

Defence cooperation models

Lessons learned and usability

Dick Zandee
Margriet Drent
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Clingendael Report



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Introduction

European defence cooperation can take many forms. It is neither new nor solely related to the European Union context. European countries cooperate bilaterally, in regional formats, sometimes in wider groups, and naturally in the EU and NATO. Operational cooperation is not limited to real-life operations. Formations like the EU Battlegroups and the NATO Response Force, including the Very High-Readiness Joint Task Force, are examples of permanent operational formations – be it that national contributions are rotating. There are many other cases of countries forming headquarters, combined land, air or naval formations together, as well as training and exercising together.

The result is a plethora of defence cooperation formats, some with a longer history and others with a shorter life span. Deployable multinational headquarters form a well-known category, which started to grow in the 1990s when crisis management operations began to dominate the agenda. The Eurocorps in Strasbourg (France) and the 1st German-Netherlands Army Corps in Münster (Germany) date from that era. They are not standing corps formations but permanent operational multinational headquarters, capable of commanding forces up to corps-size formations. The German-Polish Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin was established in more recent times, but fits in the same category. Standing multinational formations are not new either. The Franco-German Brigade was formed in the late 1980s. The UK/NL Landing Force has been a long-standing cooperation format of the British Royal Marines and Dutch Marine Corps.

Defence cooperation in smaller clusters has been stepped up in recent times. New formations have been established, like the Franco-British Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, created under the bilateral 2010 Lancaster House Treaty. The Netherlands and Germany have deepened their defence cooperation by merging the Dutch Air Mobile Brigade with the German 'Division Schnelle Kräfte'. There is now even an example of integration starting at the lowest level upwards: Dutch tank platoons are now part of a German tank battalion, which falls under the command of a Dutch Mechanised Brigade that has become part of a German Tank Division. The European Air Transport Command in Eindhoven (Netherlands) is often regarded as a best practice of multinational defence cooperation. It has successfully shown that permanent transfer of command authority from the national to the multinational level is possible, be it with arrangements in place to revoke it. The integrated command has resulted in more efficient use of air transport and air tanker capacities. Even role specialisation is no longer a taboo, though there are few examples of a country giving up existing capacities – and guaranteeing that others deliver these – while specialising itself in a dedicated capability. So far, it is more about exploiting 'niche' capabilities – such as the Czech Republic's chemical

defence capabilities – or a negative form of specialisation where others have to provide a capability to 'non-haves'. Baltic Air Policing, with Allies providing on rotation fighter aircraft to police the Baltic airspace, is an example.

This Report analyses the pros and cons of different defence cooperation models. Which factors determine success or failure? What lessons can be learned from a number of case studies? What conclusions can be derived from assessing the outcome of the case studies against the success and fail criteria mentioned in the literature? In other words: how usable are existing defence cooperation models for potential new ones?

The Report is limited to operational forms of defence cooperation. Armaments cooperation (research & development and procurement) is excluded. Various forms of operational cooperation will be analysed. These subcategories have also been taken into account in selecting case studies: multinational deployable headquarters; modular operational formations (countries maintaining the option of withdrawing their contribution and deploy it nationally); integrated operational formations (mutual dependency to deploy); permanent transfer of command (loss of national sovereignty) and role specialisation (offering capacities to non-haves).

The Report starts with a general chapter 1 on the success and fail factors for operational defence cooperation. What comes out of the existing literature? The next chapter 2 provides the outcome of researching five case studies: the Eurocorps; the Franco-German Brigade; the European Air Transport Command (EATC); the Belgian-Netherlands Navy Cooperation (Benesam) and Baltic Air Policing (BAP). All case studies will be treated along the same structure: key facts; background and the rationale behind the cooperation; governance; composition; resources and finances; possible future developments; pro's and con's and, finally, conclusions. In chapter 3 the outcome of the case studies will be assessed against the list of criteria as defined in chapter 1. Do the case studies confirm the criteria or is nuance required? Are there perhaps other criteria which can be learned from the case studies? This chapter provides the overall conclusions.

This Clingendael Report has been written by a team of researchers. Dick Zandee acted as project leader, overall coordinator, editor and conducted the research for the case study Baltic Air Policing. Rob Hendriks produced three case studies (Eurocorps, Franco-German Brigade, EATC) and Margriet Drent the case study Benesam. The whole team is responsible for the contents of the Report.

1 Success and fail criteria

While multinational defence cooperation has expanded over the years, relatively few publications have been dedicated to the question ‘which are the success and fail criteria’? A list of such criteria could help countries and international organisations to streamline and focus their efforts on initiatives and proposals with the best chance of success in practice. It could prevent a waste of energy, time, money and human resources dedicated to potential failures.

Naturally, golden rules do not exist. Multinational defence cooperation is the product of many factors of influence, some of which have a more structural character – like strategic culture and historic experience – while others might be of a temporary nature, such as unexpected defence budget cuts or personal relations between key political leaders. The best chance of success is created by maximising the application of various success criteria, but the combination of these criteria or factors might be different per case. Thus, it is important to determine which are the key factors, without which multinational defence cooperation is likely to fail. This chapter provides an overview of success and fail criteria, based on the relevant literature.

Criteria

Ground-breaking work on lessons learned from multinational defence cooperation was conducted by Tomas Valasek in his publication on ‘Surviving Austerity’ of 2011.¹ Since then other publications on the same theme have seen the daylight. The Clingendael Institute contributed substantially to this work.² Although the available literature does

1 Tomas Valasek, *Surviving austerity – The case for a new approach to EU military collaboration*, Centre for European Reform, April 2011.

2 In particular by the following publications: Margriet Drent, Wouter Hagemeijer en Kees Homan, *Internationale Militaire Samenwerking: Knelpunten en Kansen*, Clingendael Policy Brief, September 2011; Margriet Drent, Kees Homan, Dick Zandee, *Bold Steps in Multinational Cooperation – Taking European Defence Forward*, Clingendael Report, May 2013; Margriet Drent, Dick Zandee, Lo Casteleijn, *Defence Cooperation in Clusters – Identifying the Next Steps*, Clingendael Report, October 2014; *Internationale Materieelsamenwerking – Rapport ten behoeve van het Interdepartementaal Beleidsonderzoek (IBO) naar internationalesamenwerking op het gebied van defensiematerieel*, Clingendael rapport, januari 2015; Dick Zandee, ‘European defence: about neighbours and distant friends’, in: Daniel Fiott (Ed.), *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Paper 79, May 2015.

not provide for an agreed list of criteria, at least the following characteristics seem to cover the middle ground.

- **Trust, confidence and solidarity:** generally, this is regarded as the most important success factor, in particular for operational defence cooperation. The more partners trust each other, the easier cooperation will be – though not automatic. Confidence and solidarity are key when operating together. Fear of losing support of a partner ('abandonment') or perceived risk of being drawn by a partner into conflict or undesirable situations ('entrapment') can be a fail factor of cooperation.³ Partners must be sure they can rely on each other without surprises or hidden agenda's. However, trust can also grow during a cooperation project. In the beginning some partners in the NATO Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) – the pooling and sharing of C-17 military transport aircraft – had limited trust and confidence in other partners. They nevertheless joined because the United States acted as the lead nation of the SAC project. Later on, trust was established between all partner countries.⁴ Thus, trust is very important but not a *conditio sine qua non* at the start. Trust can grow over time.
- **Sovereignty and autonomy:** maintaining national sovereignty is often mentioned as a crucial blocking factor for deeper defence cooperation. Principally, countries want to have autonomy in the maximum amount of capabilities in order not to be dependent on others. On the other hand autonomy can be threatened by losing capabilities, for example as a result of budget cuts. When sovereignty is seen as 'the ability to act', defence cooperation with partner countries can even become a necessity. The German-Dutch integration of tank units is an example.⁵ Without this dependency on Germany, the Netherlands Army would not have a key component for operations at the highest level of the spectrum of land warfare available.
- **Similarity of strategic cultures:** this is of primary importance for deploying capabilities together. Valasek sees the Franco-British Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, created by the 2010 Lancaster House Treaty, as a potential success formula as the two countries have "a similar risk-taking, expeditionary mentality".⁶ On the other hand, the Germans and the French military have often closely worked together in stability-type operations, while not sharing the same expeditionary mentality.

3 *European Defence Cooperation – Sovereignty and the Capacity to Act*, Advisory Council on International Affairs, No. 78, January 2012.

4 *Internationale materieelsamenwerking*, p. 108.

5 A Dutch tank platoon will be integrated in a German tank battalion which will fall under the command of a Dutch Mechanised Brigade forming part of a German Tank Division.

6 Valasek, p. 21.

Similarity of strategic cultures is important, but mainly for interventions at the high end of the spectrum.

- **Geography and history:** most forms of deeper operational defence cooperation exist between neighbouring countries. They know each other best and often they have a long history of cooperation. Neighbours rather than distant friends are more likely to deepen their defence cooperation successfully. But it is not an absolute criterium. The NATO AWACS fleet and SAC show that a wider group of countries from various regions and with different history can operate an integrated capability successfully – be it in the category of enablers. It is less likely to happen in front line combat units.
- **Number of partners:** the general rule is that multinational defence cooperation will be more difficult when the number of participants goes up. The risk of diverging interests and national sensitivities increases. Therefore, deeper defence cooperation normally takes place in bilateral or in small subregional formations. When conducted in larger groups, it is important that a limited number of countries starts the project, sets the rules and conditions of cooperating together, which have to be followed by additional partners joining later. The European Air Transport Command (EATC) is an example of such a two-step approach.⁷
- **Countries and forces of similar size and quality:** cooperation between countries of different size can be hindered by fear of domination (by the smaller) or by ignoring the needs of the other (by the bigger partner). Equally, larger countries may judge the capabilities of smaller countries to be of lower quality. On the other hand, there are examples of successful defence cooperation between bigger and smaller countries (German-Netherlands, Belgian-French, German-Danish). Trust and mutual understanding can nullify the potential negative effects of the bigger-smaller countries relationship.
- **Top-down and bottom-up:** strong leadership at the political and the top military level is essential for defence cooperation to succeed, but equally bottom-up full engagement of military experts is required. They have to go hand-in-hand and both have to be sustained over time. Of the two, political commitment is the more risky factor. Good personal relations between Heads of State and Government and/or between Defence Ministers of partner countries can be lost due to the outcome of elections or other sudden changes. On the other hand, in case of deeper defence cooperation with mutual dependencies, change at the political or military top levels is unlikely to lead to reversing or ending the cooperation model.

7 Internationale materieelsamenwerking, p. 104.

- **Mind-set, defence culture and organisation:** 'national first thinking' has to be replaced by 'multinational first thinking'. This will take time as, traditionally, organisational structures and cultures in defence departments and military staffs have always been based on national priorities. Education, exchange of liaison-officers, career planning by alternating between national and international positions will certainly help to reduce the problem. Countries may also be different in their ways of working, in organisational set-up, and in operating procedures. These factors can have a negative impact on cross-border defence cooperation, but they are not static. They can change and adapt over time – like it is the case with trust.⁸
- **Defence planning alignment:** especially permanent forms of defence cooperation will require partners to align their defence planning. Mutual dependencies can best be sustained when partners procure the same equipment in the future. Naturally, this applies fully to integrated units, in which the military down to the lowest organisational level operate together. Defence planning alignment for replacing equipment is one thing. Chances for successful new cooperation projects will increase by systematically aligning defence plans. Transparency is the first requirement. Equally, planners have to be obliged to investigate potential for multinational cooperation first.⁹
- **Standardisation and interoperability:** the further concepts, doctrine and, obviously, equipment are standardised, the easier and more far-reaching defence cooperation can be. In particular operating the same equipment allows for integration, not only in the areas of training and education, but also with regard to logistics, maintenance, and the acquisition of spare parts (through-life management). Procuring the same equipment offers the best potential for deeper operational cooperation. The European Participating Air Forces (EPAF) of countries operating the F-16 fighter aircraft is a good example of operationally efficient and financially cost-effective close collaboration in training, operations, maintenance, and acquisition of spare parts.
- **Realism, clarity and seriousness of intentions:** although it might be regarded as an open door, realism is an important criterium for success. Too many projects have failed because they only served a political or symbolic purpose. Countries should have the same intentions, be open and clear about the goals of cooperating together, and define realistic objectives. Equally, partners have to be serious in their approach

8 Internationale materieelsamenwerking, p. 108.

9 In the Netherlands this principle was introduced into defence planning several years ago. In 2016 the Defence Materiel Acquisition Process (document) was amended. Armaments planners now have to check first the potential for multinational acquisition. In case this option will not be pursued, the Minister of Defence will have to explain (to parliament) why a multinational solution is not feasible.

to defence, both in budgetary terms but also in order “to be more willing to accept and navigate the political risks (partial loss of sovereignty, industrial tensions) that cross-border defence cooperation entails.”¹⁰ Financially, there can be no free-riding. Successful cooperation requires both partners to invest when required.

