance to local corrupt leaders"<sup>14</sup> and thus constituted a hidden threat to the national security and stability. This was particularly true as the central authorities of BiH remained relatively weak and lacked the abilities and means to assure enduring stability.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Strategic objectives of EUFOR Althea*

According to Article 1 paragraph 1 of the Joint Action establishing EUFOR Althea, the strategic objective of the EU is to "contribute to a safe and secure environment in BiH".<sup>16</sup> This is in accordance with the second strategic objective of the European Security Strategy (ESS), which is to build security in the EU's neighbourhood.<sup>17</sup>

To put it into more concrete terms, after the stabilisation phase in the immediate post-Dayton period, the EU wanted to improve the security of its neighbourhood

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in D. Leakey, "ESDP and Civil/Military Cooperation: Bosnia and Herzegovina (2005)", in A. Deighton & V. Mauer (eds.), *Securing Europe? Implementing the European Security Strategy*, Zürich, Center for Security Studies, 2006, p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> Matthiesen, *op.cit.*, p. 108; Leakey, *op.cit.*, pp. 60 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> M. Overhaus, "Operation Althea and the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Implementing the Comprehensive Approach", in M. Asseburg & R. Kempin (eds.), *The EU as a Strategic Actor in the Realm of Security and Defence?*, Berlin, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2009, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> "EU wants to 'militarily disengage' from Bosnia", *EurActiv*, 27 April 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Overhaus, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council Joint Action on the EU military operation in BiH*, *op.cit.*, Art. 1 para. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World (European Security Strategy)*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 7.

through increased integration. Thus, EUFOR Althea was set up in order to support the comprehensive EU policy towards BiH. This comprehensive approach was transcribed into concrete short-term, medium-term and long-term strategic objectives, whose achievements were to be supported by EUFOR Althea.<sup>18</sup>

The main short-term strategic objectives were the “seamless transition from SFOR to EU Force (EUFOR) in order to help maintain a secure environment for the implementation of the GFAP” (General Framework Agreement for Peace)<sup>19</sup> and first negotiations on a possible ‘Stabilisation and Association Agreement’ (SAA).<sup>20</sup> The subsequent medium-term strategic objective was the signing of such a SAA. Finally, in the long-term, a “stable, viable, peaceful and multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, co-operating peacefully with its neighbours and irreversibly on track towards EU membership”<sup>21</sup> was envisaged.

Consequently, the major challenge on the ground was less the solution of direct, violent clashes between the ethnic groups, but rather the diminution of factors threatening the security and hindering the further stabilisation and integration of BiH. High ranking among these factors were *inter alia* the widespread possession of weapons, the countrywide contamination with remaining landmines and open questions concerning the fate of displaced people and refugees.<sup>22</sup> Combined with the (organised) crime and persistent subliminal ethnic tensions, these factors constituted a threat towards enduring stability and security in BiH. And despite the already largely stabilised security situation these challenges indeed called for and justified a military and not just a civilian engagement on behalf of the EU.

Interestingly, the regularly highlighted threat of organised crime should be regarded, at least, with caution in this context.<sup>23</sup> The 2004 crime rates only partly allowed the conclusion that BiH was predominantly threatened by organised crime as such.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 235.

<sup>19</sup> Council of the European Union, *Concept for the European Union (EU) Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)*, Council Doc. 12576/04, Brussels, 29 September 2004, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy: Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Comprehensive Policy*, Council Doc. 10099/04, Brussels, 15 June 2004, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Matthiesen, *op.cit.*, p. 107; S. Blockmans, *Tough Love – The European Union’s Relations with the Western Balkans*, The Hague, T.M.C. Asser Press, 2007, p. 231.

<sup>23</sup> F. Kupferschmidt, “Bosnien-Operation ‘Althea’ – EU-Mission mit starkem NATO-Bezug”, in W. Feichtinger & C. Gebhard (eds.), *EU als Krisenmanager*, Wien, Landesverteidigungsakademie (LVAK), 2006, p. 159; Keohane, *op.cit.*, p. 212.

Crime rates concerning theft, murders, robbery and burglary were lower than in many Member States of the EU and the crime-solving rate of the Bosnian police amounted to 60% (whereas within the EU a 50% rate is already considered as a success).<sup>24</sup> Still, the implications of the combination of these crime rates with the other threatening factors constituted a continuous source of instability.

EUFOR Althea was deployed as the EU's first large-scale military operation and largely profited from the fact that it could access NATO structures and, in particular, the (infra)structures on the ground consigned by SFOR. At the same time, it must be restated that at the time of its deployment the security situation on the ground was already stabilised when compared to the immediate post-Dayton period. Therefore, the operation's objective was not so much conflict resolution as it was long-term security and stabilisation, reflecting the ESS strategic objective to ensure stability and security in the EU neighbourhood and the ambition to bring BiH closer to the EU.

### **Changing mandate, tasks and actions**

The different circumstances under which IFOR, SFOR and EUFOR Althea have been deployed inevitably also led to differences with regard to their respective tasks. Due to the fact that the situation on the ground had improved by 2004, the EUFOR objectives became civil-military objectives, rather than purely military ones.<sup>25</sup> The mandate and, in particular, the tasks of EUFOR described in the following are important for the later evaluation of the operation and possible future scenarios.

