

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability – CPCC
Director /Office of the Operations Commander

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Mission Report

TO: Deputy Secretary General, Mr Charles Fries.
FROM: CPCC Director, Mr Francisco Esteban Perez.

CC: 

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SUBJECT: Report on the CivOpsCdr's mission to Niamey (Niger) from 06 to 10.

PARTICIPANTS

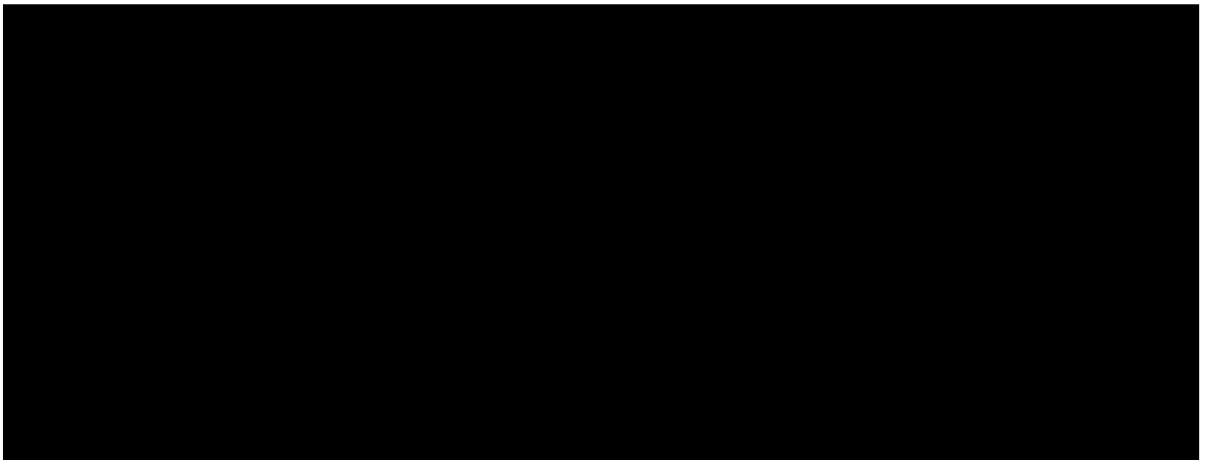
Mission to Niger

Francisco ESTEBAN PEREZ, CPCC Director – Civilian Operations Commander.


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This joint monitoring mission of the CPCC and FPI services has proved for both services very productive, allowing to acquire a very good insight of the Mission's achievements and performance.
- The CivOpsCdr visit was met with a very good and open attitude from the different Niger authorities as well as the staff of EUCAP Sahel Niger, who broadly and openly showed appreciation for the "Brussels attention" a long time without any visit from the Head Quarters.

- The EU Delegation also appreciated very much the visit and highlighted the extremely good cooperation with EUCAP Niger. In this context, the visit also revealed that EUCAP Niger and EU Del are fully aligned on the integrated approach and both sides support and coordinate with each other their respective actions, achieving tangible results on the ground.
- Niger authorities have shown at all times full support to EUCAP Niger and have remarkably expressed their satisfaction as regards the cooperation they have established with the Mission and its different branches.
- Niger counterparts (law enforcement) would welcome EUCAP Niger support in bringing Libyan and Malian authorities together to exchange views and find ways to strengthen cooperation.
- On a very positive note, the Minister of Finance revealed that current budgetary planning calls for raise in investment on security of a total of a 17% of the Niger GDP: allowing the country to double the current staffing of its security forces reaching to a total of 75.000 men (in equal share of 25.000 each – National Police, National Guard and Gendarmerie –), as well as the army to a total of 50.000 members.
- The main strategic challenges hence strategic needs presented by the Niger authorities revolve around the following axels:
 - **State's reach to remote areas**, as the main source of insecurity to those areas and the rest of the country. Likewise, the uncontrolled borders with Libya and Mali are a big source of proliferation of Terrorism and Organised Crime (and possible spill overs in Niger and Libya).
 - **Increase the investigative capacities**, of the current three law enforcement agencies (Gendarmerie, National Police and National Guard) to follow up on terrorist and organised crime groups to be able to enhance the prosecution and adjudication efficiency with legitimate evidence to substantiate adequate firm sentences.
 - **Inter-agency coordination and cooperation**. Currently Niger does not count on a police model that combines efforts and caters for exchange of information, know-how lessons learnt, etc. Also, internationally the current state apparatus does not count on an efficient service for transboundary or international cooperation on law enforcement matters and/or border management and security.



