

European Union External Action Service

Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel

SUMMARY

This Strategy has four key themes:

- Firstly, that security and development in the Sahel cannot be separated, and that helping these countries achieve security is integral to enabling their economies to grow and poverty to be reduced.
- Secondly, that achieving security and development in the Sahel is only possible through closer regional cooperation. This is currently weaker than it needs to be, and the EU has a potential role to play in supporting it.
- Thirdly, all the states of the region will benefit from considerable capacity-building, both in areas of core government activity, including the provision of security and development cooperation.
- Fourthly, that the EU therefore has an important role to play both in encouraging economic development for the people of the Sahel and helping them achieve a more secure environment in which it can take place, and in which the interests of EU citizens are also protected.

1. Issues and Context.

The Sahel is one of the poorest regions of the world. It faces simultaneously the challenges of extreme poverty, the effects of climate change, frequent food crises, rapid population growth, fragile governance, corruption, unresolved internal tensions, the risk of violent extremism and radicalisation, illicit trafficking and terrorist-linked security threats.

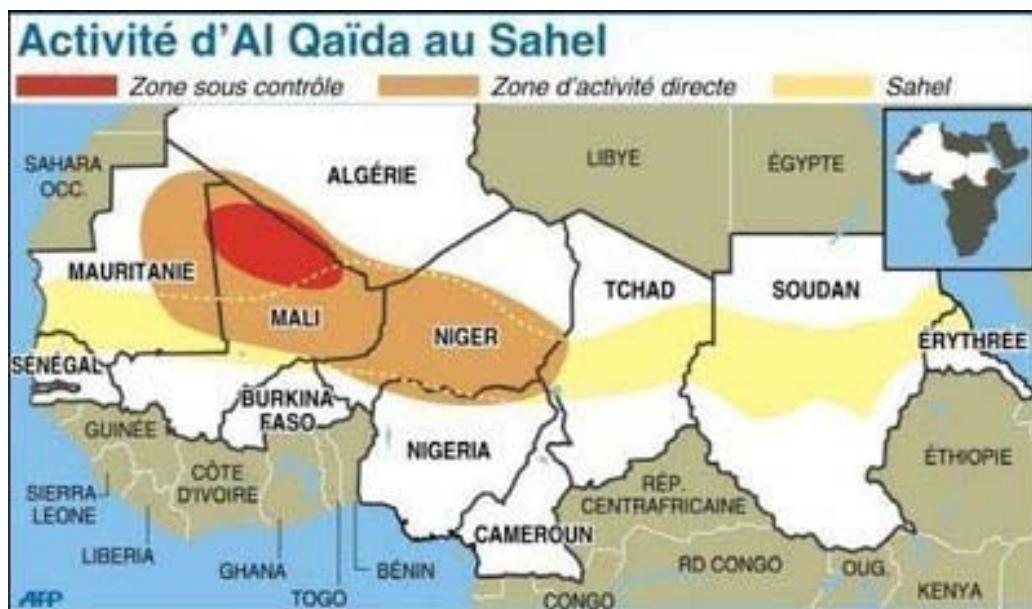
The states of the region have to face these challenges directly. The three core Sahelian states, and the focus of this Strategy, are Mauritania, Mali and Niger, though the geographical conditions – and therefore challenges – also affect parts of Burkina Faso and Chad. Many of the challenges impact on neighbouring countries, including Algeria, Libya, Morocco and even Nigeria, whose engagement is necessary to help resolve them. The current political developments in the Maghreb have consequences for the situation in the Sahel, taking into account the close relations between the countries of the two regions, a significant presence of citizens of Sahel countries in the Maghreb and the risks that arise from the proliferation of arms in the region. The problems facing the Sahel not only affect the local populations but increasingly impact directly on the interests of European citizens.

In few areas is the inter-dependence of security and development more clear. The fragility of governments impacts on the stability of the region and the ability to combat both poverty and security threats, which are on the rise. Poverty creates inherent instability that can impact on uncontrolled migratory flows. The security threat from terrorist activity by Al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM), which has found a sanctuary in Northern Mali, is focussed on Western targets and has evolved from taking money to taking life, discouraging investment in the region. AQIM resources and operational capacities are significant and growing. Deteriorating security conditions pose a challenge to development cooperation and restrict the delivery of

humanitarian assistance and development aid, which in turn exacerbates the vulnerability of the region and its population.

