

EUTM MALI

European Union Training Mission in Mali



Belgium will be handing on the torch to Spain



EUTM-Mali

Mission Force Commanders

Mission Force Commander, Brigadier General Bart Laurent, from Belgium, salutes his successor, Brigadier General Enrique Millán Martínez, from Spain.

GB Millán will be in charge of EUTM-Mali until the end of 2018.

On 31 January 2018, Belgium will be handing on the torch of the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) to Spain.

This will mark the end of 20 months of Belgian lead for this heavyweight among EU training missions.

EUTM Mali itself is not an 'operation' – involving the mobilization of heavy weaponry – but a 'non-executive mission' aiming to train, advise and, where necessary, assist the Malian armed forces with respect to their training activities. In addition to this training mission other partners are also active in Mali and do, in fact, carry out such operations. These include the UN operation MINUSMA and the French Operation Barkhane, the successor to Operation Serval, which was first launched in 2013.

EUTM Mali has come a long way since the first instructors set foot on Malian ground on 18 February 2013. This training mission came into being at the request of the Malian government, and was established on the basis of UN resolutions, in particular UN Security Council Resolution 2085.

The first mandate of EUTM Mali was to restore democracy, to help the Malian authorities win back sovereignty over the whole country, and to put a stop to organised crime and to the terrorist threat. In May 2014, EUTM Mali moved up a gear with the implementation of the second mandate.

This mandate focused more on the training of battalions and also introduced the concept of leadership, while mobile teams travelled to the Malian armed forces barracks for the first time. This second mandate lasted until 18 May 2016.

From the creation of EUTM Mali, Belgian Defence has invested both human and material resources in this mission, with about 180 military personnel from all four components and the deployment of armoured vehicles for Force Protection. This Force Protection is made up of men and women from our combat battalions. And just about every single one of the Belgian battalions has contributed to this mission. It is clear that, going back to the start of Operation Serval in 2013, and up until today, Mali has always remained at the forefront of Belgian Defence's agenda.

Three generals in turn led this 581-man mission for about 6 months each. And, in the past few months, other key positions within EUTM Mali were filled by Belgian military personnel, as our people were put in command of the Education and Training Task Force (ETTF), of the Force Protection (FP), and of the Leadership and Education Team (LET). From the headquarters (MFHQ) to the Advisory Task Force (ATF) and the medical service, Belgians were truly everywhere within the framework of EUTM Mali.



On 3 July 2016, Brigadier General Eric Harvent assumed command of EUTM Mali, kicking off the Belgian lead of the EU training mission. He was followed by Major General Peter Devogelaere, who was appointed as mission commander on 19 December 2016, until Brigadier General Bart Laurent finally took over on 12 July 2017.

Together, they steered EUTM Mali, involving no less than 27 countries, from the end of mandate two to the eve of mandate four, which will start in May 2018.



When Belgium took the lead, at the start of mandate three, the EUTM Mali training sessions all took place either at the Koulikoro Training Center (KTC) or in Bamako. This centralised approach ended on 1 October 2016, when EUTM Mali achieved Full Operational Capability (FOC), marking phase two of the Mission Plan. From then on, the focus shifted to a more decentralised approach, with instructors bringing the training courses where they were really needed: in the garrisons of the Malian units.



The very first Combined Mobile Advisory and Training Teams (CMATT) were put together. And in two instances, the courses took place in Kati and in Segou respectively, both times at the request of the Malian authorities. This brought along an important change, ending three years spent training units the size of a battalion, called GTIAs (*Groupements Tactiques Inter-armes*). As of then, the focus has been on specific training courses, taught by a few instructors whose protection is ensured by a Force Protection detachment.

The first careful steps were taken towards the Malian military schools. These partnerships will become even more important in the future, when our Malian partners will have to take on the responsibility for the training.

The path is also already being paved towards the implementation of the *Loi d'Orientation et de Programmation Militaire (LOPM)* – the Malian armed forces investment policy. But this process is still far from being completed.



EUTM Mali has had more success in taking an active part in the *Projet d'Appui au Renforcement de la Sécurité (PARSEC)* – Programme of support for enhanced security) in the Mopti and Gao regions – each time under the leadership of the European Delegation.

Today, the G5 Sahel Joint Force is on everybody's lips, but this partnership between the armed forces of Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger was already born back then. From the very beginning, EUTM Mali has planted its flag in this young organization by training their liaison officers.

The Advisory Task Force (ATF) started planting a few seeds that EUTM Mali will reap the benefits of later. Take for example the new advisor for the air force, who was immediately able to establish excellent contacts with the Malian air force, still under construction then. Similarly, the new advisors for doctrine and training were mobilized to set up the non-existent Malian structures. This was quickly followed by a first success with the Joint Forces Employment Concept seminar, end of 2016, which paved the way for later success.