- **Involvement of parliaments:** depending on national constitutions and traditions, parliaments play an essential role in decisions both on deployment of military forces as well as on defence planning and procurement. Thus, it can be of extreme importance to involve parliaments of partner countries when deepening defence cooperation. This is not only a matter of awareness and information-sharing. It can have consequences for parliamentary decision-making procedures as well.¹¹

Types of cooperation

In this report the following types of multinational operational defence cooperation are considered:

- **Multinational deployable headquarters:** headquarter formations able to plan and lead up to corps-sized operations with a permanently integrated multinational staff. Examples: 1st German-Netherlands Army Corps (Münster); Eurocorps (Strasbourg); German-Polish Multinational Corps Northeast (Szczecin).
- **Modular operational formations:** permanent multinational formations with an integrated multinational staff, but countries maintaining the option to deploy their contribution nationally or with other partners. Examples: UK/NL Landing Force, the Franco-British Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJTF); the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF); the German Division SchnelleKräfte/Dutch 11 Air Mobile Brigade.
- **Integrated operational formations:** permanently integrated formations which can only be deployed when all partners agree due to dependencies on each other. Examples: most multinational deployable headquarters; Strategic Airlift Command (SAC); the integrated German-Netherlands tank battalion.¹²

10 Valasek, p. 26.

11 For further study, see: Margriet Drent, Minke Meijnders, *Multi-year Defence Agreements – A Model for Modern Defence?*, Clingendael Report, September 2015; Anne Bakker, Margriet Drent, Lennart Landman, *The Parliamentary Dimension of Defence Cooperation*, Clingendael Report, April 2016.

12 The Dutch could deploy their tanks outside the integrated battalion (and/or their brigade) without the German tank battalion, and the Germans could deploy the battalion without the 16 Dutch tanks (and/or outside of the Dutch brigade and/or their division without the Dutch brigade). In all these cases the full combat potential of the involved units would not be used optimally.

- **Permanent transfer of command:** a multinational formation to which participating countries have transferred command on a permanent basis, thus losing national command authority. Examples: European Air Transport Command (EATC); SAC; NATO AWACS.
- **Role specialisation:** countries (non-haves) being fully dependent on other countries to deliver capabilities to them ('negative' role specialisation). Example: Baltic Air Policing.

The importance of the criteria for the various types of multinational operational cooperation will be assessed by developing the five case studies (see chapter 2).

2 Case studies



CASE STUDY A: EUROCORPS

Key facts

Starting date operations

Official inauguration: November 1993.

Full operational capability (FOC): November 1995.

Participating countries

Framework nations: Belgium (1993), France (1992), Germany (1992), Luxembourg (1996) and Spain (1994).

Associated nations: Greece (2002), Italy (2009), Poland (2002), Romania (2011) and Turkey (2002).¹³

Location

Strasbourg (France).

Category

Multinational deployable headquarters.

¹³ Formerly associated nations: Austria (2002-2011), Canada (2003-2007), Finland (2002-2006).

Cooperation agreement

The 'La Rochelle Report' (1992) officially created the (then) French-German Eurocorps. The Treaty of Strasbourg¹⁴ (2004, ratified in 2009) redefined the principles concerning missions, organisational details and the working methods of the Eurocorps; it also defined the status of the headquarters of the Eurocorps.

Employments

- Bosnia-Herzegovina, May 1998 – December 1999: three successive rotations to the NATO SFOR HQ in Sarajevo (not as an integral HQ in charge, but delivering a large part of staff capacity for SFOR).
- Kosovo, April 2000 – October 2000: framework staff and the HQ for the NATO KFOR mission.
- Afghanistan, August 2004 – February 2005: framework staff for the HQ of NATO's ISAF VI.
- Afghanistan, 2012: augmentation (300 personnel) to HQ ISAF, HQ ISAF Joint Command and HQ NATO Training Mission.
- Mali, July 2015 – December 2015: framework staff for the EU Training Mission HQ.¹⁵

Furthermore the Eurocorps has been a stand-by readiness HQ for the NATO Response Forces (NRF) in 2007 (NRF 7) and in 2015 (NRF 15). It is scheduled to perform this duty again in 2020.

14 Original title: 'Vertrag über das Europäische Korps und die Rechtsstellung eines Hauptquartier'.

15 Eurocorps is scheduled to perform this duty again in the second semester of 2017.

Background and rationale

The Eurocorps (EC) is a multi-national operational expeditionary standing headquarters (HQ), capable of commanding an up to 65,000 strong land force. It can plan and conduct land (heavy) operations, by commanding allocated forces.

It has an extensive standing mission:

- To develop its capability to adapt its role to various options, based on strong tactical and land-oriented skills, thus being capable to assume responsibilities at the operational-tactical threshold under various flags.
- To be prepared as an EU reaction force within the whole spectrum of EU crisis management operations.
- To be prepared to act for NATO: as follow-on Joint Task Force HQ for a land heavy Small Joint Operation, as Land Component Command for Rapid Response missions, or as Army Corps HQ for an Art. 5 Major Joint Operation.

It is intended to perform across the full operational and intensity spectrum, for its framework nations, EU, NATO and other international organisations. For any deployment a UN Mandate is needed.¹⁶

French President Mitterrand and German Chancellor Kohl created the EC with the signing of the 'La Rochelle Report' in May 1992.¹⁷ The nations wanted to support the European Security and Defence Initiative by creating a corps that was also open to others, and by facilitating rapprochement between the EU and NATO. France was more focussed on European defence development, whereas for Germany security equalled NATO. Still, the EC was supposed to be a more EU oriented endeavour. Notwithstanding that preference, the first employment agreement was with NATO. The SACEUR agreement, defining the EC's conditions of employment in a NATO framework, was signed already in January 1993. Next, the EC framework nations decided to put the EC at the disposal of the Western European Union (WEU), based on the Petersberg Declaration which defined the WEU's crisis management tasks, in May 1993. The Belgian parliament voted for participation in the EC in June 1993. Implementation followed quickly, with the bulk of the troops attributed in the summer of 1994. Belgium, as an outspoken advocate of European military integration¹⁸, most likely saw the EC as a clear opportunity to show in deeds that it was prepared to actually take steps and physically contribute to such developments.

The official inauguration ceremony of the EC was in Strasbourg in November 1993. On the same day, the Franco-German Brigade and a French signals regiment were subordinated, and initial operational capability was declared. Spain joined the EC in

16 From interviews, also in the Concept of Employment.

17 The Elysee Treaty of 1963 is the basic foundation for military cooperation between France and Germany.

18 S. Biscop (edit.), *The military contribution of Belgium to the ESDP*, The Royal Egmond Institute for International Relations, Brussels, June 2007, p. 11.

July 1994, its government aiming to contribute to the building of the security and defence dimension of the EU, and to reinforce the operational capability of the WEU and NATO.¹⁹ The EC HQ was then exercised in several command post exercises and major units were subordinated in October 1995: the French 1st Armoured, the German 10th Armoured and the Belgian 1st Mechanised Divisions, and the Spanish 21st Mechanised Brigade. Full operational capability was declared in November of that same year. Luxembourg joined the EC in May 1996. The EC followed an intense exercise program and was employed for its first mission, to Bosnia-Herzegovina for SFOR, in 1998. Initiated by France and Germany, the framework nations decided to transform the EC into a Rapid Reaction Corps in mid 1999; the related restructuring of the HQ started two years later. Also, the framework nations declared the EC to be available for the EU at the European Council meeting in June 1999, when the EU launched the European Security and Defence Policy. English was adopted as the only official language in the HQ (a prerequisite for the EC's role as NATO Rapid Reaction Corps) in August 2002, ending the use of French and German as working languages. A new Technical Agreement with SHAPE adapted the SACEUR Agreement to the NATO Rapid Reaction Corps requirements in September 2002. Conform the High Readiness Force criteria, the EC opened its doors for military personnel of NATO and EU member states at that time. The newly created Multinational Command Support Brigade went operational in November 2002, and an until now uninterrupted period of exercises, missions and stand-by duties followed for the EC. The Treaty of Strasbourg of 2004 went into force with the ratification by all framework nations in February 2009. The changes in the NATO standing command structure led to the new task of preparing to be able to perform as a Joint Task Force. Due to national reorganisations within the framework nations, the initial troop concept (permanently under Operational Command [OPCOM] of the EC) became obsolete.²⁰ This led to the development of the Three-Six Employment Policy (TSEPEC) EUROCORPS, approved 27 May 2015. The TSEPEC serves as a kind of force generation process with a six years outlook. Currently, the framework nations of the EC represent close to 40% of the EU members' military personnel and approximately 45% of EU members' military expenditure. These figures will rise, to approximately 45% and close to 50% respectively, with the accession of Poland in 2017.

Governance

The main steering body of the EC is the Common Committee (CoCo), formed by the Chiefs of Defence and the Political Directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the framework nations. It meets yearly, and Commander EC participates. The facilitating chairmanship, in the function of the 'Corresponding General', rotates over the nations. The Treaty of Strasbourg (ToS) declares the CoCo responsible for 'preparing the decisions of the parties and implementing them as soon as they have been approved,

19 From interviews.

20 From interviews.

issuing directives to the Commanding General of the EC and ensuring mutual information and coordination between the parties.²¹ Topics which fall under the responsibility of the CoCo are related to the EC's structure, employment considerations, external relations such as with the EU and NATO, and ToS implementation issues including the budget and personnel policy.²² The EC Committee – composed of senior officers from the nations' joint or army staffs – assists the CoCo and acts as the antechamber, meeting each quarter of the year, also with HQ EC represented. There is a plethora of other steering bodies, dealing with specific matters such as finance, security and auditing. This seems rather abundant, but strict descriptions of responsibilities are in place, and the Commander EC and his HQ do not feel burdened by the work and influence of the bodies.²³ The whole construct has worked smoothly with two or three nations, but with five it takes more effort to find consensus. However, 'if it must work, it works'²⁴, and solutions will be found if the sense of urgency on the political level is large enough. The decision-making process in itself with regard to deployment is not a problem. It has been achieved on mission employment within three days. The political discussion between nations is decisive: e.g. Libya or Syria will not be, South-Sudan might be, Mali obviously is a feasible option for employment of the EC.²⁵

Composition

The staff in the EC HQ is completely multinational. The commander, deputy commander, chief of staff, and deputy chiefs-of-staff are divided amongst the framework nations, and rotate in a two-years schedule. Of these functions, the commander, deputy, chief-of-staff, and deputy chief-of-staff operations must always be assigned to different nations evenly. The current commander is Lieutenant-General (Spanish Army) Alfredo Ramirez. Other positions are mostly flag to post, in other words nations have a prolonged claim to specific functions. Whenever a new framework nation enters the cooperation or an associated nation sends in personnel to the HQ, this will result in a re-shuffle, since there is obviously not the opportunity to just cumulate the number of functions. The EC has no influence on the posting by nations; vetting is a national obligation. In practice, this delivers a normal ratio of suitability of posted personnel. The one permanently subordinate unit – the Multinational Command Support Brigade (MNCSB) – is also a multinational entity. The total size of the HQ staff is approximately 400 personnel, and about 600 for the MNCSB. France (33 percent) and Germany (28 percent) occupy the majority of the posts.