#### *Mandate and tasks of EUFOR Althea*

The UN Security Council Resolution 1575 of 22 November 2004 mandated EUFOR to exclusively inherit the role of SFOR and therefore to ensure the implementation of

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<sup>24</sup> G. Knaus & K. Bender, "The Worst in Class: How the International Protectorate Hurts the European Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 1, Special Supplement (Inside the Bosnian Crisis: Documents and Analysis), 2007, pp. 26 *et seq.*

<sup>25</sup> Leakey, *op.cit.*, p. 63; Howorth, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

and compliance with Annex 1-A and 2 of the Dayton Agreement.<sup>26</sup> Thus, EUFOR took over SFOR's executive and robust UN-Chapter VII mandate.<sup>27</sup>

At the time of deployment, EUFOR's precise tasks were divided into four key-military and four key-supporting tasks. The-key military tasks comprised (i) the provision of a monitoring, deterring, and, if necessary, preventing "robust military presence"; (ii) the contribution to a 'Safe and Secure Environment' (SASE); the support of the 'Mission Implementation Plan' (MIP) of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the prevention of "efforts to reverse the peace implementation"; (iii) the carrying out of 'information operations' (INFO OPS); and (iv) the management of the "residual aspects of the GFAP including airspace management, advice on de-mining and ordinance disposal, and weapon collection programmes".<sup>28</sup>

The first of the four key-supporting tasks was (i) the support of the High Representative's MIP. In the context of the key-supporting tasks this comprised, in particular, the logistical and operational support with means and capabilities in the fight against organised crime. The second (ii) key-supporting task was assistance in the defence reform and to the security sector authorities. The third task was (iii) to support the 'International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia' (ICTY), that is, the tracing of 'Persons Indicted for War Crimes' (PIFWCs). Finally, EUFOR Althea was tasked (iv) to provide support to potential evacuations of officials of the international community.<sup>29</sup>

This demonstrates that EUFOR's initial key-military and key-supporting tasks were mainly presence, deterrence and support of the BiH authorities and the other international actors. Originally, proactive and autonomous engagements, for example in the fight against organised crime, were only restrictively foreseen.<sup>30</sup> And

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1575*, doc.no. S/RES/1575 (2004), New York, 22 November 2004, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Dayton Agreement, op.cit.*, Art. I para. 1 & 2.b; S. Recchia, *Beyond international trusteeship: EU peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Paris, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2007, p. 14; J. Mustonen, "Coordination and Cooperation on Tactical and Operational Levels", *CMC Finland Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2008, p. 21; Keohane, *op.cit.*, p. 213; F. Naert, "ESDP in Practice: Increasingly Varied and Ambitious EU Security and Defence Operations", in M. Trybus & N. D. White (eds.), *European Security Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 84; Bertin, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> Council of the European Union, *Concept for the EU Military Operation in BiH, op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Leakey, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

even these supporting tasks were regarded with scepticism, as different opinions existed concerning the military's abilities to provide support in these 'policing tasks'.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Development of the mandate and the tasks*

The post-2004 development of the political and security situation in BiH inevitably also had implications for the mandate and the tasks of EUFOR. This development can be divided in three phases.

The first phase lasted from December 2004 to the beginning of 2007. The initial mandate and tasks generally persisted throughout this period. However, particularly at the beginning, the fight against organised crime attracted distinct efforts of EUFOR and, therefore, developed more and more towards its 'fundamental task'.<sup>32</sup> This development was stopped by the Council's 'Common Operational Guidelines for EUPM-EUFOR support to the fight against organised crime'. Therein, EUFOR's tasks were clearly confined to supportive functions in the fight against organised crime. Furthermore, this support was made dependent on the 'endorsement' of the European Union Police Mission (EUPM).<sup>33</sup> Besides, the security situation in BiH proved stable within this period so that EUFOR's task of a deterring presence slowly developed into a reassuring presence.<sup>34</sup>

Towards the end of this first phase the BiH authorities furthermore established a proper, multi-ethnic and central professional army and a central police force.<sup>35</sup> Even though these forces inevitably exhibited shortcomings, these steps advanced the BiH authorities' abilities to autonomously ensure security and stability and to fight against organised crime. This development went along with an increased confidence within

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<sup>31</sup> B.O. Knutsen, *The EU and the challenges of Civil-Military Coordination at the strategic level*, Kjeller, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 2008, FFI-rapport 2008/01463, p. 42.