Thanks to the contribution of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Medical Equipment Project was able to start supplying the Malian armed forces with medical equipment such as medical kits, stretchers and more, and still does so extensively today.

From 19 December until 12 July, a second Belgian mission commander, Major General Peter Devogelaere, was put in charge of EUTM Mali.

The Malian Chief of Defence enlisted the help of EUTM Mali to support the operational needs of the Malian armed forces, thereby shifting the focus from structural reform to operational needs. In order to gradually transfer the responsibility of the training to the Malian instructors, EUTM Mali created the Train The Trainers programme.

Concretely, Koulikoro hosts training courses following the TTT model, such as sniper training, mortar training and Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) training.



A tailor-made CMATT was organized in Gao. It was smaller and more flexible, and could adapt to the needs of the Malian armed forces. The CMATT in Segou went even further with the successful introduction of the TTT concept.



Thanks to the support of Spain and Belgium, a specialized course in Combat River Crossing and Airborne Training could be set up. These courses climaxed in two parachute jumps, something you do not see every day on the African continent.

The delivery of infrastructure for military schools via the Capacity Building in support of Security and Development (CBSD) project opened the way to reaching young leaders in training. The milestone of 10,000 soldiers trained since the start of the mission was reached. But more important still, EUTM Mali changed its tack by shifting its main focus from quantity to *leadership and the sense of responsibility* of the officers and NCOs. EUTM Mali keeps a foot in the door at the schools by teaching courses in leadership to the young officers and NCOs of the *École des Sous-Officiers* and the *École Militaire Inter-armes* (EMIA). In order to improve their leadership skills, Malian officers practiced teaching units the size of a company: after receiving the training themselves, they were coached while they in turn trained their own soldiers.

The Advisory Task Force gradually began making progress regarding the LOPM. They coordinated the implementation of the medical chain in the Malian armed forces, from Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TC₃) to 'buddy care'. This medical chain was fully equipped with medical kits and ambulances to transport the wounded to the nearest first-aid post. Being able to count on a functional medical chain has proved to be a great boost for soldier morale.



EUTM Mali continued to make a difference with its commitment to FC-G5S by organizing various courses such as the Liaison Officer Courses or courses aimed at improving the planning and execution of joint operations. Moreover, we advised the G5S headquarters in Sevre and drew up the Concept of Operations (CONOPS). All this was realized in cooperation with our other European partners such as EUDEL.

Two experts in International Humanitarian Law have been hired to raise the awareness of both soldiers and command.



When Brigadier General Bart Laurent took over command on 12 July 2017 he continued on the same path. During this last period we could reap the benefits of a year of continued efforts to make progress. For instance, EUTM Mali gained better access to the military schools because the Malian Chief of Defence authorized a wider cooperation at the end of November. Furthermore, we have been more than welcome in the 'Centre Opérationnel interarmées (COIA)' where a Belgian team helped to set up the infrastructure.

G5Sahel has been holding the spotlight a lot as well. Although EUTM Mali can only give advice and provide training within its capabilities and with its limited resources this support has turned out to be indispensable in the creation of this organization. G5Sahel did not only attain its Initial Operational Capability on 17 October, but it also executed its first operation straight away early November. The mission also provided the 'G5 Sahel Staff Officers' course to the officers from the five countries involved who will take command of G5Sahel in the future. This is a story that has certainly not been completely written yet.

At the tactical level we increased our focus on the Train the Trainer concept placing the ball more and more in the court of our Malian partner. And successfully so. European trainers have seen Malian trainers become increasingly better, which allows them to provide courses independently. Some courses catch more attention than others, such as the artillery and mortar course that concluded with a live firing exercise, something that had not been seen in years.



Meanwhile the focus remained on leadership and the associated sense of responsibility of the Malian officers and NCOs.

In the second half of 2017 the major part of the investment policy of the Malian armed forces (LOPM) was written down by experts of the training mission's Advisory Task Force (ATF). Malian Defence has now put it into effect. ATF has also proved important as far as doctrine is concerned. These documents are the backbone of the army.

And last but not least: no less than 6 CMATTs have been organized and a seventh is in the pipeline. Sikasso (already initiated by General Devogelaere still), Kati, Gao, Timbuktu, Kayes and Sevare could count on the military expertise of European trainers and advisors. The whole range of courses was offered, even simply teaching soldiers how to fire.





CMATT at Sevaré

Furthermore, we advise the officers of the 'Poste de Commandement Interarmées de Théâtre' (PCIAT). They will be the future leaders of G5Sahel.

It should also be taken into account that the continuity has been ensured; in Koulikoro the focus continued to be on centralised courses. It can therefore be concluded that the third phase of the third mandate has been completed.

EUTM Mali is now ready to prepare for its next mandate, which will start in May 2018.

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