21 Treaty of Strasbourg, Brussels, November 2004, p. 6.

22 *Terms of Reference for the Eurocorps' Steering Bodies*, Strasbourg, December 2010, pp. 2-3.

23 From interviews.

24 From interviews.

25 From interviews.

Resources and finance

The EC HQ has its own HQ equipment, partly purchased from the multinational budget, partly permanently handed over by nations. Personal equipment of the military is a national responsibility. Weapons however are delivered by type: handguns by Belgium, long rifles by three nations. Vehicles are similarly available. Generic communications & IT equipment are multinationally owned, whereas operational ICT/Signals is taken care of by a German Signals Company in the MNCSB. The Commander EC prepares an annual common draft budget and a medium term draft financial plan. The budget is approved by the CoCo. It amounts to € 12.8 million (2015). The budget includes operating & maintenance (40%), infrastructural costs (24%)²⁶, investments (20%), training & exercise costs (14%), and personnel costs (2%). It is financed by the framework nations, whose financial contributions are calculated on the basis of the national contribution in personnel as fixed in the organisational Peace Establishment (including flagged and rotational posts) of the HQ on 1 January of each budgetary year. The EC Commander is responsible for budget execution. An independent Auditing Committee monitors, checks, and verifies all issues regarding the budget. Additionally, national auditing authorities have the right to perform checks on this budget.

Education, training and exercises

All individual training (basic, functional, topical) is a national obligation.²⁷ Twice a year there is an EC organised international training, comprising basic soldiering skills, bonding activities, cultural exchange programs, etc. Mission preparation training is a national task for the generic soldiering and is based on specific national requirements. A tailor-made mission preparation training for the functional part – the HQ entities – is organised by the EC itself. This chosen division of responsibilities has worked well for the HQ over its existence. The generic soldiering training is very much alike across the nations, so the national execution of it does not lead to misfits or friction in the HQ nor the MNCSB.²⁸ Obviously, specific national preparation requirements must be arranged by the respective nations. Culturally, the common denominator between military personnel in the end is larger than the differences. The fact that several – rather than two – cultures cooperate makes for easier blending in practice.

Employment

Employment of the EC always remains an exclusive responsibility of the framework nations and has to be based on consensus. The Concept of Employment provides the

26 The operating costs of using the infrastructure (buildings, etc.) which is offered by the host nation (France).

27 It should be finalised upon arriving at the HQ, but that is not always the case. This is because of national regulations that sometimes only allow for specific – especially international – courses after a function has been appointed.

28 From interviews.

conceptual framework on how to use the EC within its full mission spectrum. The overall basic principles for employment of the EC are threefold:

- “EU vocation: the EU will become a more predominant focus of EC employment, without ever discarding its NATO affiliation.
- Modularity: the ability to adopt various, mission tailored, lower level roles.
- Comprehensive approach: will be part of all adopted roles, and in line with EU and NATO policy (...) tailored to the specific needs of the mission.”²⁹

Specific mid and longer term planning is done through the Three-Six Employment Policy Concept. It addresses the use of the EC, comprising a detailed assessment and tasking on the different main efforts of the EC for the three upcoming years, and a general idea for the three years beyond that. It requires endorsement by the CoCo at the end of each year. As such, it is the main working mechanism document for the framework nations and the EC. The intent of the framework nations is for the EC to remain a relevant capability by maintaining operational and deployable. For a long period, the EC has earned this accreditation on the NATO side only, even though the founding members had an employment preference that leaned slightly to the EU. Article 47 of the Treaty of Strasbourg states that ‘the parties may unanimously invite any member state of the EU to accede to the Treaty’, emphasizing the EU preference of the EC framework nations. However, shortly after the start in 1995, the demand on NATO side turned out to be real and plentiful, whereas the EU in general remained rather hesitant regarding the use of military capability.³⁰ Furthermore, the few small EU military missions were not suitable for an HQ of the type and level of the EC. More recently, the situation has significantly changed with the EU, as shown, among other developments, by the creation of the CSDP task catalogue. The EC framework nations have immediately reemphasised the availability of the EC for actual missions of the EU. Currently, the EC is more involved with the EU than with NATO, having been the framework HQ for the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali in 2015, and taking on that task again in 2017. However, the EC is actively striving to find the proper balance. For 2020 the EC is on the NATO NRF roster again.

Future

The first item is the change of Poland’s participation from associated to framework nation. Although earlier announced for 2016, currently the projected date is January 2017. Secondly, there is the ongoing study into becoming the EU’s preferred HQ. This is not about transforming the EC into a permanent EU Operation HQ (OHQ) based in Brussels. The EC framework nations regard deployability as a key feature of the EC. Rather, the EC can be a forward HQ for EU military operations and it would like to become the steady primary candidate for such a role. It could also form a Joint Operational Planning Group from its HQ, which could be offered for instance to the EU Military Staff as a planning (facilitating) tool. In parallel, the EC is further developing

29 *Concept of Employment, Eurocorps*, Strasbourg, November 2014, pp. 5-6.

30 From interviews.

towards full ability to perform as Joint Task Force HQ for NATO, expanding its existing scope for commanding land forces to include air and naval capabilities. It already has permanent air and maritime elements in-house in order to include contemplations from those domain-specialists into planning. The rebalancing towards the EU after a long NATO focus is ongoing, but there is awareness that there must not be an overbalance.

A third and most recent development is the French-German proposal to reinforce European defence cooperation in the context of implementing the EU Global Strategy and revitalising the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. Both countries aim at further strengthening the role of the EC in the context of the 'Framework document between the EU and Eurocorps'. In a first step the EC should support the EU with "expertise for training, mentoring, advisory and assistance missions" and in a second step it should "put at the EU's disposal adequate capabilities at the tactical/operational level for the planning and conduct of military CSDP missions and operations" – a new task already mentioned above.³¹

Pros

The following elements can be regarded as positive factors of the EC model:

- True multinationality is a tough working construct, but it does result – once consensus is reached – in strong unity of purpose and hence in unity of effort.
- The framework nations represent a significant part of European defence capability (even more so after Poland enters; close to 50% of military expenditure and 45% of personnel strength).
- Despite the domination (over 50 percent) of French and German military in the EC HQ the construct regards all participants equal once aboard, whether it is a large defence nation like France or a smaller country such as Luxembourg – which is expressed in the rotation of key posts in the EC HQ among all framework nations.

Cons

The following elements can be regarded as negative factors of the EC model:

- Multinational cooperation becomes increasingly difficult with more partners involved, especially if it is not on one topic or function (as for instance at the EATC), but on a whole range of those, combining into a broad land capability.

31 *Revitalizing CSDP towards a comprehensive, realistic and credible Defence in the EU*, French-German paper, September 2016.

- The agreed consensus model is completely clear (all in or not in at all), however brings the risk of an 'all but one' situation. If 4 out of 5 want to employ the EC and one does not, it is a no go, which might be highly frustrating for the 'majority'. If that happens too often (and 'too' is alas indefinable) it may erode the solidarity amongst framework nations, leading to a hollowing of the symbolic and actual value of the EC as a multinational European deployable HQ.
- Because of the difficulty in finding a proper balance of focus for the EC, the availability of the EC for both the EU and NATO – although a positive principle in itself – could lead to adaptation problems in case of real-life employment to one of the two organisations.

Conclusions

Multinationality is never easy and sometimes even far from it. Interoperability within the EC is in order though; the challenges are as normal as within any multinational formation. It takes constant effort within the EC HQ, and certainly also in the many steering bodies, to keep the balance between five and soon six framework nations. However, in the end this does deliver a larger return on investment, since multinationality represents a feeling of shared responsibility. In the EC this is for instance shown in the arrangements for the resources. Some of these arrangements may not be the most logical ones (like having the vehicles delivered by several nations, with logistical consequences), but certainly breathe the idea of 'nation sharing': all framework nations adding to the sum of materiel. Operationally, the EC has given ample evidence of being able to do what its nations had intended it for. If any cautioning remark is in order, then it is that there seems to be a pendulum-like switch in focus on NATO or EU employment. After focussing too long on the one organisation as employer, it takes quite some effort to adapt to the 'other' organisation when that comes into focus. If the amplitude of the pendulum would be smaller – a shorter, or less strong, focus in practice – it would cost less effort to switch focus when and if the 'other' organisation becomes an employer. The EC is very aware of this, and strives to achieve a more balanced dual focus. However, recent political developments – in particular the recent French-German initiative to reinforce the EC in its EU role – could work to the contrary.



CASE STUDY B: FRANCO-GERMAN BRIGADE

Key facts

Starting date operations

Founded: October 1989.

Full operational capability (FOC): October 1990.

Participating countries

France and Germany.

Location (Brigade HQ)

Müllheim, Germany.

Units belonging to the brigade are at various locations in France and Germany.

Category

Modular and integrated operational formation.

Subordinate units of the brigade can be deployed nationally; thus, the category would be 'modular operational formation'. In case of deployment of the brigade as a whole, the appropriate label is 'integrated operational formation'.³²

Cooperation agreement

The 'Foundation Treaty for the Franco-German Brigade' (current version December 2010) between the two governments and additional 'Technical Agreements on the Franco-German Brigade' (current version October 2012) between the two Ministries of Defence.

Employments

- Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1996 and 1998: SFOR, Central Brigade, Sarajevo.
- Afghanistan, July 2004 – January 2005: ISAF, Kabul Multinational Brigade.
- Mali, February 2014 – August 2014: framework unit for the EU Training Mission (EUTM).
- Elements of the brigade were deployed to: Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2002, SFOR; FYROM, 2003, Task Force Fox; Kosovo, 2009-10, KFOR; Mali, 2014-16, EUTM; Lebanon, 2015, DAMAN.
- Units of the brigade have also been employed in support of civil authorities/disaster relief: ERIKA oil spill in France, 2000; Hurricane LOTHAR in France and Germany, 2002; ELBE flooding in Germany, 2002 and 2013; and HEPHAISTOS forest fires in France, 2013.
- Furthermore the Brigade has been a stand-by readiness unit for the NATO Response Forces (NRF) in 2006 (NRF 7) and 2010-2011 (NRF 15) and for EU Battlegroup II in 2008.
- The Brigade or parts of it have been recently deployed in several NATO Assurance exercises, including in Lithuania in 2016.
- Finally, units of the Brigade have also been employed on numerous purely national missions.

32 The brigade staff and the combat service support battalion are the only truly integrated bi-national entities. Of these, the brigade staff could theoretically be employed 'stand-alone' as a task force staff for units in a mission, thus fitting the category of 'multinational deployable headquarter'. However, this option is highly unfeasible since it does not fit the intent of the participating nations.

Background and rationale

The Franco-German Brigade (FGB)³³ is a binational operational combat brigade.³⁴

The FGB has a threefold standing mission³⁵:

- to contribute to the friendship between France and Germany, and to sustain the achieved trust between the two, by developing common maxims, procedures, and regulations;
- to improve military efficiency, by harmonisation, standardisation, and interoperability;
- to be a deployable and capable military formation, including the ability to perform an initial-entry operation.