<sup>32</sup> Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> Council of the European Union, *Common Operational Guidelines for EUPM-EUFOR support to the fight against organised crime*, Council Doc. 10769/06, Brussels, 21 June 2006, pp. 2 *et seq*; Office of the High Representative, *30th Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations: 1 February – 30 June 2006*, Sarajevo, 15 July 2006, para. 76.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 77; Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*; M. Budin, *Report on Public opinion and the Althea mission one year on*, Paris, The Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly of Western European Union, 20 June 2006, doc.no. A/1936, p. 13; Blockmans, *op.cit.*, p. 231; Knaus *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p. 25; Bertin, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

the Bosnian population with regard to its security and the state's stability, even in consideration of a potential downsizing of EUFOR's presence.<sup>36</sup>

The second phase extended from 2007 to early 2010. The demarcating event compared to the first phase was the Political and Security Committee approval of the revised Operation Plan on 27 February 2007, which entailed a tremendous reduction of forces and therefore inevitably also affected the remaining forces' abilities.<sup>37</sup> Yet, the key-military tasks, in particular the task of contributing to the SASE and supporting the OHR, as well as key-supporting tasks like the support to the ICTY, were upheld.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the downsizing decision did not affect the robust character of the mandate.<sup>39</sup> The implications of the decrease of the force level were therefore not so much reflected in the formulation of the tasks, as they were in the range of actions and activities undertaken on the ground.

The ambiguity of a downsizing of forces and the perpetuation of a robust military presence can be explained by the fact that notwithstanding the BiH authorities' efforts to establish central military and policing forces, these forces sometimes remained weak and were confronted with persisting political tensions.<sup>40</sup> The absence of serious threats to the security situation allowed the downsizing of EUFOR, but the political tensions at the same time required the continuance of the robust presence in order to be able to intervene in case the situation deteriorated.<sup>41</sup> The Council emphasised that it perpetuated "the capacity to reverse the effects of the force reduction for an initial period of 6 months and to re-establish a more robust military presence if needed."<sup>42</sup> This political instability persisted throughout the whole second phase and beyond.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> Council of the European Union, *Press Release - 2789th Council meeting - General Affairs and External Relations*, Council Doc. 6756/07 (Presse 39), Brussels, 5 March 2007, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU confirms decision on transition*, Council Doc. 6896/07 (Presse 43), Brussels, 28 February 2007, pp. 2 *et seqq.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1 *et seqq.*

<sup>40</sup> Overhaus, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Bertin, *op.cit.*, p. 62; E. Keymer, K. Shardlow & A. von Rosenbach, "Neighbourly intentions - The military capabilities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia are analysed by Jane's Armed Forces team", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 47, no. 11, 2010, p. 28.

<sup>42</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council Doc. 6896/07, op.cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> "Diplomat: Serbs and Kosovars must live with their differences", *EurActiv*, 16 April 2010; "EUFOR wird weiterhin gebraucht", *Bundeswehr*, 14 May 2010.

The third phase spans from early 2010 until now. It started with the Council decision of 25 January 2010 that established “non-executive capacity-building and training support”<sup>44</sup> for the BiH authorities. Some experts and nations had previously claimed EUFOR’s accomplishment of the military tasks and demanded a withdrawal of the executive mandate.<sup>45</sup> Yet, this new, non-executive security sector reform dimension of EUFOR was added to the persisting executive key-military tasks and constituted the most important shift in the operation’s tasks since its deployment.<sup>46</sup>

### *Intermediary results*

This section showed that EUFOR has had a robust executive mandate throughout its deployment. While this was also true for its predecessor, SFOR, differences between SFOR’s military mandate and EUFOR’s civil-military mandate became apparent from the very first moment of deployment. These differences were particularly obvious in the third phase with the non-executive dimension that introduced EUFOR’s new capacity-building and training tasks.<sup>47</sup>

Concerning the evaluation of EUFOR Althea, it can therefore be stated that, with regard to its tasks, the operation is developing more and more towards a reassuring, mentoring and training mission and the military dimension in the sense of a robust presence is steadily falling behind. This new dimension that aims at enhancing the local ownership and autonomy of the BiH authorities might well be the next step towards a major restructuring or even the first step towards the conclusion of the operation. This expectation is further affirmed by the development of the force level, illustrated in the next section.

## **Size, structure and composition of EUFOR Althea**

The size and composition of EUFOR Althea have been subject to far-reaching developments throughout its deployment. The following analyses the development of the force level and the composition of EUFOR.

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<sup>44</sup> Council of the European Union, *Press Release - 2992nd Council meeting - Foreign Affairs*, Council Doc. 5686/10 (Presse 10), Brussels, 25 January 2010, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> G. Gya, J. Herz & F. Mauri, “ESDP and EU mission updates - July 2009”, *ISIS European Security Review*, no. 45, 2009, p. 15; K. Soder, *Multilateral Peace Operations: Europe, 2009*, Solna, SIPRI Fact Sheet, July 2010, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with an official, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mons, 29 April 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Leakey, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

When EUFOR Althea was deployed to BiH the force level of about 6,500 to 7,000 troops equated that of its predecessor SFOR.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, 80% of the initial EU forces had already been deployed under SFOR and just needed to change their badges.<sup>49</sup> The force consisted of troops from 22 Member States and 11 third countries.<sup>50</sup> In total, 32 of the 35 nations that had previously contributed to SFOR continued their troops' commitment under EUFOR.<sup>51</sup> This troop level was, however, not maintained. Instead, the number of troops began to decrease shortly after deployment.<sup>52</sup>

The first important and constitutive event for the development of the force level was the 2007 decision to downsize EUFOR. This decision promptly decreased the already reduced force level of 5,500 to 2,500.<sup>53</sup>

