



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 8 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

France, in its capacity as the President of the Security Council for the month of June, organized on 5 June 2020 a biannual briefing under the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa”, with an aim to discuss the Secretary-General’s report contained in document [S/2020/373](#) and the further operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

As has been an established practice, the representative of the European Union participates in the aforementioned meeting as a briefer.

On behalf of the four European Union member States of the Security Council, Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany, I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Council.

*(Signed)* **Sven Jürgenson**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 8 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

**Briefing on behalf of the European Union by Olof Skoog, Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, for the Security Council open videoconference on peace and security in Africa, 5 June 2020**

The European Union welcomes the discussion by the Security Council on the situation in the Sahel at a particularly decisive moment for the region, which is further aggravated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

In support of this very timely debate, the European Union wishes to draw the attention of the members of the Security Council to the following points.

**I. Renewed European Union engagement for the security and stability of the Sahel region, alongside the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), based on the most urgent and reaffirmed priorities**

In addition to the elements contained in the Secretary-General's report, the European Union wishes to underline the importance of the close partnership between the European Union and the G5 Sahel countries, its support to the Sahel, a region of strategic priority for the European Union, and an integrated approach that encompasses all our external action instruments. This commitment is all the more crucial in the context of a deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, which is further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This partnership was recently renewed at the 28 April high-level meeting between the European Union and the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel countries, with the participation of the United Nations and the African Union, and in the joint declaration adopted on that occasion. The meeting and the declaration called for a new collective impetus, based in particular on the following points:

- The primary responsibility of the G5 Sahel countries, notably in terms of security and governance
- Their commitment to reinvest as a matter of priority in the areas identified as the most vulnerable, in particular on the basis of the Integrated Framework for Priority Action, adopted by the Heads of State at the G5 Sahel Summit on 25 February
- The need to integrate the fight against COVID-19 and its socioeconomic impact in our common approach to stability
- The recognition of the European Union's support actions to the Sahel, based on an integrated approach
- The effective joint creation of the Coalition for the Sahel and of the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel, for which the European Union will have a special responsibility

To support these advances and their implementation, the European Union has announced additional support measures amounting to €194 million in the areas of security, justice and development, which will complement the ongoing support provided to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The European Union has also reinforced the mandate of the military mission EUTM Mali to better respond to needs on the ground.

In addition to this package, the European Union has adopted an action plan to fight COVID-19 that provides for specific support measures, in a total amount of €449 million for the five Sahel countries.

In order to be effective, this renewed and intensified European Union engagement must be part of a wider mobilization. The implementation of the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel and the Coalition for the Sahel requires a stronger commitment from the entire international community, in particular from the partners that are already mobilized in the Sahel.

The causes and dynamic of the Sahel crisis are manifold and the challenges are not limited to security. Addressing the challenges of development and social cohesion requires a political response. The implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is, more than ever, a condition for the stability of Mali and of the region as a whole. The deployment in the north of Mali of the “reconstituted army”, for which the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) played a decisive role, is an important but still fragile and partial step. The return of the army must be accompanied by the return of State authority and basic services in the most vulnerable areas, in particular through further decentralization. As a guarantor of the Algiers Agreement, the European Union is and will remain fully engaged with all stakeholders, including through the Comité de suivi de l’Accord, for the full implementation of the Agreement.

The importance of MINUSMA support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force must be stressed, as stated in the Secretary-General’s report. This support is essential for the full operationalization of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Under the tripartite agreement between the European Union, the United Nations and the G5 Sahel, MINUSMA should continue and strengthen its support to the Joint Force and extend it to all its battalions, including those deployed outside Mali. Such support is essential for the full operationalization of these battalions. A smooth flow of goods and services to the Force’s battalions is one of the key points for their effective deployment and, in the long term, for their autonomy. The European Union also reiterates its commitment to continue working closely with the United Nations and MINUSMA.