French President Mitterrand and German Chancellor Kohl decided to create a binational military brigade at their summit meeting in November 1987.³⁶ The initiative was to 'express the special French-German cooperation' and 'be an example for further multinational efforts to the conventional defence capability in Europe.'³⁷ The FGB was founded in October 1989. It achieved full operational capability (FOC) in October 1990, which was celebrated with the inauguration ceremony in the presence of both Defence Ministers. Since then, the FGB has been continuously engaged in intensive training and exercise programs. It was deployed for the first time in 1996 in Bosnia-Herzegovina (NATO SFOR), followed by many other deployments, both for crisis management missions abroad as for military support to civil authorities at home. A 'Common Vision for the future of the Franco-German Brigade' was agreed in 2004. The vision focuses on the midterm future, and puts the FGB in the wider context of the cooperation between the two armies, and the strengthening of European defence, in particular for the building of a European rapid response unit.

Governance

At the political level the two nations have the (standing) Franco-German Defence and Security Council, which includes the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Defence. The FGB receives its standing mission and orders, and generic direction, from this level through the Treaty for the Franco-German Brigade. The two defence ministries have the 'Technical Agreements on the Franco-German Brigade' (current version 2012) for procedural and process descriptions in place. Next to that, these ministries have a Standing Land Working Group with a Military Cooperation Working Group, and one of

33 The German name is 'Deutsch-Französische Brigade', the French name is 'Brigade Franco-Allemande'. For the purpose of this case study the nations are mentioned in alphabetical order throughout the text, including in the name.

34 A brigade is the smallest type of land formation that is capable – due to its organisational lay-out as well as personnel and armaments composition – of carrying out operations without reinforcements.

35 As defined in the Treaty for the Franco-German Brigade.

36 The Elysee Treaty of 1963 is the basic foundation for military cooperation between France and Germany.

37 H. Franke & O. Richter (Editors), *25 Jahre Deutsch-Französische Brigade*, Müllheim, 2014, p. 13.

the sub-groups of this is the FGB Working Group. Although this body has no place in the actual hierarchy above the FGB, it does deal with many issues that obviously directly involve or influence the FGB. Looking at the operational picture, the FGB is virtually 'surrounded' by higher echelons. Both army staffs officially have the FGB in their order of battle. Although the army staff level normally does not directly get involved with brigades (unless there is no intermediate level, as in the Netherlands), the special nature and position of the binational brigade as a high-profile unit implies that one or the other of the army staffs is paying attention to the FGB on specific topics sometimes. The actual next higher echelon for a brigade is the division level, and the FGB falls under two divisions: the 1st (French) Division and the 10th (German) Armoured Division. These two divisions lead the FGB as if it were one of the regular brigades under their command. Yearly exercise plans, yearly management orders, and specific orders arrive from both divisions at the FGB HQ. For the French units belonging to the FGB these come from the 1st (French) Division; for the German units they come from the 10th (German) Armoured Division. For the FGB in total and for the Brigade staff they come from both divisions. The Brigade staff is responsible for deconfliction between the two sets of instructions and for compatibility of these 'national inputs' with the binational obligations. For a while the FGB has resided directly under the Eurocorps as a dedicated unit. The subordination of the FGB to the Eurocorps has been ended, redefining the connection as 'preferred partnership'. Additionally, for national operations in both nations, and for issues like infrastructure of the peace-time location barracks, the FGB's units fall under two respective territorial commands: for the French the 'Etat Major Soutien Defense' and for the German units the 'Bundeswehr Territorial Kommando'. This arrangement adds two more entities to the list of higher echelons.

Composition

The FGB is 5,000 military strong and has 150 civilian employees. The HQ/Brigade staff, located in Müllheim (Germany), has approximately 150 personnel. The FGB consists of four combat units: a French light infantry regiment, a French light cavalry regiment and two German light infantry battalions (all together some 3,050 military). There are two combat support units (a German artillery battalion and a German armoured engineer company – together around 830 personnel) and a binational combat service support unit, the Support Battalion of about 970 military. The ratio French vs. German personnel is approximately 50/50 for the binational staff and the Support Battalion. The four (national) combat units are equally divided between France and Germany. The two combat support units are both fully German. This results in a total of 2,100 French and 2,900 German military for the total strength of the FGB. Personnel of the FGB is overall highly motivated. They feel the FGB is a special entity to serve in, which is also expressed in its very full exercise program and its high rate of mission employment.³⁸

38 From interviews.

Leadership at the FGB is as binational as practically possible: every two years the Brigade Commander changes, switching between France and Germany, with the Deputy Commander cross-switching at the same time. Added to that, every two years, but with a year difference to the above, a likewise change is made with the Chief-of-Staff (the directing manager of a brigade staff) and the G3 (one of the branch chiefs of a brigade staff, considered *primus inter pares* because he is responsible for operations). The binational Support Battalion has the same arrangement, switching the commander/ deputy position between the nations every two years, and this happens even at company level. The other units have regular national command arrangements. There is however the issue of the two official languages. Cadre at the HQ and the Support Battalion is required to be bilingual. For troops it is not mandatory, but they are encouraged to be. The rest of the units use their national language. Add to this that for employment in the NATO or EU context the operating language is English. So there is a risk of 'lost in translation'. Probably a switch to English as working language, as has been made in the Eurocorps HQ, would in the end take less effort from the personnel and help prevent misunderstanding. Managing all this, the FGB necessarily follows a pragmatic approach. With the Brigade not always being truly binational, but sometimes rather 'having two nationalities', there is a constant need for adaptability and flexibility. Often the Brigade staff manages to discern what is the easiest way (between two national choices) to get something arranged and then just uses that solution. This has become more difficult over the last few years however, because of a stricter application of the rules by the national military authorities.³⁹ So far, this has not created an obstacle for the FGB, which is used to finding solutions for challenges that other units do not have. The common will to make this cooperation work has always been strong, true to the FGB's motto: "*Devoir d'excellence – Dem Besten verpflichtet*" (Duty of excellence).

Resources and finance

All subordinate units have national vehicles, equipment and weapons. For the binational Support Battalion this implies a mixed set of means. The Brigade staff and Support Battalion have French weapons, however for national training obligations German personnel uses German weapons and mostly these also go along into missions. With regard to infrastructure, the responsibility (and costs) lie with the two respective nations for their units. The binational HQ/Brigade staff and the Support Battalion fall back on host nation support by Germany (at Müllheim). One German light infantry battalion is stationed in France and, likewise, France provides the infrastructure. Thus, host nation support seems to be balanced between the two countries. For communication and information systems (CIS) equipment, the current situation is that the units use national means. These are not completely compatible, and where this delivers friction, the nations have provided 'double' sets, falling back on 'human interface' to overcome the non-compatibility. Operationally this is not optimal, so the

39 From interviews.

nations are looking into a new concept for CIS equipment. With regard to finance, the only remaining large cost-group is for training & exercises. Here the arrangement is that each nation carries the costs of the events where its national units are the main training audience (and including costs for the binational entities and guests), and at the end of each spending year these costs are balanced out.

Doctrine

For higher level doctrine, the FBG uses the NATO doctrine series and, where existing, EU doctrinal work. All subordinate units are also fully taught in their respective national doctrines. This is the case for domain, functional, and thematic doctrine.⁴⁰ At the level of (tactical) procedures and instructions, the HQ and the Support Battalion have developed binational standard operating procedures (SOP) and standard operating instructions (SOI) for the brigade as a whole, the staff, and the Support Battalion. All the (other) subordinate units (also) use nationally developed SOP/SOIs internally. This has implicated quite some effort in the past, but the SOP/SOI sets are now mostly harmonised and they are relatively easy to adapt to changes from either side of the binational vs. national balance.

Education, training and exercises

All functional training and education are national obligations. But many of the national courses have been made available for the other nation's personnel. For instance, French snipers follow courses at the German 'Gebirgsjägerschule' (mountain troop school). This enhances interoperability and understanding amongst personnel and thus the units. Training is organised nationally, but as a principle, always executed binationally. In case of a French regiment going into a French training facility, it will have a German unit embedded for the occasion and vice versa. Again, this is part of the effort to constantly strive for optimal interoperability. Larger exercises, especially those in the NATO calendar (or in the preparation blocks for stand-by periods for NATO or EU) are always entered binationally, and with the largest possible presence of units. Additionally, a two week long binational training & education block is organised four times per year. This block includes 'green weeks' (basic soldiering skills), bonding activities, cultural exchange programs, etc. The focus for these sessions is on the non-commissioned officers, being the 'backbone' of the formation.

Employment

For both nations, the FGB is a deployable brigade like any of their national ones, but with two peculiarities: binationality and polyvalence. They regard it to be an important element of the (rapid) reaction capability of both EU and NATO, able to cover the whole

40 Domain: Joint, Land, Air, Maritime, Space, (arguably) Cyber. Functional: e.g. Planning, Intelligence, Logistics, CIMIC, Engineering, etc (roughly as per the branches of a staff). Thematical: e.g. Counter Insurgency, Security Forces Assistance, Non-combatant evacuation operations, etc.

spectrum of possible missions of both organisations. The FGB should be exemplary in Europe by achieving and maintaining the highest possible level of interoperability, exploiting complementarity and contributing to armaments cooperation, as well as providing input from practice to capability-focused discussions. The nations strive to constantly employ the FGB (or large elements thereof) in worldwide deployments. This has led to four deployments as a brigade (although sometimes with a slightly re-arranged order of battle) involving the brigade staff and subordinate units: as Central Brigade Sarajevo to the SFOR mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1996 and 1998, as Kabul Multinational Brigade to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan in 2004-2005, and as the framework unit for the EUTM mission in Mali in 2014. Furthermore, units of the FGB were deployed to the various NATO operations in the Balkans (Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Kosovo), to EUTM in Mali and to Lebanon. Parts of the Brigade have also been employed in support of civil authorities for disaster relief in France and Germany. Finally, the FGB has been a stand-by readiness unit for the NATO Response Forces (NRF) in 2006 (NRF 7) and 2010-2011 (NRF 15) and for EU Battlegroup II in 2008. The Brigade or parts of it have been recently deployed in several NATO 'Assurance Measures' exercises, including in Lithuania in 2016. The willingness of the two nations to put the FGB on especially the NRF roster implies that they have the intent to employ the FGB across the spectrum of possible military campaigns, encompassing combat, crisis management operations and other military engagement. However, as yet the FGB as a binational entity has never been actually deployed into combat missions.

Next to the above mentioned employments, units of the brigade have also been deployed to numerous purely national missions. In some of these cases this possibly might have been binational endeavours, but the nations could not find consensus on employment of the FGB due to different political considerations and interests. However, criticism on the lack of deployment of the FGB⁴¹, in particular as a binational unit, is unjustified as the facts show. Naturally, there might have been occasions that the two countries did not agree on deploying the FGB (or parts of it) for political reasons, but those national objections would most probably also apply to the deployment of other military formations. The same would apply to national caveats on the use of force. Obviously, the need for consensus is a crucial and therefore possibly a paralyzing element of binational cooperation. Through the years, there have been relocations of units and a number of changes of incorporated units by both nations. But never has the existence been doubted so far. The accumulative operational experience of the FGB guarantees that it is definitely not just a test-case unit for multinational cooperation, but certainly an operational capability. Currently, respective elements of the FGB are employed for Operation Sentinelle (homeland security, France) and 'Helfende Hände'

41 See for example: *Franco-German troops still wait for deployment*, Deutsche Welle, 22.01.2013; *Franco-German Brigade to Deploy for First Time*, theTrumpet, February 24, 2014.

(refugee management, Germany), and there is tentative thinking about involving the FGB in Mali (see below).⁴²

Future

Both the CIS concept and the Logistic Concept of the FGB are currently subject of study. The aim is to make the new concepts more adaptable, and to implement more modern equipment in order to enhance the expeditionary capability of the FGB even further. For logistics, an extra challenge is that both national logistic systems are increasingly centralised, whereas the Support Battalion needs larger self-sustainability. Next to these studies, there is a possibility of being involved in Mali again in 2018. Although the political thinking for now is only tentative, the FGB might be tasked to help fill several missions there (United Nations mission MINUSMA, EUTM), so not employed 'as a whole', but probably the whole of the brigade will be deployed nonetheless. The developments with regard to this possible employment might shed more light on the crucial topic of consensus between the partners. For example, should the French troops of the FGB be used for MINUSMA (a relatively robust UN peace support operation), while the German units would be engaged in the EUTM (a mostly barracks/base-confined training and advising mission), then it would not be illogical to conclude that the nations have different views on employment.