The 2010 Council decision that adapted the mandate of the operation did not have large implications for the force level. By contrast, the number of troops remained constant during that period.<sup>54</sup>

This can, to a certain degree, be explained by the fact that the force level had already reached a critical level of 2,000 troops and the political decision to further decrease it could have sent the wrong signal to the Bosnian population, the soldiers and the international community.<sup>55</sup> Even though the decision did not include a further official reduction of forces, the contributing nations continued to vote 'with their feet' and withdrew another 500 troops.<sup>56</sup> The latest major withdrawal occurred in February and March 2011 when the German contingent was reduced to a

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<sup>48</sup> Keohane, *op.cit.*, pp. 214 *et seq.*

<sup>49</sup> Bertin, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>50</sup> Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA - [First] Quarterly Report to the United Nations*, Council Doc. 6713/2/05 REV 2, Brussels, 7 March 2005, p. 2. The list of the contributing nations can be found in n. 1 of the same report.

<sup>51</sup> K. Soder, "EU military crisis management: an assessment of member states' contributions and positions", May 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Council of the European Union, *Quarterly Report to the UN of 7 March 2005*, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA - [Ninth] Quarterly Report to the United Nations*, Council Doc. 7596/07, Brussels, 20 March 2007, pp. 3 *et seq.*

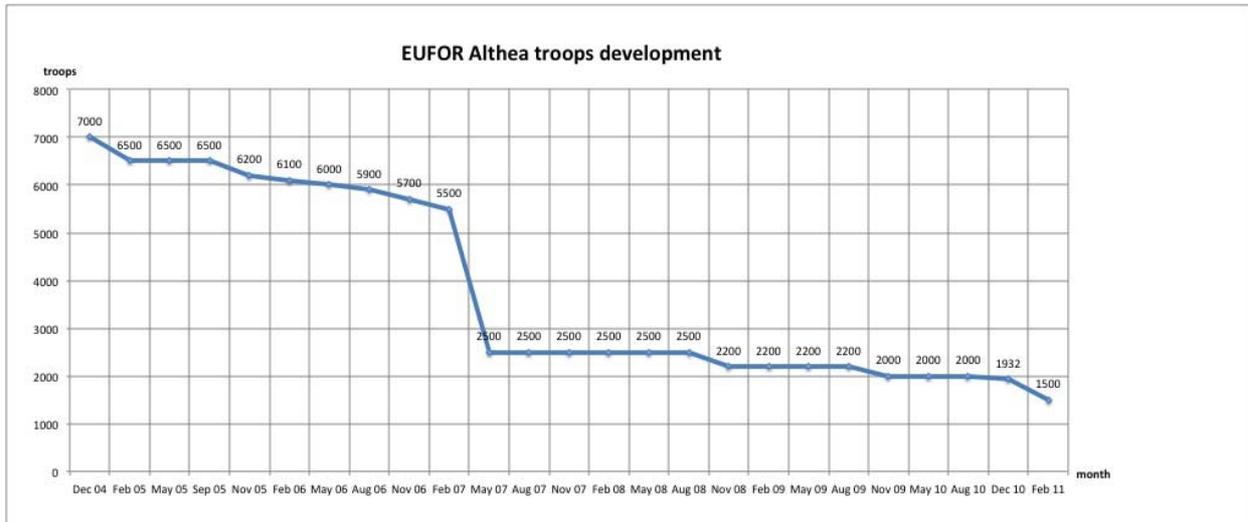
<sup>54</sup> Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA - [Twenty-first] Quarterly Report to the United Nations*, Council Doc. 7494/2/10 REV 2, 24 March 2010, p. 4; Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA - [Twentieth] Quarterly Report to the United Nations*, Council Doc. 17391/09, 9 December 2009, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> S. Bloching & G. Gya, "CSDP and EU mission updates - July 2010", *ISIS European Security Review*, no. 50, 2010, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> Overhaus, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

remaining maximum of 15 personnel.<sup>57</sup> The current force level amounts to only 1,500 troops from 21 Member States and five third countries.<sup>58</sup> Graph 1 illustrates the hitherto force level development and allows to assume the continuance of this downward drift.<sup>59</sup>

Graph 1:



### Structure of EUFOR Althea

The tremendous reduction of the force level inevitably also affected the composition, structure and distribution of the EU forces throughout BiH. Without going into detail in the context of this paper, the following briefly illustrates the most important changes with regard to the evaluation of the operation.<sup>60</sup>

The force components of the EUFOR structure were initially the three 'Multinational Task Forces' (MNTFs) of 1,600 to 1,800 troops each, which had defined geographical areas of responsibility. With the 2007 downsizing decision these MNTFs have been replaced by the 'Multinational Manoeuvre Battalion' (MNBN).<sup>61</sup> At the time of writing,

<sup>57</sup> K. Breiden, "German Withdrawal", *EUFOR forum*, no. 64, March 2011, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA - [Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth] Quarterly Report to the United Nations*, Council Doc. 7716/11, Brussels, 14 March 2011, p. 4. Currently contributing countries are: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Albania, Chile, The FYROM, Switzerland and Turkey ("EUFOR Fact Sheet - Countries of EUFOR", *EUFOR Althea*, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> J. Knauer, *EUFOR Althea - An Analyses and Evaluation of the EU's Former Flagship Operation and its Future Prospects*, Bruges, College of Europe, Master's thesis, 2011, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> For a detailed description and analysis of this process, *ibid.*, pp. 18 *et seqq.*