The new measures covered by the €194 million announced by the European Union on 28 April include:

- Territorial coverage and security of the defence and security forces, starting with the most affected regions
- Strengthening the capacity of the internal security forces and border control forces in strategic areas
- The fight against impunity for terrorism and human rights violations (criminal justice system)
- Support to local reconciliation and cohesion in vulnerable areas
- Support to activities to bring defence and security forces closer to people (spaces for dialogue, civil/military action, etc.)
- Reinforcement of special investigative units
- Improving living conditions and resilience of the most vulnerable populations
- Improving access to livelihoods and food security

The main objective is to support the return/maintenance of the State and its services throughout the entirety of the countries, including in the most vulnerable areas, and under the security-development continuum.

Our Common Security and Defence Policy missions EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger (almost 900 experts deployed) are in line with the most urgent priorities identified in advance in consultation with the G5 Sahel authorities and under the two pillars of the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel and pillar 4 of the Coalition for the Sahel, presented in detail below.

- *Pillar 2: “Strengthening security and defence capabilities”*

- Direct support to the national defence and security forces and to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, in terms of training capacity, deployment, employment
- Management and increase of staff
- Coordination of all training and equipment offers to the national armed forces and the G5 Sahel Joint Force

- *Pillar 3: “Support for the return of the State’s authority”, which focuses on the strengthening and redeployment of government services, in particular police, gendarmerie and customs personnel, and by strengthening the criminal justice system in the G5 Sahel countries*

- Territorial coverage and presence of the security forces throughout the territory to challenge the armed groups in the areas in which they operate and/or have established themselves, allowing for the return of the State’s authority (infrastructure, effective operational deployment of security forces, etc.), including the strengthening of State security actors at the local level (local or community policing)
- Intelligence in order to prevent or react to attacks: structuring the intelligence chain and operational intelligence, management, operation (particularly in terms of cooperation between intelligence services) and data centralization
- Justice and the criminal justice system in order to ensure proper criminal follow-up in the areas of operation and to restore trust between security actors and civilian populations. Beyond the judicial dimension of the fight against terrorism, the fight against trafficking (drugs, weapons, raw materials, smuggling networks, trafficking, etc.), corruption and money-laundering are also specifically targeted
- Stabilization actions aimed at consolidating the achievements in matters of safety through the presence of the State and its service departments, strengthening of social cohesion and the reduction of conflicts at the local level, providing assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees

- *Pillar 4: “Development cooperation”*

- Fight against food insecurity and promotion of rural development
- Foster decentralization and improvement of basic services
- Support education and youth employment
- Develop the sustainable energy sector and the fight against climate change
- Promote the private sector and sustainable economic growth

## **II. Call for the mobilization of regional and international stakeholders**

Like the European Union member States, which are asked to align their ongoing or future support actions with these priorities, regional or international actors

involved in the security, stability and development of the Sahel are invited to join these initiatives, which aim to bring together the efforts of the international community. The European Union welcomes the fact that several countries have already signalled their interest.

This will be more specifically addressed in a ministerial-level conference that should take place by videoconference in the coming days.

For its part and without further delay, the European Union has taken steps to ensure the monitoring and piloting of ongoing and future projects and efforts under its responsibility within the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel and within the Coalition for the Sahel and is already fully part of the work of the Sahel Alliance.

### **III. The requirement for respect, exemplarity and accountability for human rights and international humanitarian law**

In the same way that European Union support is indexed to progress in governance and reforms in the security sector, increased vigilance is given to compliance with international standards on human rights and international humanitarian law in the region. This applies in particular to the defence and security forces, which are bound to lead by example, notably in a destabilized and permissive environment. The partnership between the G5 Sahel and the United Nations (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), supported by the European Union, for the implementation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework has particular relevance in this context. The support to the operationalization of the police component and provost brigades of the Joint Force must strengthen the judicial process of operations and the fight against impunity.

It is essential to put the protection of civilian populations at the heart of our joint action. In this regard, the European Union and its member States will remain very attentive to the follow-up of investigations and prosecutions which will be applied to allegations of violations in this area, a fortiori in the context of the monitoring and programming of ongoing and future projects. It will also be important to ensure that victims and witnesses of violations receive the necessary support and assistance from the national authorities. The European Union will also be able to support the authorities in putting in place preventive, responsive and accountability measures.