Pros

The following elements can be regarded as positive factors of the FGB model:

- The chosen level for this specific cooperation is very useful. A brigade is the 'workhorse' of land forces, it can be employed for many tasks, including the provision of battalions/battalion task forces, and is to a large extent self-sustaining. The active employment history of the FGB, both as a brigade or providing sub-units, shows it truly is more than a test-case unit or a showcase. It is a capable and multi-employable formation.
- Binationality is easier to work with than multinationality. There are 'only' two cultures to merge and 'only' two owners need to come to terms on the many issues that inevitably have to be dealt with.
- Optimal interoperability and understanding amongst units is achieved by integrating as much as possible in education/training/exercises, even though combat units and combat support units are in fact very national.

42 From interviews.

Cons

The following elements can be regarded as negative factors of the FGB model:

- Inevitably, the largest con for a cooperation based on consensus, is that political views on ways to approach upcoming or ongoing crises may differ and thus hinder the achievement of consensus. That then leads to a perfectly apt employable unit to remain unused in such cases.
- There is duplication of effort through the construct of double/multiple national C2 structures with two respective national divisions (and for specific items also two national territorial commands) both steering the FGB as a sub-unit.
- This cooperation has two equally large partners. There is a factor of national pride, or too strict abidance of the equality principle, in place; e.g. with the two official languages issue. Language is just an example obviously.

Conclusions

The FGB has a track record showing that it is indeed capable of performing the intended tasks in the envisioned way. Although it remains to be seen if the two nations can also agree on employing the FGB in a full out combat scenario, given the record of different political views on crises that might call for such a mission. The chosen level (brigade) for the cooperation is extremely suitable for actual employment of a multi-national entity. The chosen form of multinationality (binationality) is probably the most manageable, especially for a tactical level formation. The focus throughout the existence has been on interoperability, leading to a mind-set of understanding and cooperation. This has helped overcoming, or at least coping with, the drawbacks of a partnership between two equally strong sides.



CASE STUDY C: EUROPEAN AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND (EATC)

Key facts

Starting date operations

Inauguration: September 2010.

Initial operational capability (IOC): May 2011.

Full operational capability (FOC): July 2014.

Participating countries

Belgium (2010), France (2010), Germany (2010), the Netherlands (2010), Luxembourg (2012), Italy and Spain (2014).

Location

Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

Category

Permanent transfer of command.

Commander EATC has Operational Control. However, the conceptual construct embeds a permanently guaranteed revocability of the Transfer of Authority. De facto the EATC has created a 'conditioned permanent transfer of authority to a multinational level, without loss of national sovereignty'.

Cooperation agreement

France and Germany decided to create a common strategic command for airlift at the 7th Franco-German Ministerial Council in October 2006. Belgium and the Netherlands joined by signing a Note of Accession. The four nations' Chiefs of Defence approved the EATC Concept, which sets the framework for the working process and the defined levels of responsibilities, in May 2007. The Technical Arrangement between Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands (co-signed by Luxembourg via a Note of Participation) dates to June 2010. Each year, the national staffs state the 'Transfer of Authority' to Commander EATC over the assets as controlled by the Operational Division in an Agreement, listing the number of aircraft, the types, etc. This yearly renewed agreement also arranges the 'Delegation of Responsibility' to Commander EATC for the issues as dealt with by the Functional Division (policy, doctrine, regulations, etc).

Employments

In the period 2010-2015 the EATC has transported 1.5 million personnel, 108,000 tons of cargo, and 6,000 patients. It has also organised 18 multinational training events, delivering 76 trained aircrews and 24 tactical qualified aircrews. For 2016 the output is projected to be the command & control of an average of 60 flight missions per day, also organising 11 multinational training events.

Background and rationale

The EATC is a multinational operational command, commissioned by seven participating nations. The EATC has two major clusters of output. Firstly, the Operational Division is the command & control entity for (currently) 220 pooled fixed wing air transport assets of the participating nations, encompassing 60 percent of the total of European air transport assets. The EATC employs these airframes – 24/7/365 and worldwide – for three main products for the nations: air transport (AT), aero-medical evacuation (AM) and air-to-air refuelling (AAR). In addition to guaranteeing effectivity of air transport, it constantly strives for the highest achievable level of efficiency, in order to ensure the participants' optimal exploitation of their national capabilities. The tasks for the Operational Division are: planning, tasking, mission control, and analysis & reporting. Secondly, the Functional Division of the EATC is a centre of expertise for AT, AM, and AAR (aiming to become an official Centre of Excellence for the latter). This division is responsible – on behalf of the participating nations – for common policies, harmonisation of existing rules & regulations, interoperability, and studies, all with regard to AT/AM/AAR and closely related topics. It is also in the lead for organising international training events and exercises.

The EATC is the result of developments that started with the launching of the European Security and Defence Policy. Already in 1999 strategic air transport was identified as an important capability shortfall, and the future establishment of a European Air Transport Command was announced.⁴³ France and Germany thereupon announced to initiate a multinational air transport command. In the next year, the European Air Group (EAG)⁴⁴ received the task to assess the feasibility of the intended initiative. The EAG concluded that it would be of great added value to actively stimulate cooperation between member states and also recommended to organise a coordination element for air transport demand. This resulted in the creation of the European Airlift Coordination Cell (EACC) in 2001, as an initial step towards a coordinating authority. It was located at the Eindhoven Air Base, on offer from the Netherlands. The EACC was soon replaced by the European Airlift Centre (EAC) with more responsibilities and tasks. France and Germany then decided to create an European Air Transport Command in 2006, immediately inviting Belgium and the Netherlands to join. The four nations agreed on the EATC Concept in 2007, and started the preparatory work. In September 2010 the EATC was officially inaugurated at Eindhoven Air Base, after a longlasting Belgian argument for a location

43 In the Helsinki Headline Goal which was set at the European Council in the Finnish capital in December 1999. See: ANNEX 1 to ANNEX IV of the Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999.

44 A cooperation entity between seven nations (built upon the Franco-British European Air Group of 1995), located in High Wycombe (UK). The participants as of 1999 are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and the UK. Its goal is to strengthen cooperation between the respective air forces in order to improve operational capabilities in view of common interests.

at one of its national air bases, showing that even among partners that are convinced of the usefulness and even the necessity of their cooperation, sometimes national interests may disturb the process.⁴⁵ The EATC received Operational Control (OPCON) over the fixed wing air transport of the participating nations in the months after the official inauguration in September 2010. Initial operational capability was declared in May 2011. Luxembourg joined as the fifth nation in November 2012. Full operational capability was achieved in July 2014. In that same month Spain joined and rendered OPCON over a large part of its fixed wing air transport fleet to the EATC. Italy joined in December 2014, and handed over OPCON over a large part of its fleet per January 2016.

Governance

The conceptual construct of the EATC is a business model for pooling and sharing with conditioned delegation of authority.⁴⁶ The participating nations redefine and restate this delegation to Commander EATC in a yearly renewed agreement which is fundamental for the work of two pillars of the EATC, the Operational and the Functional Divisions. For the operational pillar, the national staffs state the 'Transfer of Authority' (ToA) to Commander EATC over the assets as controlled by the Operational Division. This is done in a 'a la carte manner', listing the number of aircraft, the types, etc. Each year the nations may vary the specifics of their contribution to the pool. This ToA gives the EATC OPCON, and thus the necessary mandate for effective and efficient command & control of the pooled airplanes. However, the ToA is conditioned: the availability for the nations of their contributed planes is assured. At any time and for any reason (or even without giving one), nations may temporarily revoke the ToA over specific assets. This can be done by national airstaffs or by the so-called 'red card holder', the Senior National Representative (SNR) of the nation concerned in the EATC HQ. This SNR is also mandated to assess if individual flight missions planned for 'his/her' national assets are in line with current national political-military guidelines, positions, etc. The SNR may use the 'red card' – refusing the mission on behalf of his nation – in case he/she concludes that there is a (potential) conflict of interests. In both situations, the responsibility to find an alternative solution lies with the EATC, since the revocability of the ToA is guaranteed as a fundamental principle. It should be noted that no red card has been drawn by any EATC member state so far.⁴⁷ The yearly agreement secondly arranges the 'Delegation of Responsibility' to Commander EATC for the issues as dealt with by the Functional Division. Within the main topics of policies, harmonisation of existing rules & regulations, interoperability, studies, training & exercise objectives and responsibilities⁴⁸, nations indicate specifically what authority they each ascribe to Commander EATC. This can also be done for specific items under the main topics. The EATC concept allows for three

45 From interviews.

46 From interviews.

47 From interviews.

48 All with regard to air transport, aeromedevac, air-to-air refuelling and closely related issues.

available levels of authority to attribute.⁴⁹ This total compound of seven nations' authority delegation per (sub-) topic is an intricate and complex set for the EATC to work with. However, all the effort leads to deep understanding among the nations and the EATC of each other's positions and interests, thus enabling the Functional Division to properly perform their tasks.

The steering mechanism for the EATC is the Multinational Air Transport Committee (MATRAC), consisting of the seven Chiefs of Air Force. The MATRAC meets yearly, and delivers guidance and objectives to the Commander EATC. It is supported by the Advisory Group, meeting twice per year, which advises Commander EATC as well as prepares the MATRAC session. The member states have spent quite some years defining the EATC Concept. However, the return on this investment is that there is a large shared unity of purpose among the member states, hence the MATRAC meetings and decisions as a rule know little friction or principal differences. Obviously the double sense of urgency with regard to the EATC's field of employment (scarceness of air transport and general financial restraints) is a permanent added factor enhancing the will to come to terms.

Composition

Command of the EATC is rotated between France and Germany, with the deputy commander always of the other nation. The current Commander EATC is Major-General (German Air Force) Christian Badia. He is also the Senior National Representative of his country. The other SNRs are (Deputy) Division Chiefs. Thus the leadership within the EATC is balanced between the participants. The overall personnel strength of EATC is 214, of which about half are occupied by France and Germany. EATC has three divisions: the already mentioned Operational and Functional Division plus a Policy & Support Division, responsible for i.a. legal and policy issues, and finance. The number of positions a nation may hold in the HQ is related to its contribution to the multinational budget for the EATC and not to the number of assets it contributes to the pool. After enrolling in the EATC and having paid their dues, all nations have an equal say in the proceedings of and with the EATC. This approach prevents domination by the larger players (or 'have mores'), ensuring an even balance. There is a high drive to work at the EATC, because personnel in national military air transport sectors realise that the EATC is in the first echelon of work and development. Germany has even basically dissolved the fixed wing air transport part of its national air staff, making the EATC the only highest echelon

49 Recommending Authority (REA), Coordinating Authority (COA) and Commanding Authority (CMA). If a nation attributes REA to the EATC for a certain topic, they will take the recommendations of the EATC, and assess if they will implement these. If a nation attributes COA to the EATC, they will allow the EATC to find the largest common denominator for the several interests and points of view on a topic, thus mitigating towards a shared solution. If a nation attributes CMA, they will follow the indications and directions on that topic as developed and provided by the EATC.

opportunity. France, as an example of the other end of the spectrum, has chosen to have its participation in the EATC as a parallel to the national air staff element.⁵⁰ The mindset that can be found – and is absolutely necessary – amongst EATC personnel, is that multinational cooperation benefits all involved, including the national interests.⁵¹

Resources and finance

The pooled airplanes remain national assets. Maintenance is a national obligation for instance, just like all other logistical items. However, maintenance is planned in transparent coordination with the EATC, which uses that information both for operations planning as for studies into trends and developments. The host nation (Netherlands) is providing the infrastructure. In the near future EATC will move to new premises at Eindhoven Air Base. The multinational budget for the EATC (approximately € 4.2 million for 2016) is allocated by the MATRAC and intended for common costs of the HQ. France and Germany together currently provide approximately 50 percent of the funding, thus also delivering approximately 50% of the staff positions. The common budget is used for operations software (46%), general ICT (20%), costs for directly hired civilians (18%), administration costs (12%) and investment (4%). This budget has no relevance for the employment of the air assets. For that, the EATC nations use the ATARES⁵² approach, recalculating every flight-hour of every type of plane to an equivalent in C130/160 flight-hours. A C130/160 flight-hour is the common virtual currency for all missions, where it is crucial to the concept that it is not based on bilateral reciprocity, but that a participating nation is supposed to deliver to the ATARES community as many equivalent flying hours as it receives. The allowed period for such reimbursement to the pool is 60 months, which in practice has shown to be ample time.

