



Dear Colleagues,

Although the Battlegroups have been created as a rapidly deployable force, it has never been possible to employ them because of the complexity of the relevant; of the heterogeneous national procedures for authorizing the participation in missions abroad and, not least, of the difficulties encountered in the recruitment of national contributions of military units required for the completion of the expected contingents.

These circumstances hamper the European Union's ability to react to international crises as quickly as needed, as clear indicated in the discussion paper "EU Battlegroups: use them or lose them" presented by the Dutch delegation at the Inter-parliamentary Conference held in Rome last November.

Therefore, aim should be to provide the European Union with an instrument that would enable it to act quickly in situations where the time factor is crucial.

In Rome, we also set ourselves the goal to submit to this Inter-parliamentary Conference with some suggestions about four points:

- 1) How to deploy EU Battlegroups within the terms of reference of article 44 TEU,
- 2) How the ATHENA Mechanism may be modified to address funding concerns expressed by some Member States,
- 3) How the authorization process for deployment in Member States' parliaments may be brought into sync more effective,
- 4) Possible ways to include Battlegroups within the framework foreseen by Permanent Structured Cooperation under the Lisbon Treaty.

It is in the constructive spirit emanated from the Rome Conference, and following the broad and detailed speech by Mr. Van Kappen, also following the suggestion of Chairman Brok, that I wish to consider, for the next meeting in Luxembourg, asking the HR to propose new concepts about the implementation of a rapid intervention force of the European Union to be used in the time and manner required using the possibilities offered by art. 44 TEU. A force that will complement the Battlegroups, but distinct from them, whose purpose will be to intervene in case of emergency and to create the conditions for the subsequent intervention of the Battlegroups or other forces operating under the umbrella of the United Nations. This force could be created within the Permanent



Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as per Art. 42 and governed by the subsequent articles, or, alternatively, could be created according to the so called PESCO “light” concept, that means without the need of the integral fulfilment of all those conditions envisaged for the PESCO as per Art. 46 and related Additional Protocol.

The structure of the new force should not be rigid (without the rotation mechanism employed by Battlegroups), but still be based on a permanent mechanisms for information sharing, preparation of contingency plans and provision of common resources (especially respect to the stocks of ammunitions and consumables). As proposed by the Dutch delegation, the modularity of the project should allow his effective use.

Without the pre-allocation of contingents for the rotation, it would be possible to create forces suited to the task when necessary, by drawing on forces made available by the participating countries.

The implementation of these forces to be combined with Battlegroups should take into consideration the possibility to activate, when crisis occurs, a mechanism for setting an *ad hoc* multinational contingent for that specific mission which, anyway, can rely on the aforementioned provision of common resources (including access to "services" that already exist in the EU, such as the European Air Transport Command), according to the pooling and sharing concept.

We could ask to optimize a database, already available to the HR, of the existing European commands (also the ones that have cooperated with NATO), to enhance the use of the financial and information resources, and move forward to the implementation of a permanent mechanism for information sharing, coordination and common resources, with all the related aspects of standardization.

Obviously a such rapid intervention capability should have to be supported also by an equally rapid availability of the funds needed for the operations. For this purpose, as explained by Senator Van Kappen in his introductory speech, we could create a Start-up fund as defined in the art 41(3) TEU.

In conclusion, do the proposals developed in this session answer the points indicated in the final document of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference of Rome?



Summarizing:

**1) How to deploy EU Battlegroups within the terms of article 44 TEU.**

Battlegroups, in their current configuration, are not enough flexible, and that will nullify the advantages of the use of article 44. Instead, the new force that we are proposing would be created under article 44 and would allow the Member States who feel a more pressing need to provide the European Union with a rapid response capability, to do it in short time, giving the other Member States the option to onto late stage adhere to the initiative or to adhere at all.

**2) How the Athena mechanism may be modified to address funding concerns expressed by some member States.**

With the new force the EU will have a tool which is easier to use and less expensive to maintain that will be based (at least in the first phase) on the interoperability among the European Forces that has been developed within NATO. The lack of financial resources for the Battlegroups would have a lesser impact, because Battlegroups would be requested to intervene at a later stage, giving the contributing Countries more time to make available extraordinary funds. The greater costs for the Member States that will contribute to the new rapid response capability would be mitigated by the pooling and sharing approach, while the operational costs of the mission could be covered by the creation of a start-up fund.

**3) How the authorization process for deployment in member States' parliaments may be brought into sync more effective.**

This problem is not easy to solve. Anyway, with the proposed tool created as per Art. 44, Member States that are not able, do not want or have procedural problems to contribute to the mission, even being part of the Battlegroup in a stand-by mode, will not prevent automatically the EU mission, which could be launched using the new military tool specifically tailored thanks to its modularity. Obviously each Member State could veto the mission if it disagrees with the political and strategic goals of the mission itself.

**4) Possible ways to put Battlegroups within the framework foreseen by Permanent Structured Cooperation under the Lisbon Treaty.**

Originally the Battlegroups were conceived as being the first step toward the PESCO, however this path has never been followed because of a scarce political will by some



Countries. This does not mean that the new proposed tools could be created within the PESCO as per Art 42 and 46 TUE, in which case they still will ensure a level of flexibility and quick response capability much higher than the one provided by Battlegroups. In any case, the Battlegroups may still keep their current structure and be used as a reinforcement element according to a forces deployment concept based on more phases.

**5) Which new operative task can be assigned to EUBG?**

It is a sure thing that it is necessary to add Training & Mentoring capability to the capabilities provided by the Battlegroups, a part from the reconfiguration here proposed. There are many studies and lot of literature on this matter.

The good practices started in the Athens session, optimized in Rome, lead me to submit to you the inclusion in the conclusions of this IPC the request to ask the HR to propose solutions on how to implement what we have proposed today. In particular on:

- 1) How to define and validate a modular concept for the implementation of a European Rapid Response Capability and if the creation of an interim Rapid Intervention Corp could be useful for the validation of the concept,
- 2) How to create, within Athena, a simplified mechanism for the management of the funds, namely creating a start-up fund according to the Article 41(3) TEU,
- 3) How to define the broadening of the Battlegroups tasks to training and mentoring activities,
- 4) How to elaborate a trust formula among the Member States in order to harmonize the decision making process also involving the national parliaments, to keep them informed on the situation of current crisis.

With respect to our work towards the forthcoming session in Luxembourg today's workshop has agreed on the need that our parliament should urge our respective governments to adopt a proactive attitude in the run up to the June Summit with respect to two issues: the procedures for parliamentary authorisation for EU-led missions and the tasks to be assigned to the battlegroups