The EU's development policy in the Sahel, drawn up in partnership with the countries concerned, is geared towards tackling the root causes of the extreme poverty and towards creating the grass-root conditions for economic opportunity and human development to flourish. But it will be hard for this policy to achieve a high impact unless security challenges are also tackled.

The problems in the Sahel are cross-border and closely intertwined. Only a regional, integrated and holistic strategy will enable us to make progress on any of the specific problems. A reinforced security and law enforcement capacity must go hand-in-hand with more robust public institutions and more accountable governments, capable of providing basic development services to the populations and of appeasing internal tensions. Development processes, promotion of good governance and improvement of the security situation need to be carried out in appropriate sequence and in a coordinated manner in order to create sustainable stability in the region. This Strategy therefore proposes a framework for the coordination of the EU's current and future engagement in the region with the common objective of reinforcing security and development, thereby strengthening also the EU's own security. Building on work done up to now, the Strategy points to a number of specific actions that could be taken, drawing on all the instruments that the EU has at its disposal¹. The Strategy is also intended to encourage EU Member States and other partners with similar interests in the region to play an integrated part therein.



¹ The EU has been advocating a comprehensive security and development approach to respond to the complexity of the challenges in the Sahel since 2008. A joint paper (14361/10) on the security and development in the Sahel was drafted by the Commission and the Council Secretariat General, following the options paper (COREU SEC 750/09 of 7 April 2009), and joint fact finding missions to Mauritania, Mali and Niger, at the political and technical level. Following the rapid and serious deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel and notably the kidnapping of European nationals, the Foreign Affairs Council of 25 October 2010 invited the High Representative to draw up, in association with the Commission, a strategy on the Sahel, in response to which a Joint Communication by the Commission and the HR was presented on 08 March 2011 (COM(2011)331).

2. Challenges

The challenges identified by the EU fact-finding missions to Mali, Mauritania and Niger (and a further visit to Algeria) are at four levels:

- 1) Governance, development and conflict resolution:** The remote and isolated character of this sensitive region and the difficulties faced by the Sahel countries in providing protection, assistance, development and public services to local populations, the insufficiently decentralised decision making and the inequitable sharing of revenues of capital-intensive economic activities pose serious challenges. Lack of education and employment opportunities for young people contributes to tensions and makes them prone to cooperate with AQIM or organized crime for financial reasons or to be radicalized and recruited by AQIM. Weak governance, in particular in the area of justice, social exclusion and a still insufficient level of development, together with remaining internal conflicts and recurrent rebellions in regions affected by insecurity, render the Sahel countries and their populations vulnerable to the activities of AQIM and organised crime networks. The desert regions of all three countries have a history of de facto autonomy which makes government control hard to exert. Corruption also hinders the effectiveness in the fight against AQIM and the development of an effective security sector. Carrying out development assistance projects has also become more dangerous.
- 2) Regional political level - challenges of coordination:** The security threats in the Sahel – as well as their solution - are of a transnational nature, yet differ in intensity from one country to another. The sometimes differing perception of the threats and solutions by the three Sahel States and their three Maghreb neighbours (Algeria, Libya and Morocco) and the absence of a sub-regional organisation encompassing all the Sahel and Maghreb states, lead to unilateral or poorly coordinated action and hamper credible and effective regional initiatives. At the level of the international community (including the EU), coherent and systematic action linking political, security and development aspects is also insufficient.
- 3) Security and the rule of law:** These states have insufficient operational and strategic capacities in the wider security, law enforcement and judicial sectors (military, police, justice, border management, customs) to control the territory, to ensure human security, to prevent and to respond to the various security threats, and to enforce the law (conduct investigations, trials etc.) with due respect to human rights. This is notably reflected in the insufficiency of legal frameworks and law enforcement capacity at all levels, ineffective border management, lack of modern investigation techniques and methods of gathering, transmitting and exchanging information, as well as obsolete or nonexistent equipment and infrastructure. State control of the desert regions in the North of Mali and Niger is fragile. Available resources are insufficiently used to target terrorism and illegal activities.
- 4) Fight against and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation:** In the Sahel region the simultaneous interaction between various factors such as poverty, social exclusion, unmet economic needs and radical preaching bears the risk of development of extremism. The situation in Mauritania is particularly worrying in terms of risks of radicalisation and recruitment of youth by AQIM.