There are no data available on the savings made by the participating nations of EATC. But it is clear that the reduction of overhead and operating costs (including the significant decrease of the need to hire civilian air transport capability because of the pool availability) have resulted in financial savings. The Netherlands expected to make savings in the order of 10 to 15 percent.⁵³

Employment

A basic principle is that for the EATC ‘operations are operations, it is always for real’. Whether the flight is for peace-time support or mission support to one of the participants, or for mission support to an international organisation (through one of the

50 An interesting development being that the flight wings and squadrons have indicated to prefer missions as directed from the EATC to those of the national air staff, because of the higher level of professionalism (from interviews).

51 From interviews.

52 ATARES (Air Transport & Air to air Refuelling and other Exchange of Services).

53 European Defence Cooperation – Sovereignty and the Capacity to Act, p. 28.

participants) – it makes no difference in approach or execution. The concept of pooling and sharing results in the availability of all types of capabilities for all participants, making all nations 'haves' even if they nationally are a 'have not' for specific types of air transport means.⁵⁴ In this way scarce commodities are used more optimally, and since every involved nation may have the need for all of the available capabilities, the sense of urgency is clear and present. It results in the collective will to use the concept. Even though nations can use the 'a la carte' approach, specifying per type how many they actually make available (e.g. Italy has pooled 7 of its 11 C-27s for 2016⁵⁵), most nations opt to offer all, or at least most, of their air transport assets to the pool. This confidence in the concept must constantly be earned by the EATC, because mutual trust is built on longer achievements and can easily be lost by incidents. Furthermore, this conviction of the benefit of cooperation for all involved is also a driving force behind the work of the Functional Division. Rules & regulations, doctrine, and policies are largely developed together, notwithstanding the three possibly attributed levels of responsibility. The fairly large contingent of some 60 responsible personnel in the Functional Division is accepted by the nations due to the fact that the EATC takes over national efforts, and does that well. Although sometimes this co-development takes large efforts, the return on investment is found in strongly shared outcomes. The rule for every doctrinal output of the EATC is that in the end it is a national decision to implement it yes or no, but in practice the 'no' option is hardly ever applied.

The results achieved by EATC are impressive.⁵⁶ In the period 2010-2015 the EATC has transported 1.5 million personnel, 108,000 tons of cargo and 6,000 patients. Approximately 20,000 ATARES flight hours have been exchanged in this period. The number of air-to-air refuelling flights has gone up from 16 in 2010 to 415 in 2015. The EATC has also organised 18 multinational training events, delivering 76 trained aircrews and 24 tactical qualified aircrews over that same period. Training activities are organised under the umbrella of the European Defence Agency. The output for 2016 is projected to be the command & control of an average of 60 flight missions per day, also organising 11 multinational training events.

Although the EATC as such is not an element of any mission structure for the UN, the EU or NATO, it can operate flights for these international organisations if requested through one of the participating EATC nations. E.g. for the NATO Operation Unified

54 The most optimal example being smart buyer Luxembourg, which has procured one A400M transport aircraft, not because it needs such a wide body capability itself, but because it is the type of capability all of the nations need. In return for making available the A400M (once delivered to be operated by a Belgian Air Force crew with a Luxembourg pilot), Luxembourg then gets access to everything from VIP flights to aero-medevac services in return.

55 From interviews.

56 Data from the EATC website: www.eatc-mil.com

Protector (Libya) the EATC flew 347 missions, transporting 12,400 personnel and 3,500 tons of cargo. For the African regional AFISMA mission and the French Serval Operation the EATC completed 222 flights, carrying 34,972 personnel and 2,539 tons of cargo. MINUSMA, ISAF and other NATO operations have been serviced with EATC flight missions.

Future

The first issue on possible future developments is enlargement of EATC participation. Naturally, EATC enlargement will always be a political decision. Integration of other NATO/EU member states would be the most logical step since that would imply a more matching set of rules and regulations at the start. But notably, EU/NATO membership is not a definite *conditio sine qua non* for joining. The EATC has received several working visits by delegations from the Czech Republic, Norway and the UK over the past years, but so far this has not initiated concrete developments. From a practical point of view however, there is a limit to the span of control the EATC can handle with regard to the number of participants.⁵⁷ The EATC discerns three alternative ways of expanding the successful concept:

- The creation of regional EATC-like operation centres that, as an entity, can link into the main EATC's Operational Division. In parallel, personnel would physically join the Functional Division, thus enabling further interoperability progress along the knowledge approach. E.g. the four Scandinavian nations could build a Nordic Opcentre together and send specialists to the main EATC.
- Cooperation in specific areas with embedding of specialist personnel. E.g. the Czech Republic could send two 'observer status' specialists on the topic of aero-medevac to the Functional Division.
- Management of third party assets by the EATC proper.

Another future issue is the upcoming large shift in available assets. The rapidly declining availability of the C160 tactical airlifters has even shortly created a challenge for the EATC to keep up its high average of missions per day. With the influx of the A400M – the new all-round workhorse of the pool – the capacity will be more than compensated. In fact, an in-house EATC study 'Vision 2025' combined the current workload with several parallel crisis scenarios where EATC would be employed to fulfil large numbers of flight missions. The conclusion was that approximately 80% of the current missions would still be executed under such additional circumstances.

The last future issue is the further growth of AAR as a product. By creating more common standards, having the capacity enlarged (number of tanker-planes in the pool), and enhancing the interoperability of the several AAR systems, the EATC expects to be able to meet the growing demand of the participating nations. In this context, the

⁵⁷ From interviews.

multinational project of Luxembourg and the Netherlands for the purchase of Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) capability is worth mentioning. The two countries will acquire two Airbus A330 MRTT planes. In a Memorandum of Understanding they have agreed to create a multinational unit, pooling the aircraft, and to station it at Eindhoven Airbase. Belgium, Germany, Norway, and Poland have shown interest to participate in this initiative, but for political reasons they have not yet done so. Both the MoU as well as the bid from Airbus allow for later participants. The total number of A330s may rise to 8 with the inclusion of these extra nations, which is exactly the remaining allowed sound-space for military aircraft that Eindhoven Airbase is allowed. The A330 is employable as AAR tanker, as transport plane, and as medevac capability (including the possibility to carry intensive care units). The two currently ordered airframes will arrive from 2020 onwards, and the two Dutch KDC10s will be phased out in parallel. With this purchase the involved nations contribute to the restriction of capability shortfalls for both NATO and EU in the field of AAR and air transport. Currently the nations are investigating whether they will have the multinational A330 unit controlled by the EATC.⁵⁸

Pros

The following elements can be regarded as positive factors of the EATC model:

- Obviously it addresses a sense of urgency with regard to a recognised capability shortfall, actually accomplishing what it was created for. Assured effectivity of air transport combined with achieved efficiency (national personnel costs and outsourcing costs go down, interoperability through common experience and knowledge goes up) for all participants.
- The EATC model proves that transfer of national sovereignty in practice is possible. The built-in guaranteed revocability of the Transfer of Authority is an essential element, and a huge trust and confidence builder. It convinces nations to hand over part of their sovereignty in the form of Operational Control to a multinational commander.
- The options for Delegation of Responsibility create a similar trust & confidence situation. This allows the EATC to enable and actively enhance interoperability even further for future employments.
- Financially, it offers a low threshold, with only the multinational budget for HQ costs as a nominal investment. The ATARES approach for the employment of flight assets allows for all participants to use from the pool what they need, compensating for it

58 *Update Multi Role Tanker Transport Project*, Parliamentary Letter BS2016008942 of the Minister of Defence of the Netherlands, The Hague, 28 July 2016.

with what they have. The 60 month compensation period gives ample opportunity to arrange this.

Cons

The following elements can be regarded as negative factors of the EATC model:

- The conditioned Transfer of Authority over national air assets, including the revocability of ToA, results in a permanent situation in which the burden for trouble-shooting and problem solving lies with the EATC. This requires constant efforts as well as permanent investment in transparency, pro-activity and adaptability.
- The options for Delegation of Responsibility result in an intricate multi-layered and multi-faceted compound of game-rules for the EATC to abide by. This requires a highly intense effort from the EATC in order to keep participants fully aboard.
- The concept includes a 'first us seven, then others'-principle, thus creating an in-group/out-group effect amongst European air forces (or at least for the transport branch). Since there is relatively little room for growth, this means that other potential candidates may have to resort to alternative ways to incorporate themselves in the construct.

Conclusions

The EATC has de facto created a 'conditioned permanent transfer of authority to a multinational level, without loss of national sovereignty'. It has also embedded a form of role specialisation, in that it equalises – through the pooling and sharing approach – the 'haves and have nots' within the cooperation. The reimbursement concept allows for a very low threshold to participate, since it does not require large investment. Ultimo, the guaranteed revocability of ToA (thus maintaining national sovereignty) convinces nations to conditionally hand over Operational Control of their scarce assets. This form of multinational military operational cooperation allows the EATC to fulfil its mission. By carrying it out successfully, EATC has become a best practice case of deepening multinational defence cooperation.



CASE STUDY D: BELGIAN-NETHERLANDS NAVY COOPERATION (BENESAM)⁵⁹

Key facts

Starting date operations

1996.⁶⁰

Participating countries

Belgium and the Netherlands.

Location

Den Helder, the Netherlands (Admiral Benelux Headquarters; frigate training and maintenance); Oostende, Belgium (mine warfare training and maintenance); Zeebrugge (mine countermeasures vessels operational sea training); Bruges, Belgium (commissionership school).

59 The authors would like to thank Anne Bakker and Anne van Heerwaarden for their assistance in writing this chapter.

60 Starting date of the binational navy headquarters of Admiral Benelux. Other forms of cooperation had started earlier.

Category of cooperation

Modular operational formation and integrated operational formation.

Benesam⁶¹ is a mixture of modular bilateral operational cooperation and integration of staffs, training, education, workup, logistics and maintenance. Both countries can still decide independently of each other on the operational deployment of their vessels with their own crews. However, for training and maintenance they are dependent on each other.

Cooperation agreement

A variety of treaties signed between 1948 and 1996 have gradually deepened bilateral naval cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands. These are known as the Benesam accords. The two key documents for the current cooperation are:

- 'The Joint Declaration concerning the cooperation of the Royal Dutch Navy and the Belgian Navy in times of peace and war and in times of crisis and tension' of 1994. This agreement can be seen as the framework agreement that laid the foundations for the strengthened navy cooperation starting in 1996.
- 'The Admiral Benelux Agreement of 1995' – focuses on the integration of headquarters in the Admiral Benelux, joint operations, and coordination and fusion of training. This agreement has become operational in 1996.

Deployments

So far, there have been no operations under binational command. The Benesam cooperation focuses on the education, training, logistics, maintenance and workup phase towards operations.