MAIN TEXT (Detail of the Meetings)

➤ **WORKING BREAKFAST WITH EU AMBASSADORS: (EU Del, FR, DE, NL, BE, IT, ES)**

The Head of EU Delegation (HoD) led a short introduction of the attendees where the official visit was presented; with mention of the capacities of the EEAS and FPI colleagues.

Following the introduction of the HoD, the CivOpsCdr presented the nature and objective of the visit. He stressed the need to work closely with EU Member States and European Commission projects and programmes, as the only way to address integrally the security situation in Niger while ensuring sustainability to our efforts, **the so-called integrated approach**.

In the same context, it was highlighted the special importance of the role that EUCAP Niger can play in interfacing between the Niger's criminal justice and the EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies (JHA) or with MS line Ministries through their different representatives. He also highlighted the contribution that EUCAP Niger brings, in the latter context, to the internal-external security nexus.

To conclude his initial intervention, CivOpsCdr used the occasion to thank the Ambassadors for the efforts their respective national administrations are doing to support EUCAP Niger by seconding their experts.

FPI went on remarking the importance of cooperation with MS and to use to its full potential the opportunities offered by the current Team Europe Initiative as well as the opportunities offered by the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which has been specifically designed to serve this objective.

Upon a question from the NL Ambassador enquiring as regards the regional dimension of the integrated approach, EU HoD, CivOpsCdr and FPI answered jointly providing an explanation of the different mechanisms in place to ensure the integrated approach considers the regional dimension as an integral part of any planning or action -the RACC being the most prominent stand out mechanism to ensure regional dimension is fully embedded in the national planning and development- .

The EU HoD went on stating that Niger is a ground breaker on integrated approach where EU Del on the development and cooperation side and EUCAP Niger on the CSDP side have established a symbiotic ecosystem in which both sides work in a fully integrated manner and develop their actions with the utmost synergy. EU Ambassador explained how the EU Delegation uses the expertise of both EUCAP Niger and the RACC to advise and add value to actions funded by development funds and how EUCAP delivers its mandate in full synergy with development and cooperation actions – regular meetings and joint planning -.

➤ **MEETING/PRESENTATION OF EUCAP NIGER SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

Following a very generic presentation of the Mission's mandate, the Head of Operations presented the threat landscape, the structure and maturity of the security forces and how the Mission is supporting them and envisions to continue that support in the future.

In essence, Terrorism, Organised Crime and Illegal Migration constitute the main elements that currently pose a serious threat to the security and stability of the Country.

Whereas the government and the different law enforcement agencies are conscious and very transparent about these phenomenon and likewise continue to show a strong will to fight them, resources and competencies among the three main forces as well as the maturity of the overall State's apparatus are very basic (to inexistent in some cases) - a great deal of law enforcement agents are completely illiterate, training is very basic to inexistent in a number of cases and equipment very limited (i.e, daily losses are reported as basic protection equipment is not available).

In achieving a full ownership on behalf of Niger government, EUCAP Niger has crafted a model which delivers training and logistics, performs monitoring and will soon try on with mentoring (embedding experts in relevant ministerial services). EUCAP Niger also provides expert advice to foster reforms and create frameworks leading to bridge the existing gaps.

CivOpsCdr lectured the Mission on "Mission Model Structure" and how the different services and units need to be coordinated to ensure and efficient achievement of the Mission Implementation Plan's goals.

➤ **PRESENTATION FROM THE REGIONAL POLICE COMMANDER OF AGADEZ, COORDINATOR OF THE AGADEZ PATROL: an example of enhanced efficiency through increased coordination.**

EUCAP Niger in conjunction with the Regional Governor of Agadez and the three State law enforcement agencies (National Police, Gendarmerie and National Guard) have put together a plan to increase efficiency and reduce duplications.