3. Mutual interests in improving the security and development situation in the Sahel

There is a clear and longstanding interest both for the countries of the regions and for the EU in reducing insecurity and improving development in the Sahel region. Strengthening governance and stability within the Sahel countries through the promotion of the rule of law and human rights as well as socio-economic development, in particular for the benefit of the vulnerable local populations of these countries, is crucial.

An urgent and a more recent priority is to prevent AQIM attacks in the Sahel region and its potential to carry out attacks on EU territory, to reduce and contain drug and other criminal trafficking destined for Europe, to secure lawful trade and communication links (roads, pipelines) across the Sahel, North-South and East-West, and to protect existing economic interests and create the basis for trade and EU investment. Improving security and development in Sahel has an obvious and direct impact on protecting European citizens and interests and on the EU internal security situation. It is therefore important to ensure and strengthen coherence and complementarity between internal and external aspects of EU security.

4. Objectives of the Strategy

5/10 years perspective: enhancing political stability, security, good governance, social cohesion in the Sahel states and economic and education opportunities, thus setting the conditions for local and national sustainable development so that the Sahel region can prosper and no longer be a potential safe haven for AQIM and criminal networks; assisting at national level in mitigating internal tensions, including the challenges posed by violent extremism on which AQIM and other criminal groups feed.

3 years perspective: improving access of populations in the contested zones to basic services (roads, livelihoods, education, social services) as well as to economic and education opportunities, while improving their relations with their parent states; reducing terrorist attacks and kidnappings in the Sahel countries, limiting the capabilities of AQIM and criminal networks, improving security in the contested zones of Sahel as States' administration and services redeploy effectively and are in line with the principles of good governance, while their security capabilities to fight terrorism and criminal trafficking across the region are improved; contributing to the fight against corruption, supporting the implementation of peace settlements, raising awareness and training the local traditional elites to better understand and react to the threats of terrorism and organised crime; increasing confidence between local and state authorities.

In pursuing these objectives, the EU will need to promote and encourage actively African responsibility and ownership, particularly of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to demonstrate focus, urgency, pragmatism and political engagement, along with flexibility and a requirement to coordinate with other players, such as the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), as well as other bilateral and multilateral partners with an interest in the region, including the UN, the USA, Canada and Japan and the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya and Morocco).

5. Building on and supporting existing initiatives at the national and regional and international level

To ensure ownership, coherence, and long-term impact, the EU has to build on and support the existing political and operational initiatives for security and development in the Sahel, both at national and regional levels, and take account of other planned initiatives of the international community.

Mali has set up, in the framework of the national policy to fight insecurity and terrorism, the *Programme spécial pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement dans le nord du Mali* (PSPSDN) to combat insecurity and terrorism in northern Mali. In parallel, Mali's President Amadou Tamani Touré has, since 2007, intended to organise a Conference of Heads of State, for which the political conditions (political will, threat perceptions, common vision and interests) have yet to be met. In addition, Mali has initiated a new office to fight against drug trafficking.

In **Mauritania**, a comprehensive national strategy to fight terrorism is being implemented with the following components: i) doctrinal and religious, ii) cultural and academic, iii) communication, iv) political, v) justice, defence and security. A Counter Terrorism law was adopted in 2010 providing a comprehensive legal framework for the judicial fight against terrorism.

In **Niger**, while a specific strategy to fight insecurity and terrorism is still under preparation, there is a strategy and action plan for the reform of the justice system, which foresees inter alia the creation of a specialised chamber responsible for dealing with terrorism and trafficking which has been established recently in the Superior Court of Niger (Tribunal de Grande Instance).

Burkina Faso has been relatively successful in pursuing economic development and has a role in several of the anti-terrorist activities in the region.

For the **Maghreb** countries, the advanced political dialogue and legal structures existing between these partners and the EU in the framework of European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plans (for Morocco), the Roadmap (for Algeria), Association Agreements (for Algeria and Morocco) could serve as a basis to develop tailor-made and coordinated actions regarding the Sahel-Sahara region. The ongoing developments in Northern Africa, especially in Libya, should be monitored closely. Developments in Libya will determine the basis for the future co-operation in these matters.