61 Benesam is the acronym of 'Belgisch-Nederlandse Marine Samenwerking' (Belgian-Netherlands Naval Cooperation).

Background and rationale

Today, the Belgian-Netherlands Naval Cooperation – Benesam – consists of several elements. The Admiral Benelux (ABNL) Headquarters, located in Den Helder (the Netherlands), is the integrated naval headquarters commanding the fleets of both countries – be it along separate command lines unless in case of combined operations. Therefore, ABNL HQ is integrated in its set-up, but the arrangement allows for national command lines. It is in training and maintenance that Benesam has realised the deepest form of cooperation in which both countries have become dependent on each other. For the Belgian and Netherlands minehunters all education and maintenance takes place in Belgium. For the M-frigates of both countries all education and maintenance takes place in the Netherlands. Apart from these platforms on which both countries operate, there are other naval assets such as the Dutch Walrus-class submarines, air defence & command frigates, patrol vessels and logistics support ships. These are operated under the ABNL HQ, but there is no specific cooperation between the two countries with regard to these platforms.

The cooperation between the Dutch and Belgian navies has a long history.⁶² They started working together in 1948, when both countries signed the Netherlands-Belgian Military Agreement. With this agreement, the two countries agreed that their navies would operate under single command during times of war as they share the same zone of responsibility. In the 1960s and 1970s the Belgian and Dutch navies started strengthening their cooperation mainly in the area of education. A Benesam Committee was appointed to investigate potential for an overarching coordination structure to optimise the cooperation in 1972. This was affirmed when the Admiral Benelux⁶³ was officially appointed in 1975 to have the binational operational command over both navies during wartime operations.

After the end of the Cold War the cooperation got a decisive push and became more integrated. Big defence cuts were a driving factor. This also had large implications for the naval capacities of both countries. For the Belgian Navy these cuts were expected to lead to a complete loss of the frigate capacity and potentially the whole navy. The Dutch Navy needed to reduce 3,000 naval personnel on a total of 21,000. In order to retain most of the fleet capacity, efficiency gains had to be made on shore. In 1994, a political framework agreement was signed by the Belgian and Dutch Ministers of Defence which intended to deepen defence cooperation between both navies, both in peacetime and in war, through a) integration of operational staffs, b) joint operating of operational fleets,

62 For a thorough overview see: Pieter-Jan Parrein, *De evolutie en toekomst van de Belgisch-Nederlandse marinesamenwerking: Spill-over en politieke samenwerking*, Koninklijk Hoger Instituut voor Defensie, November 2011.

63 The Commanding Officer of the combined military staff of the Royal Netherlands Navy and the Naval Component of the Belgian Armed Forces.

c) aligning and merging several navy education programs, d) deepening cooperation on logistics and materiel, and e) coordinating the acquirement of new materiel.⁶⁴

To govern this deepened cooperation, the Benesam agreement was signed in 1995. It arranges the cooperation between the Belgian and Netherlands navies in times of peace and war.⁶⁵ This agreement officially integrated the operational staff and fleet of both navies and put them under single command of the Admiral Benelux during both peacetime and war. This agreement became operational in 1996, when the binational navy headquarters of the ABNL was established in Den Helder.⁶⁶ The 1996 agreement also resulted in further stepping up combined training. Furthermore, after Belgium had acquired two M-frigates from the Netherlands Navy (in 2007-2008), maintenance of these ships would be carried out in the Netherlands, just as was already the case for the Netherlands minehunters in Belgium. Thus, mutual dependencies in naval cooperation increased.

In 2014 the Belgian-Netherlands naval cooperation expanded to the NH-90 NATO Frigate Helicopters (NFH). To organise the maintenance of the NFH as efficient as possible, the Binational Logistic Cell NH-90 (BNLC) was created in Woensdrecht (the Netherlands).⁶⁷ Belgium and the Netherlands 'pool' their spare parts and are further developing cooperation in maintenance, workup and training.⁶⁸ The close navy cooperation has contributed to the alignment of equipment choices. Originally, the Belgians were not planning to equip their NH-90 helicopters with an ASW (Anti-Submarine Warfare) capacity, but they changed their mind to harmonise this capability with the Dutch.

Governance

The different components of the Belgian-Dutch Navy Cooperation fall under the coordination of the Benesam management structure, an exogenous structure outside the daily practice of operation. This consists of a Benesam Steering Committee and various workgroups meeting together in a bi-annual forum. The composition of the Steering Committee differs for the Dutch and Belgian side. For the Dutch it has a clear naval character and consists of the Deputy Commander of the Netherlands Navy and various other Department Directors, such as the Department of Operational Support of

64 The Joint Declaration concerning the cooperation of the Royal Dutch Navy and the Belgian Navy in times of peace and war and in times of crisis and tension.

65 The Admiral Benelux Agreement of 1995.

66 Binational integrated staff means that any function in this staff can be fulfilled by personnel of both nationalities and that any person of the staff, despite nationality, works for the ABNL as a whole.

67 At Woensdrecht Air Base all aircraft and helicopters of the Netherlands armed forces are maintained.

68 *Vijftiende jaarrapportage van het helikopterproject NH-90*, Kamerbrief van de Minister van Defensie, 12 oktober 2015.

the navy, but there is also a representative of the Chief of Defence and the Department of Materiel of the Defence Ministry (the deputy chief 'seasystems'). The Belgian side has less of a maritime character and consists of the Assistant Chief of Staff Strategy, and representatives of the Human Resources Department, the Financial Department and the Materiel Department. All of these belong to the Ministry of Defence, but it is taken into account that Benesam has a maritime character.⁶⁹ The Steering Committee meetings alternate every six months between Belgium and the Netherlands.

There are seven workgroups within the Benesam structure: operations and capacity development; personnel and organisation; operational data exchange; education, material and logistics; legal affairs and budget; and the NH90-helicopter.⁷⁰ This collaborative framework is a bilateral cooperation structure rather than a formal command structure. Apart from an integrated operational staff it comprises a bilateral Admiralty Board, bilateral schools for naval education and training, and bilateral staff cells for managing weapon systems and ship maintenance.⁷¹ The Benesam governance structure is characterised by a bottom-up approach, as the cooperation is clearly led from and built around the military (navy) side. The Belgian-Dutch cooperation does not have a permanent political or politico-military steering mechanism – though it is part of the overall Benelux defence cooperation which received a political boost in April 2012 with the signing of a new ministerial agreement. The advantage of this bottom-up structure is that the integration of the cooperation reflects the requirements from the practitioners which facilitates the implementation of proposals.⁷²

Composition

The ABNL is located in Den Helder (Netherlands) and houses the combined staff of the Dutch and Belgian navies responsible for operational steering, workup and training of the fleets falling under the Belgian-Dutch cooperation. The ABNL is a permanent structure responsible for the efficient use of joint equipment and personnel, and it oversees the joint training programs.⁷³ In the ABNL Headquarters Belgian functionalities have been built in, that can be taken out in case of strictly national operations. The ABNL HQ falls under the command of the Admiral Benelux. This position is filled by the Commander of the Netherlands Naval Forces. The Commander of the Belgian

69 Pieter-Jan Parrein, *De evolutie en toekomst van de Belgisch-Nederlandse marinesamenwerking. Spill-over en politieke samenwerking*, p. 111.

70 Some workgroups meet more often than others.

71 Ioannis Chapsos & Cassie Kitchen (ed.), *Strengthening maritime security through cooperation*, IOS Press: Amsterdam, 2015, p. 70.

72 See: Pieter-Jan Parrein, *Some ideas for European Defence Cooperation from the Case Study of the Belgian-Dutch Navy Cooperation*, Royal High Institute for Defence, December 2010, <http://www.irsd.be/website/images/livres/focuspaper.FP25.pdf>, particularly Chapter 4.

73 <https://www.defensie.nl/organisatie/marine/inhoud/eenheden/admiraal-benelux>

Naval Component is the Deputy Admiral Benelux. In theory, a Belgian can become the Commander of ABNL, but in practice this has not happened.⁷⁴ Here, the 6:1 difference in size of the two navies plays a role.

The emphasis of the Belgian-Dutch Navy (operational) Cooperation lies at the workup and training aspects, of which the planning is aligned. The deployment in operations is decided upon at the national capitals (political decision-making) and it takes place under national command (using the national command chain within ABNL HQ). So far, ABNL has not commanded combined Belgian-Netherlands deployments.⁷⁵ With regard to the workup phase of deployments, the Belgian and the Dutch naval departments' Operations Directorates (DOPS) are each individually responsible to get their national units 'ready for sea'. But in the workup process to get the units 'ready for duty' both navies work together within the ABNL. This can be done by the binational Sea Training Command in Den Helder, the Mine Countermeasure Vessels Operational Sea Training (MOST) in Zeebrugge and the Netherlands-Belgian Maritime force (NLBMARFOR) in Den Helder.

Resources and finance

The financial aspect of the Belgian-Netherlands Naval Cooperation is a mix of various settlements. The maintenance of the two platforms is straightened out against each other. The placing of staff is at the cost of the sending country, and the infrastructure is financed by the receiving country. In addition, each unit and organisation under the naval cooperation has various detailed financial arrangements applicable to that specific unit and organisation.

Training

The Belgian and Dutch navies merged their education programs in three binational schools and have joined up their technical education program. The Binational Naval Mine Warfare School (EGUERMIN) trains the Belgian and Dutch naval forces in naval mine warfare.⁷⁶ EGUERMIN is located in Oostende (Belgium) and has been an integrated binational Belgian-Netherlands organisation since 1975.⁷⁷ The M-frigate training takes place at the Netherlands-Belgian Operational Training School (NLBEOPS), which is located in Den Helder (Netherlands) and provides operational instructions and training to the navy staffs of both countries since 1996. The Belgian-Netherlands Navy Commissionership School (BENLCMS) in Bruges (Belgium) trains Belgian and

74 From interviews.

75 From interviews.

76 In 1964 both countries decided to integrate their naval mine warfare education program. In 1975 this school became an official integrated binational school. In 2006, EGUERMIN became a NATO Centre of Excellence, and also trains NATO, Partnership for Peace and other non-NATO countries in naval mine warfare.

77 <http://www.eguermin.org/welcome/misc/history/>.

Dutch navy cooks, stewards, and logistic personnel since 1996. To end duplication, both technical naval schools developed a complementary curriculum starting in 2010. The programmes themselves however are still physically separate.

Maintenance

As for training the Belgian and Dutch navies are fully dependent on each other for maintenance of the ships. This could also be labelled as task specialisation in maintenance which is possible as both countries have the same platforms: Multipurpose-frigates (M-frigates) and minehunters or Mine Countermeasures (MCM) vessels. Both countries own six MCM vessels. Belgium is the 'lead nation' for the maintenance and the logistics of these vessels (and provides for the education and training of the crews, see above). Both countries own two M-frigates. The Netherlands is the 'lead nation' for the maintenance and the logistics of the frigates and provides for the education and training of the crews (*idem*). This was arranged in the 2006 Matlog (Material-Logistics) Agreement, which strengthened the dynamics of the Benesam cooperation immensely, based on the decision of both countries to make their capacities more equal. Both navies invested in a binational modernisation of the tripartite mine hunters⁷⁸, which took place between 2006 and 2010.⁷⁹ In addition to that, the Belgian Navy acquired two Dutch M-frigates in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, the Netherlands and Belgium decided to modernise their M-frigates by rebuilding their hangar and helicopter decks to accommodate the NH-90 helicopters. This investment of both navies in the same equipment encouraged a spill-over effect towards close cooperation for maintenance and logistics, which were previously a national responsibility. But it also affected training.⁸⁰ This underlines the importance of having the same equipment as a success factor for deepening defence cooperation.

The dependency on each other for logistics and maintenance can also have an impact during operations. For example when maintenance is required for a Dutch MCM vessel operating in the Mediterranean, Belgian technical personnel has to be flown in to carry out the work. This has not caused major difficulties yet. There are however scenarios thinkable in which vital maintenance personnel from one country is not granted permission to work on a ship of the other country. For example, if Belgium

78 Tripartite refers to the acquisition of the platforms. France was the third partner.

79 When the concept of the 'lead nation' came into being in 2006 most of the subsystems of the tripartite mine hunters had different configurations, which made logistical and maintenance cooperation more difficult. After the binational modernisation programme took place, these differences were ruled out.