<sup>61</sup> Kupferschmidt, *op.cit.*, pp. 179 *et seq.*; Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

the MNBN consists of "three Motorized Companies from Austria, Hungary and Turkey and one Reconnaissance Platoon from Austria"<sup>62</sup>, which in total comprise about 380 personnel.<sup>63</sup>

The second EUFOR component, the 'Integrated Police Unit' (IPU), has been assembled by a "Gendarmerie type of military police force" and initially comprised around 500 armed forces (today approximately 100 personnel).<sup>64</sup> Their tasks range from the general maintenance of the SASE to more precise tasks like civil crowd and riot control, policing investigations and assistance in the fight against organised crime, border protection and weapon-collections.<sup>65</sup>

The third, rather civilian and, more importantly, local element of EUFOR have been the so-called 'Liaison and Observation Teams' (LOTs).<sup>66</sup> The 44 deployed LOTs were initially composed of teams of five to eight members and the originality of these teams was that they were allocated throughout BiH and were living amongst the population.<sup>67</sup> Today, 29 LOTs with a composition of two to ten members have persisted.<sup>68</sup> Their tasks comprise, in particular, information gathering, the demonstration of presence and the coordination of EUFOR's operations in the field.<sup>69</sup> They were quickly considered as the 'early warning system' and the "eyes and ears of EUFOR Althea on the ground".<sup>70</sup> The LOTs conduct their tasks under the umbrella of four 'Regional Coordination Centres' (RCCs) that guarantee the regional EUFOR representation.

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<sup>62</sup> "Multinational Maneuver Battalion (MNBN)", *EUFOR Althea*, 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with an official, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mons, 3 May 2011.

<sup>64</sup> "Integrated Police Unit (IPU)", *EUFOR Althea*, 2011; Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 22; Knauer, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>65</sup> Council of the European Union, *Quarterly Report to the UN of 7 March 2005*, *op.cit.*, p. 5; Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 22; Overhaus, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>66</sup> Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 18 and n. 84 on p. 23

<sup>67</sup> Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative for BiH, *Report to the European Parliament: February 2006 - June 2006*, Sarajevo, 11 September 2006; N. Ragaru, "Perception of EU Military Co-operation: Present and Future", in N. Leonhard *et al.* (eds.), *Military Co-operation in Multinational Missions: The Case of EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Strausberg, Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2008, p. 230; M.C. Santero, "The European Union's Military Contribution to the Stabilization and Integration Process of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Family of European Nations", in N. Leonhard *et al.* (eds.), *Military Co-operation in Multinational Missions: The Case of EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Strausberg, Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2008, p. 19.

<sup>68</sup> Knauer, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>69</sup> Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 25; "EUFOR (Bosnien-Herzegowina)", *Schweizer Armee*, 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Mustonen, *op.cit.*, p. 18; "EUFOR (Bosnien-Herzegowina)", *Schweizer Armee*, *op.cit.*

This tripartite structure has been further enhanced by the 2010 Council decision in the sense that a new fourth component has been officially introduced, that is, the non-executive training and capacity-building element represented by the 'Mobile Training Teams' (MTTs). Their task is to "improve the capabilities of the Bosnian armed forces".<sup>71</sup> With a capacity of approximately 200 military personnel from eleven contributing nations the MTTs currently implement 30 different so-called 'Force Elements' (Areas of Training) throughout the country.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, since the beginning of its operation EUFOR has been able to request support by the so-called 'over the horizon' forces. These forces comprise the KFOR troops deployed by NATO to Kosovo and up to four national battalions (from Italy, Germany, France and the United Kingdom).<sup>73</sup> As demonstrated in operational exercises these forces can, in the case of emergency, be quickly deployed in order to back up EUFOR.<sup>74</sup>

#### *Intermediary results*

It can be concluded that EUFOR demonstrated continuity when it took over the responsibility from SFOR by the perpetuation of the force level and the structure with several MNTFs, respectively the MNBN.<sup>75</sup>

However, with the development of the situation on the ground and EUFOR's downsizing, the structure and tasks underwent inevitable adaptations in order to maintain EUFOR's robust capacities and effectiveness even with a diminished force level. Three MNTFs with proper headquarters would, for example, not have been sustainable with a reduced force level of about 2,500 troops or less.

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<sup>71</sup> Council of the European Union, "Statement by General McColl, Commander of Operation", 5 October 2010.

<sup>72</sup> V. Inzko, "Thirty-sixth report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1 May – 31 October 2009", in United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 12 November 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council*, New York, 19 November 2009, doc.no. S/2009/588, p. 20; A. Mullins, "Official Recognition of Mobile Training Teams in Travnik and Tuzla", *EUFOR forum*, no. 60, November 2010, p. 4; Interview with an official, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mons, 29 April 2011.