At the initiative of Algeria and following a meeting of army chiefs of Algeria, Niger, Mali and Mauritania in August 2009, a **joint military command** was set up on 20 April 2010 **in Tamanrasset** (Algeria) to coordinate operations against terrorist groups in the Sahel, followed in September 2010 by a joint intelligence cell to monitor AQIM's activities. Although this structure has yet to produce tangible operational results, initiatives of coordinating activities among the countries of Sahel should be encouraged.

The Joint EU-Africa Strategy, adopted in December 2007, provides the overall platform guiding the EU relations with the continent. Mali, Mauritania and Niger are concerned by this Strategy, which emphasises the need to promote holistic approaches to security,

encompassing conflict prevention and long-term peace-building, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, linked to governance and sustainable development, with a view to addressing the root causes of conflict. The EU holds enhanced dialogue on the continental, regional and national level in the area of peace and security, good governance and democratisation. The AU will be a privileged EU's partner in the implementation of the Sahel Strategy.

ECOWAS has developed a comprehensive regional framework for promoting good Governance, Peace and Security, based on the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. It has also adopted a Common Position on Migration and a Strategy for the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime, completed with an Action Plan (Praia Action Plan), which provides a framework for regulatory and operational action by West Africa States. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (**UNODC**) is working with the Sahel countries on regional law enforcement cooperation, including through the Sahel judicial platform. All these strategies are supported by the EU through geographical and thematic cooperation instruments. EU's strong political relations and operational cooperation with ECOWAS, the privileged regional actor, should be beneficial to the implementation of the Sahel Strategy.

Operational Challenges

There are a number of more concrete difficulties to overcome: The proposed counter-terrorism cell in Mali has still to be established, while progress on the PSPSDN (Special Programme for peace, security and development in the North of Mali) lacks momentum. In Niger, the central authority to fight against terrorism has still to be established. Local authorities face challenges in adequately mobilizing and using the units which have been trained and the material that has been provided by donors. In Mali, the setting up of the security and development poles in Northern Mali should muster strong political engagement of the central authorities while benefiting from a higher level of dialogue with the local civil society, in order to consolidate trust to avoid the deployment of security agencies in the North being interpreted by local and traditional leaders as undoing the engagements under the national pact. The security of development and humanitarian aid workers in the North of Mali and Niger has become a crucial challenge. In Niger, the preparation of a long-term strategy to fight against terrorism, initiated under the transitional authorities, will have to be pursued by the incoming administration.

6. Building on existing EU engagement in the Sahel countries

Current EU cooperation strategies under the European Development Fund (EDF), agreed with Mali, Mauritania, Niger and ECOWAS focus on political and economic governance, institutional capacity building, and regional integration. The strategy with Mali focuses in particular on the economic development of the northern and Niger River inner delta regions. Fighting terrorism, organized crime and addressing fragile states are priorities identified in the European Security Strategy², the EU Council Conclusions on Security and Development³, the Internal Security Strategy⁴ and the Stockholm Programme⁵. As outlined in the EU Counter-

² A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, 12 December 2003

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, 2008 Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy, Providing Security in a Changing World

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/104630.pdf

³ 2831st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting, Brussels, 19-20 November 2007,

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/97157.pdf

⁴<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st05/st05842-re02.en10.pdf>

Terrorism Strategy⁶, the EU's commitment is to contribute through its external action to global security and to promote the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Combating illicit trafficking of cocaine produced in Latin America and smuggled to Europe via West Africa is a priority for the EU, which has launched important initiatives in this area. Relevant progress in exchanging information among Member States as well as with major international partners (such as the US) and in avoiding overlap of actions and programs in the region can be flagged.

EU Member States and the EU coordinate their capacity building activities and exchange operational information in the region through the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) and two EU cooperation platforms in Dakar, Senegal and Accra, Ghana. Moreover, on 23 April 2010, the Council adopted the Action Oriented Paper: "Strategic and concerted action to improve cooperation in combating organized crime, especially drug trafficking, originating in West Africa"⁷, and on 3 June 2010 the Council endorsed the European Pact to combat international drug trafficking – disrupting cocaine and heroin routes⁸.