The so-call "Plan Addou" consist of a coordination cell established under the authority of the regional Governor and the strategic direction of the regional coordinator. The cell brings together personnel from the three law enforcement agencies to:

- exchange information among the forces, and
- subsequently develop a regional patrolling plan, avoiding duplications, and augmenting the coverage throughout the territory,
- follow up on cases which have not been solved yet.

The presentation provided statistics on apprehensions, seizures, arrests of organised crime (drugs, oil, arms, gold) groups and terrorist elements operating in the region. The numbers showed a clear increasing tendency on arrests and seizures which reflects the efficiency of this coordination mechanism as well as a reduction of law enforcement losses during their interventions.

During the presentation, it has also been reflected that as the law enforcement efficiency increases, so does the trust of the population on the security forces and the overall state apparatus.

➤ **MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR (accompanied by the General Commander, second in command of the National Police and the Commander of the Firefighters Corps).**

The Minister reflected the very good cooperation the three law enforcement agencies have with EUCAP Niger and valued extremely positive the cooperation and adaptability of the Mission to respond to the ever-evolving needs as a result of the constantly changing context.

The Minister went on explaining that the current model is based almost uniquely on crisis response and containment. However, security services have realised that the best to fight organised crime and specially terrorism is cutting their provisioning capacity. He continues elaborating by saying that they have experienced that for instance impeding the supply of petrol (by acting upon provisioning points)

they limit or even impeded the moves of certain terrorist groups and weakened also their capacity to counter the operations conducted by law enforcement and/or army.

The Minister was very forthcoming and showed the utmost commitment to endure the necessary reforms and enhance the capacities and capabilities of Niger Law enforcement community. He voiced the road map to achieve a better security apparatus in Niger:

- Reinforcement of the mobile companies and deployment of polyvalent squadrons, to regain the territories under the control of terrorists or organised crime groups.
- Train the law enforcement agencies on Judicial Police techniques and procedures.
- Create Investigation units with HUMINT capacity to be able to elicit information from the population and civil society, leading to the identification of terrorist elements in order to bring them before justice and dismantle their sources of provisioning.

In views of the Minister (shared entirely by CivOpsCdr and HoM), higher effectiveness of the law enforcement and prominence of the rule of law will result in citizens gaining more confidence in the State apparatus, hence it will subsequently increase the cooperation with security forces, which will eventually lead to optimising efforts while amplifying results.

The Minister finished his intervention highlighting the recent adoption of the “Plan Regional de la Securite” which is a nation-wide plan to increase security by regions -addressing the specific needs of each region and ensuring a stepped up approach- .

CivOpsCdr offered an increase in support from EUCAP Niger to the implementation of the plan.

➤ **MEETING WITH THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD**

The Commander of the National Guard depicted the threat landscape along the same lines as previous interlocutors. He, however, emphasised that the biggest threat from terrorism is not emanating from Boko Haram as sometimes media reports, but from the groups settled in the north west of the country in the border with Mali, along the region of Tillia.

The Commander made clear that the main problem is not the terrorist groups themselves but the consequence that local population acquire arms to protect against the incursions of these terrorist groups, creating serious situations of conflict and many casualties. He mentioned a recent case known in Tillia regions as “La Massacre” where over hundred villagers were slaughtered.

To avoid this happening, the National Guard has put together a plan to recruit these people (usually youngsters) joining the armed groups and train them to incorporate them as agents in the different stations of the agency.

The Commander highlighted the dire need the National Guard has on equipment and training. Some of the agents are put on service with a very basic training of one to two months.

CivOpsCdr highlighted the capacity of EUCAP Niger to support all these initiatives with an emphasis on the training part by using the expertise available.

➤ **MEETING WITH THE ACTING COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GENDARMERIE.**

The meeting with the acting commander in chief was also followed by the Commander in Chief of the two companies trained by the GARS¹ project.

Both officers conveyed a great appreciation of the work EUCAP Niger is doing with the National Gendarmerie, in the training of its gendarmes and supporting also the deployment and training of the GARS¹ Companies.

Both commanders highlighted the need to ensure the deployment of a third company of GARS¹ (as planned) in the region where Boko Haram is settled. The need is growing as they believe that the region is gaining in insecurity.