<sup>73</sup> "EUFOR at a Glance", *IMPETUS - Bulletin of the EU Military Staff*, no. 6, 2008, p. 21; J. McColl, "EUFOR Althea - Successful Contribution to Stabilisation", *IMPETUS - Bulletin of the EU Military Staff*, no. 7, 2009, p. 23. The support by KFOR is reciprocal so that the MNBN could also be requested to support the KFOR troops in their operation, cf. "Multinational Maneuver Battalion (MNBN)", *EUFOR Althea*, 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Council of the European Union, *Operation ALTHEA - [Second] Quarterly Report to the United Nations*, Council Doc. 9684/05, Brussels, 6 June 2005, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Knauer, *op.cit.*, pp. 18 *et seqq.*

It is problematic that the force level seems to have fallen below the critical amount necessary to guarantee robust intervention capacities in case of re-emerging large scale security threats or conflicts.<sup>76</sup> This conclusion is particularly important for the future prospects of EUFOR Althea.

With regard to its tasks it can first and foremost be stated that all of the eight key-military and key-supporting tasks of EUFOR Althea have been transposed into concrete actions.<sup>77</sup> The range of actions undertaken at the time of deployment was, of course, not upheld throughout the operation (e.g. EUFOR's arms collection efforts), as some tasks have been fulfilled or handed over to the BiH authorities (e.g. in the framework of the Joint Military Affairs or weapon collection programmes).<sup>78</sup> At the same time, EUFOR commenced new activities with the evolution of the operation (e.g. the MTT activities).

EUFOR's most important activities have included the support of the ICTY in the search of PIFWCs; the assistance in the fight against organised crime and the exercise of the Joint Military Affairs (JMA); the training with and of the AFBiH; and the presence and situational awareness of the LOTs throughout the country.<sup>79</sup>

From a military and operational point of view the operation and its achievements can generally be considered as a success. The enhanced capacities of the BiH authorities and the stable security situation on the ground allowed EUFOR to cease some of its activities.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, shortcomings like the long-lasting failure to arrest prominent PIFWCs have been counterbalanced by the overall achievements and, in particular, by the maintenance of the SASE.

However, it must at the same time be stated that the tasks and activities have been and are further developing towards assistance and training with continued situational awareness activities. This trend that has been observed with regard to EUFOR's composition and tasks can also be affirmed in terms of its concrete actions

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<sup>76</sup> Overhaus, *op.cit.*, p. 21; S. Bloching, *Parliamentary Update (SEDE Subcommittee) 3 June 2010*, Brussels, ISIS Europe, 2010, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the actions undertaken by EUFOR Althea, *cf.* Knauer, *op.cit.*, pp. 39 *et seqq.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

and activities.<sup>81</sup> The operation is slowly evolving towards a *de facto* assistance and training operation and leaving behind its robust combat dimension.

EUFOR's continued evolution as illustrated in the foregone sections inevitably entails certain challenges. First, the considerable and continued decrease of the force level, with the latest withdrawals of large parts of the Italian, Spanish, Polish and German contingents has led to a situation in which a non-EU country (Turkey) is now the biggest troop contributor.<sup>82</sup> The predicted trend regarding the future development of the force level is a cause for concern. A force level below the current level would necessitate further adaptations of the operation.

Second, the hitherto general tripartite structure of EUFOR has, to a certain degree, been extended to include a fourth element, that is, the capacity-building MTTs. Even though this development represents an important qualitative step towards an increased training and 'Security Sector Reform' focus of the overall operation, at the same time it questions the necessity of EUFOR's military dimension.

Third, the enhanced training efforts increase the necessity of a strengthened cooperation with the other actors on the ground in order to compensate EUFOR's decreased force level.

Fourth, a continued withdrawal of troops combined with shortcomings in the MNBN soldiers' preparatory training as regards the *civil*-military dimension of the operation might decrease the morale of these forces.<sup>83</sup> However, the strengthened training dimension might, at the same time, increase the motivation and morale of the IPU and the LOTs. Combined with the fact that the security situation on the ground remains stable (in spite of the political instability that reached a new peak with the elections of 3 October 2010 and the subsequent incapacity of the BiH politicians to form a central government), this should foster new considerations concerning the cessation of the executive mandate and a potential dissolution of the MNBN.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>82</sup> N. Gros-Verheyde, "Pas de Turc à la tête d'EUFOR Althea", *Bruxelles2*, 3 June 2010.

<sup>83</sup> Knauer, *op.cit.*, pp. 35 *et seq.*

<sup>84</sup> Council of the European Union, *Quarterly Report to the UN of 14 March 2011, op.cit.*, p. 2; "Formation of BiH Government Should be Priority, not Attacking State Institutions", *European Union Special Representative in BiH*, 29 April 2011.

## Lessons learned and future prospects

Despite the fact that the findings allow to classify the operation as a success, they also raise questions regarding the lessons learned and future prospects. As the operation is still on-going, the following mainly focuses on the future prospects. In this regard, three different scenarios seem possible: (i) the continuation of the operation with the current structures; (ii) the termination of the whole operation; and (iii) an adaptation of the operation's mandate and structures.

### *Lessons learned*

Certain lessons learned can already be drawn at this stage of the operation. The main interest revolves around whether or not EUFOR Althea has been able to ensure security in BiH. The foregone analysis leads to the conclusion that EUFOR's success has been mainly based on two important pillars.