7. Strategic Lines of Action.

The Strategy focuses primarily on the countries most affected by common security challenges: Mali, Mauritania and Niger, while being placed in a larger regional context, reaching towards Chad, the Maghreb and West Africa. The Strategy is articulated around four complementary lines of action:

- **Development, good governance and internal conflict resolution:** to contribute to the general economic and social development in the Sahel; to encourage and support the internal political dialogue in the countries of the region in order to enable sustainable home-grown solutions to remaining social, political and ethnic tensions; to enhance transparent and locally accountable governance, to promote institutional capacity; re-establish and/or reinforce the administrative presence of the state, particularly in the north of Niger and Mali; to help create education and economic opportunities for local communities; to open up the regions affected by insecurity through key road and social infrastructures; and to mitigate the impact of climate change effects.
- **Political and diplomatic:** to promote a common vision and a strategy by the relevant countries, to tackle cross-border security threats and address development challenges through a sustained dialogue at the highest level; to engage with partners (including Maghreb countries, regional organisations and wider international community) on a reinforced dialogue on security and development in the Sahel.
- **Security and the rule of law:** to strengthen the capacities of the security, law enforcement and the rule of law sectors to fight threats and handle terrorism and organised crime in a more efficient and specialised manner and link them to measures of good governance in order to ensure state control.
- **Fight against and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation:** to help enhance the resilience of societies to counter extremism; to provide basic social services, economic and employment perspectives to the marginalised social groups, in

⁵ The Stockholm Programme – an open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens (2010/C 115/01)

⁶ <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st14/st14469-re04.en05.pdf>

⁷ Approved at the JHA Council of 10-11 May 2010

⁸ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114889.pdf

particular the youth vulnerable to radicalisation; to support the states and legitimate non-state actors in designing and implementing strategies and activities aiming at countering these phenomena.

Concrete activities for each Line of Action will be further developed.

8. Assumptions / risks

It is assumed that legitimate democratic institutions are maintained in the countries concerned, and that they continue to welcome EU involvement in tackling the problems they face.

There is no shortage of risks. The three greatest are the weak absorptive capacity of the state structures concerned, the fragile political consensus in some states, and therefore their difficulty in delivering outcomes, plus the physical risk of continued insecurity in several areas.

9. Resources

Political action and adequate engagement of the EU are now vital. Activities identified in this Strategy should lead to the commitment of adequate resources, expertise and funding by the EU and its Member States. Contributions by third countries in support of the Strategy should be encouraged.

Within the broader financial cooperation with these countries, the resources already committed or in the pipeline which specifically contribute to the objectives of this Strategy amount to approximately €650 million (approximately €450 million in the three Sahel countries and at the West Africa regional level and approximately €200 million in the Maghreb countries).

On the basis of the Mid-Term Review of the 10th EDF and the identification made on the ground, an additional amount of approximately €150 million may be mobilised in the three Sahel countries until the end of 10th EDF in support to the Strategy.

Moreover, funding through the Instrument for Stability (IfS) should be pursued as appropriate, taking into account the possibility to resort to the crisis response component of the Instrument for Stability to take some immediate initiatives, while long term actions through the long term component of the IfS and through EDF are being pursued.

Bilateral support from EU Member States should be geared towards supporting the objectives of this proposed EU Strategy.

Furthermore, possible actions under the Security and Rule of Law Line of Action may require additional dedicated financial and human resources. The reinforcement of EU Delegations with seconded experts from Member States may also be desirable.

When implementing the cooperation aspects of the Strategy, the EU might activate existing derogations to normal procedures for countries in situations of fragility.

The two tables below present the amounts of EU assistance to the Sahel and to the Maghreb countries under the EDF, IfS, European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), thematic programmes and budget lines.

EU assistance to the Sahel countries:

Country/region	Ongoing (in million €)		Programmed (in million €)		Proposed Additional Resources (in million €)	Total (in million €)
	Country programmes ⁹	IfS	10 th EDF	IfS		
Niger	39,9		42,2		91,6	173,7
Mali	202		38	4	50	294
Mauritania	21,25	1,2	22		8,4	52,85
West Africa region		13,7	66	6		85,7
Total	263,15	14,9	168,2	10	150	<u>606,25</u>

EU assistance to the Maghreb countries:

Country/region	Ongoing (in million €)	Planned (in million €)	New resources	Total
Algeria	99		N.A	99
Libya	24,5		N.A	24,5
Morocco	70		N.A	70
Total	193,5		N.A	193,5

9th and 10th EDF, budget lines and thematic programmes