CivOpsCdr brought forward the need to continue this excellent cooperation and further strengthen it where needed. He also added that if the GARS¹ Model works for them he also shares the point of view of the Commander of the Gendarmerie in creating the third company of the GARS¹, to which also the HoM agreed to be an advisable move.-

➤ **WORKING LUNCH WITH THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH AUTHORITY FOR THE PEACE CONSOLIDATION.**

The nature of the meeting and context catered for a less formal exchange among the parties, facilitating a fluid dialogue and discussion on various topics.

The lead of the Head of the EU Del was key in quickly settling a climate of confidence and mutual interaction.

Once again the threat landscape was brought over by the President of the High Authority for Peace Consolidation (President HAPC), who clearly and openly said that the “growing” security concerns are coming from the areas where State reach is very limited or inexistent.

These remote and/or bordering areas are populated mainly by alienated communities which never or very poorly received the support of the State and on the contrary suffer the constant harassment of terrorist groups and/or organised crime cartels.

The President HAPC continued explaining that in his view the major threat comes from organised crime groups who proliferate in those regions and find safe heavens for the operations in the neighbouring countries such as Mali and Libya where State reach and State security are even less present.

The Minister of Finance has clearly stated that in view of the current government and specially a push from the current President, security remains a top priority as the only way to continue ensuing stability and a sustainable development of country.

The Minister elaborated further explaining that the current commitment of national budget in security (including armed forces and law enforcement) accounts for 13,40 % of the national GDP. In

¹ GARS¹ SAHEL : Le programme contribuera au renforcement des capacités opérationnelles des autorités nationales pour permettre un contrôle effectif du territoire et élargir l’action de l’État de droit à l’ensemble du Sahel en créant des unités policières robustes, flexibles, mobiles, multidisciplinaires et autosuffisantes qui permettent un contrôle adéquat du territoire.

preparation for the new budgetary exercise, the Minister claimed that the target figure the government is determined to achieve reaches a total of 17% of the GDP.

The aforementioned budget commitment would allow Niger government to increase the armed and security forces by more than a double:

-Army a total of 50.000 personnel – currently around 25.000.

-Law enforcement agencies (Gendarmerie, National Guard and National Police) a total of 75.000 agents (25.000 each) – currently around 32.000.

In words of the Minister of Finance the current government is “determined to build a strong security apparatus”.

➤ **FIELD VISIT OT BIRNIN KONI.**

This field visit was conducted by CPCC.1 Desk Officer and FPI colleagues in order to monitor the progress and achievements of the CMCF2² (funded by Germany and Netherlands).The monitoring visit consisted on a presentation and analysis of the developments of the project and the integration with the Mission’s core mandate.

The visit revealed that the Mission is currently advancing on the implementation of CMCF2 project and the units created are already functional. Likewise, the visit provided an insight on one of the parallel activities the Mission develops through a local NGO - the so-called trust building project - consisting of informing the population on the Unit’s nature and goals through 36 displays in strategic locations in various languages, several radio broadcasts in local languages (Aoussa and Tamashek), and settlement and animation of local consultation committees with participation of youth and women.

The visit has also witnessed a mock exercise of the Company’s capabilities (control of a vehicle and arrest of suspects).

CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The overall assessment of the current state of play of the EUCAP Niger is good. The visit revealed that Niger seems to be determined to prevail security as a source of assurance for development and sustainable peace.

EUCAP Niger has proved to be a reliable actor, highly regarded, and best positioned to continue enforcing its mandate and support other initiatives (i.e. from development funds) to achieve better results at country and regional level.

Should the plans to increase the personnel of the Niger security forces come to a reality as anticipated by the Minister of Finance, consideration must be given to the above elements in view of a possible demand for increased support from EUCAP Niger to the different law enforcement agencies.

² Project funded by Germany and Netherlands aiming at the creation of a mobile company able to mobilise and deploy in a short fashion to respond to sudden crisis or perform routine patrols. The Mission has signed a contract with both countries and implements the project following the standards of and financial regulations and norms of the EU. The mission report on achievements to both countries and to EEAS (CPCC).