The first pillar has been the demonstration of a deterring presence combined with the strengthening of the local ownership. This comprised on the one hand the field presence of EUFOR and regular military training exercises and, on the other hand, the handing over of the JMA tasks and the recently deployed MTTs.

The second pillar has been the retrenchment of factors destabilising the established security level. This was in particular reached through arms collections, the detention of PIFWCs and the support in the fight against organised crime. Due to the achievements in the first pillar it was in the meantime possible to hand some of the activities of the second pillar over to the BiH authorities, which in return further strengthened the first pillar.

This directly leads to the second dimension of the lessons learned, that is, why the operation has reached a stage at which a decisive adaptation of its structure and tasks is on-going and should perhaps be further advanced. In order to establish a situation in which long-term security is assured, BiH authorities and in particular the AFBiH must be granted the largest local ownership possible. In this regard the handing over of responsibilities is going in the right direction but does not suffice. It seems necessary to progressively draw back the paternalistic relation between EUFOR and the AFBiH, in order to put the established and strengthened local structures on their own feet and let them gain the necessary experience of what it

means to be autonomous and independent. Otherwise, the achievement so far might implode if abruptly confronted with the entire withdrawal of EUFOR Althea.

Therefore, the general lessons that can be drawn from this operation are: robust presence and deterrence only as much as necessarily required; and training in the form of monitoring, mentoring and advising as much as possible (JMA as a good example) combined with the elimination of destabilising factors. However, with regard to the transposition of these lessons learned to other military operations, it is important to restate that EUFOR Althea was not deployed to a crisis situation or an immediate post-crisis situation, but has been an operation ensuring an already established, stable post-crisis security. Therefore, these lessons learned are not necessarily suitable for other kinds of conflicts and international engagements.

#### *Scenario I – unmodified continuation of the operation*

In the first scenario the operation continues with the mandate, objectives and structures as described above. This would guarantee the continued monitoring and training of the BiH authorities and in particular the AFBiH. Furthermore, deterrence and the theoretical possibility of robust reactions on re-emerging conflicts would be upheld.

However, this scenario would also entail the continued paternalism of the BiH security sector. Furthermore, the uncertainty as regards the development of the participating nations' willingness for continued commitments and in particular the force level would constitute a looming risk. An incapable military presence could destroy the soldiers' morale, could turn out to be disastrous for all parties in case of erupting conflicts and would not be in the interest of anybody (except perhaps local actors that economically benefit from EUFOR's presence).

#### *Scenario II – termination of the whole operation*

In the second scenario the whole operation terminates as such and all EUFOR components would be withdrawn. The main benefit of this solution would be the short-term cost-savings for the EU and the contributing nations.

The negative implications would, however, outweigh these gains. First of all, this step would also terminate the training activities and it is doubtful that the BiH authorities and the AFBiH are already sufficiently skilled to take care of the national security

completely independently from EUFOR. At this stage, such a step could endanger the achievements of the BiH capacity building.

Furthermore, the deterrent effect of the international presence would cease to exist, and even if the possibility of an 'over-the-horizon' intervention was upheld, it would be questionable whether such an intervention could be successful without access to coordinating military structures on the ground. At the same time, with the official termination of EUFOR Althea an eventual redeployment of another EU operation would necessitate a new political agreement and would most likely entail high diplomatic and financial costs. Besides, without the field presence, and in particular the 'situation awareness matrix' of the LOTs, the EU might lack the capabilities to ensure that it would perceive a possible deterioration of the security situation early enough to intervene and prevent resulting conflicts. This can be stated even in spite of the continued EUSR and the EUPM presence on the ground as the LOTs currently provide the EU with first-hand information regarding in the population.

Lastly, such a step would most likely entail a further reduction in the political importance which the international community places on BiH development, leading to a decrease in the pressure for continued security sector reforms as well as an amplification of political and societal tensions.

### *Scenario III – adaptation of the operation*

In the third scenario the operation is adapted, that is, the mandate, objectives and structures would be readjusted according to the situation and necessities on the ground. With regard to the current tendencies, such an adaptation could entail the dissolution of the MNBN and the ultimate focus on the IPU, LOTs and MTTs. Moreover, the possibility of short notice interventions by the 'over the horizon' forces could be perpetuated, but would necessitate the continuation of the general C3 structure under the 'Berlin Plus' arrangements.

This scenario would entail cost-savings as the force level could be further reduced. At the same time, a continued presence, training and situational awareness would be guaranteed. As a negative point, the deterring dimension of EUFOR would be decreased. Therefore, this scenario requires a stable SASE and the crossing of a certain threshold of the local authorities' competences. The fact that the dissolution of the MNBN would entail the cessation of common military training exercises

between EUFOR and the AFBiH could, at least to a certain degree, be counterbalanced by common training exercises with the 'over the horizon' forces.

### *Intermediary results*

Even though the EU had stressed already in 2010 the "decisive progress made by Operation Althea towards accomplishing its mandate and in particular the completion of the military and stabilisation tasks provided for by the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement",<sup>85</sup> the military end-state as defined by the concept of EUFOR Althea has not yet been fully reached.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the termination of the operation as illustrated in scenario II does not seem feasible.

However, this situation does not prohibit an adaptation of the operation. By contrast, a restructuring of EUFOR Althea could well constitute a step towards further efforts to achieve the military end-state. The operation's exit strategy states that "it will be important to avoid the creation of a culture of dependence upon EUFOR".<sup>87</sup> In this regard, scenario one might, in the long run, lead to such a dependency. Therefore, bearing in mind the current structure of the operation, the latest tendencies of its further development and the situation on the ground, scenario III appears to be the most reasonable one.

In 2009, 25% of BiH's population feared that a new war might break out should EUFOR be withdrawn, whereas about 64% felt confident with the stability of the security situation, even in case of a complete EUFOR withdrawal.<sup>88</sup> Scenario three would meet the remaining concerns that warn that a complete withdrawal would be precarious at the current and continued stage of political instability.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, the third scenario would fit well into the current restructuring of the position of the EUSR with a new double-hatting comprising the EUSR and the Head of the EU Delegation to BiH, as this position could turn into the linchpin of coordination between the training activities of the different EU actors.<sup>90</sup> Finally, this solution would

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<sup>85</sup> Council of the European Union, "Council conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina", *3076th Foreign Affairs Council meeting*, Brussels, 21 March 2011, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> Council of the European Union, *Concept for the EU Military Operation in BiH*, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> A. Sirčo, *Early Warning System 2009*, Sarajevo, United Nations Development Programme, 2010, p. 105.

<sup>89</sup> Ashdown, "We must stop Bosnia becoming another Libya", *op.cit.*

<sup>90</sup> "Statement by the EUSR for Bosnia and Herzegovina - Part 1", *Council of the European Union*, 5 April 2011.

send a strong signal to BiH that the EU believes in its operation and that it actively supports the further development of BiH security, whilst at the same time remains ready to intervene with its 'over the horizon' forces if the security situation deteriorates.

However, scenario three would require a stable SASE and also a common agreement in Brussels. Whether such an agreement is feasible within the next month seems questionable. Some countries, first and foremost the UK and Slovakia, still seem to insist on the continued robust presence on the ground.<sup>91</sup>

## Conclusions

Based on these findings, a last question remains to be answered. To what extent can EUFOR Althea actually be considered as a 'Club Med' for the deployed soldiers? The MNBN forces might, to a certain degree, perceive the operation as some kind of 'Club Med Plus', the 'Plus' standing for the fact that it is, if at all, a 'Club Med' with a particular characteristic: the regular combat exercises and the uncertainty whether the relatively calm situation can be trusted or whether, and if so when, the atmosphere might change.

For the other EUFOR components the situation is, however, different, as their workload remains constant or is even rising. In the end it must be stated that it is to a certain degree due to the effective fulfilment of EUFOR's tasks that the security is assured and that no necessity for a MNBN intervention arises. From this point of view, the classification of EUFOR Althea as 'Club Med' can even be interpreted as an expression of the success of the whole operation.

Nevertheless, it is also an expression of the fact that the structure of the operation might be out-dated and should be adapted. As demonstrated in the lessons learned and the future prospects, several scenarios and good reasons for such an adaptation do exist. Three scenarios have been presented in this context. However, only the third scenario seemed able and appropriate to meet the requirements on the ground. Yet, for the moment it remains questionable whether the political decision-makers in Brussels would be able to agree on such a scenario.

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with an official, Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union, Brussels, 29 March 2011; N. Gros-Verheyde, "Echec de la présidence suédoise sur Althea Bosnie (maj)", *Bruxelles2*, 8 December 2009.

In a famous speech during the Second World War, the then UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said "this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."<sup>92</sup> With regard to the latest developments in BiH, this quote seems suitable to describe the complex situation of the EUFOR Althea operation. We do not know with full certainty how the situation in BiH will develop. But to come back to Ashdown's initial warnings, an overly hasty and complete withdrawal might lead to the re-emergence of instability and threats to the security situation. Notwithstanding the favoured future scenario in this paper, the current situations in BiH and Brussels seem to allow the conclusion that this is not yet the end of military EU presence in BiH. And yet, the current situation on the ground and the latest developments might well constitute the beginning of the end of the EU's military engagement in BiH. In any case, the operation's evolving focus on increased capacity-building and training tasks and the decreased focus on pure deterrence allow the conclusion that EUFOR Althea has definitely completed the first phase of its operation and, therefore, reached the end of the beginning of its military presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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<sup>92</sup> W. Churchill (10 November 1942), cited in "The End of the Beginning", *The Churchill Centre and Museum at the Churchill War Rooms*, 2011.

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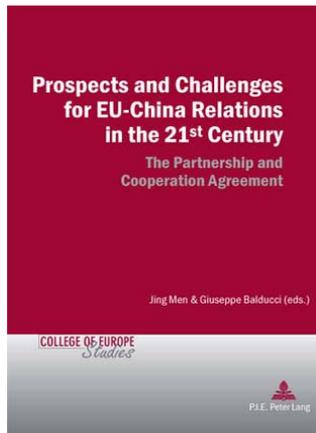
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