80 When the Netherlands abolished their S-frigate in 2003, which was similar to the Belgian E-71 frigates, the common ground for instruction was gone which led to a separate Belgian operational school within the binational operational school. Only since the introduction of the M-frigates in 2007 and 2008 within the Belgian navy, the reintegration of the Belgian operational training and the Dutch training could be restarted.

would politically object to participation in an operation in which Dutch MCM vessels participate, sending maintenance personnel could create serious difficulties. The same could happen vice-versa with Dutch maintenance personnel to be sent to Belgian M-frigates in an operation not supported by the Netherlands. It is unlikely to happen, but in unforeseen circumstances it could occur.

It is clear that the level of integration of the two navies creates co-dependencies. However, as long as the benefits of the Benesam outweigh the disadvantages (which are unlikely to happen), the model works well. An example of the flexibility that the two navies have reached in their cooperation is illustrated by the deployment of a Belgian Alouette III naval helicopter on the Dutch Air Defence and Command Frigate 'De Zeven Provinciën' on a national counter-drugs operation in the Caribbean in January 2016. At the time the Netherlands Navy did not have a helicopter at its disposal and Belgium was able to fill this gap.

Future

The mutual dependencies in minehunters and M-frigates training and maintenance stand or fall with future replacement programmes. If both nations were to go in separate directions and procure different ships, it would result in unravelling the deeper forms of naval cooperation built up over the years. The Belgian government has announced that it is looking to replace the Belgian M-Frigates and MCM vessels by the mid-2020s.⁸¹ The Netherlands has not yet made a definite decision on whether the M-frigates and minehunters will be replaced, although in June 2016 the country has officially started the requirement phase of a possible new acquisition of the M-Frigates replacement.⁸² In the meantime, the two countries have started a bilateral study to look into possible collaboration on the replacement of both the MCM vessels capability and the M-frigates.⁸³ The MCM study also has a European dimension under the flag of the European Defence Agency. Besides Belgium and the Netherlands, it involves Estonia, Germany, Norway and Sweden. Possible cooperation of the Dutch with the Germans on the frigates has turned out impossible, because of widely different requirements for the frigates. The Germans are investigating to acquire a frigate that is three times larger than the current M-Frigate. It will be decisive for the future of the cooperation to what extent Belgium and the Netherlands will acquire similar ships. As of yet, the announcement of the plans of either country to replace the M-frigates and minehunters does not guarantee that political support is guaranteed, nor that sufficient finances can be found for such investments.

81 *De Strategische Visie voor Defensie*, Eerste Minister, 29 juni 2016.

82 <http://marineschepen.nl/nieuws/Vervanging-M-fregatten-in-nieuwe-fase-160616.html>

83 'MAST Europe 2016: Netherlands, Belgium move together on MCM, Frigate replacements', *IHS Jane's Navy International*, 22 June 2016.

Officially, Belgium and the Netherlands are investigating the possibilities of cooperation with regards to the Netherlands Navy's Joint Support Ship, on areas such as staff and exploitation of helicopters.⁸⁴ However, it is questionable whether a sizeable and useful sharing of the capability can be found. Recently plans were announced to intensify the cooperation between the Dutch Marines and the Belgian Light Brigade. Moreover, Belgium has stated that they want to acquire tactical drones within the ABNL fleet to ensure joint maintenance. This might also take place in a broader cooperation with France or Germany.⁸⁵

Pros

The following elements can be regarded as positive factors of the Benesam model:

- Over the years the Belgian and Netherlands Navies have realised an exceptional form of deeper cooperation which can serve as an example for other nations.
- No doubt, binationality has contributed to the success of Benesam. Integrating operational headquarters and creating mutual dependencies in training and maintenance would become more difficult with additional participants.
- Key to success in mutual use of single training and maintenance capacities in Belgium (minehunters) and in the Netherlands (M-frigates) – and thus reducing on shore costs – is to have completely the same equipment.
- The cooperation has an overall political top-down structure without specific steering mechanisms, but has a strong bottom-up structure in which practitioners co-operate.

Cons

The following elements can be regarded as negative factors of the Benesam model:

- For political and sovereignty reasons the cooperation does not extend to the in-operations phase. Combined operations would be helpful in this respect, but the issue of assured access to services, personnel and equipment in cases of emergency make this a difficult bridge to cross.
- Benesam's focus is on workup, training & education, logistics, and maintenance. As the integrated Admiral Benelux Headquarters has never commanded a combined operation of Belgian and Dutch ships, the public visibility and the political support for this unique cooperation model remain relatively limited.

84 De Strategische Visie voor Defensie, 2016.

85 De Strategische Visie voor Defensie, 2016.

- The mutual dependencies in training and maintenance make the model vulnerable in case of replacement of the platforms. If both countries were not to agree on future procurement of the same minehunters and frigates, the positive results built up over the years would be lost.
- The naval cooperation cannot be seen in complete isolation from the other defence efforts of both countries. In case of future budget restraints The Hague and/or Brussels might set different priorities for their armed forces (air, land and naval) which could endanger Benesam.

Conclusions

The level of integration of the Dutch and Belgian navies is unprecedented. The long-standing cooperation from 1948 onwards has built trust between the two countries, but it was the necessity to mitigate the budget cuts in the mid-1990s that has given the cooperation a decisive push. Two identical capabilities – the minehunters and the M-frigates – allowed for a reciprocal hand-over of training and maintenance tasks with mutual dependencies. The efficiency gained and cost-savings made enabled both navies to retain important capabilities. It could even be argued that it was of existential importance to the Belgian Navy. The success of the Belgian-Netherlands Naval Cooperation (Benesam) is built on reciprocity. Both navies feel that the cooperation represents a win-win for both. There is overall trust and satisfaction with the quality of the cooperation.

Benesam is a highly interesting and far-reaching case of defence cooperation, which other countries can take into account. The specialisation is achieved in the less sovereignty-sensitive areas, such as maintenance, training and education, work up and logistics. The politically sensitive part of the actual ownership of ships and the deployment is exempted from the cooperation. However, this model also has to fulfil criteria that make it a difficult act to follow: identical capabilities, acceptance of dependency to a degree, cultural closeness, trust and geographical proximity. The question is whether the Dutch and the Belgians will be able to further align their strategic and financial priorities and their planning timelines to maintain the anchor of their successful cooperation: identical capabilities.

It is also important to note that different sizes of the two navies has not been a negative factor of influence. This is reflected in the top of the Admiral Benelux, with the Netherlands permanently in command and Belgium providing the deputy commander. But the reciprocity in training and maintenance of the two types of ships provides a clear balance.



CASE STUDY E: BALTIC AIR POLICING

Key facts

Starting date operations

30 March 2004.

Participating countries

Receiving: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

Deploying: Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, France, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom, United States, Turkey.

Category

Role specialisation.

Cooperation agreement

Part of the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS).

Deployments

Continuously on rotation. Two air bases used today: Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania (since 2004) and Ämari Air Base in Estonia (since 2014).

Background and rationale

Air Policing is a NATO peacetime mission which aims to preserve the security of Alliance airspace. This collective task started in 1961. Today, Alliance Air Policing is part of the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System – NATINAMDS. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) is responsible for the conduct of NATO Air Policing. The Allied Air Command at Ramstein (Germany) oversees the mission with 24/7 command and control from two Combined Air Control Centres (CAOC). The CAOC in Uedem (Germany) is responsible for Air Policing north of the Alps and the CAOC in Torrejon (Spain) for the area south of the Alps. NATO member states assure the availability of interceptor fighter aircraft on Quick Reaction Alert (QRA), ready for immediate take-off on a 24/7-all year round basis in order to react to violations or infringements of Alliance airspace.⁸⁶

In 2004 a number of Allies joined NATO without own QRA capacities: the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and Slovenia. None of these countries was able to acquire fighter aircraft needed to perform the air policing mission. Because air policing is a collective NATO task a solution had to be found. At the proposal of NATO staffs the responsible NATO committees decided that Italy and Hungary would carry out QRA flights over Slovenia, while all NATO Allies with interceptor fighter aircraft would contribute to Baltic Air Policing (BAP) on a rotating basis.⁸⁷ BAP started on 30 March 2004, the day after Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had become formal members of the Alliance.

Governance

As NATO Air Policing is part of the NATINAMDS there is no separate governance structure for BAP. The Alliance's Air and Missile Defence Committee (AMDC) is the senior policy advisory and coordinating body for all NATINAMDS activities. It reports directly to the North Atlantic Council, the Alliance's political decision-making body. The NATO Military Committee (MC) is assisted by an MC Working Group for Air and Missile Defence for its decisions on the military aspects. Naturally, the three Baltic States are represented in these bodies, together with all other NATO member states. The three capitals of the Baltic States are in regular contact in BAP with a specific focus on host nation support (budget) coordination (see section on resources and finance).

Composition

A standard BAP deployment consists of four fighter aircraft with between 50 and 100 support personnel. For a long time the standard rotation period was three months. Since 2015 this has changed to four months. However, the duration of deployments is not strictly fixed and can vary due to particular circumstances and needs of sending states.

⁸⁶ Information from the NATO website (www.nato.int)

⁸⁷ In 2009 Albania joined the Alliance. Since then Italy and Greece carry out air policing in Albanian air space.

For a period of ten years BAP was conducted from one location, the Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania. Belgium was the first country to conduct BAP, followed by Denmark and the United Kingdom in the same year. Other Allies with interceptor fighter aircraft followed in subsequent years. During the Crimea crisis in 2014 the United States reinforced its rotational presence in Lithuania with six additional F-15C Eagle fighter aircraft from Air Base Lakenheath in the UK. The BAP mission itself was enhanced in the spring of 2014 in response to the Russian interference in Ukraine and the increasing number of air space violations conducted by Russia. The presence at Šiauliai Air Base was doubled, while a single rotational deployment started at Ämari Air Base in Estonia, beginning with a Danish contribution. In May 2014 a fourth contribution was deployed to the Malbork Air Base in Poland, with France providing the first rotation. This quadruple deployment (4 x 4 fighter aircraft) continued until September 2015. Since then two deployments (4 fighter aircraft in Lithuania and 4 fighter aircraft in Estonia) has been the norm. At the moment of publishing this report France (Estonia) and Germany (Lithuania) are carrying out BAP.⁸⁸ In 2012 the NATO Council decided to continue BAP without fixing or setting a date for a review. Member states committed themselves to provide the necessary aircraft in the future, while the Baltic States promised to increase host nation support (see section below).

Resources and finance

Each year the Baltic States sign an arrangement on the BAP financing and cost-sharing. It lists all the expenditure categories covered by host nation support (HNS) such as lodging, local transport, food and other goods and services. The Baltic States also pay for the aviation fuel up to a fixed amount. The cost-sharing model is based on the following arrangement: Lithuania and Estonia pay HNS for the expenditures in their own country, while Latvia pays a fixed share of these costs. The commitment of 2012 to increase HNS has resulted in a substantial growth of the expenditure of three Baltic States for BAP. The total annual amount of HNS funding has gone up from € 2.2 million in 2011 to € 5 million in 2015. Although BAP enhancement accounts for this increase, it seems that the Baltic States also wanted to show their willingness to reward the sending states by better financial arrangements. In 2011 the Baltic States paid zero euro for aviation fuel, which is the main cost driver. In 2012 and 2013 it amounted to € 370k per year; in 2014 it was raised to € 462k and in 2015 the amount had gone up to over € 2 million.⁸⁹ Sending states pay the salaries and per diems for foreign deployment of their personnel. Generally speaking, sending states are very content with HNS.⁹⁰ BAP is not an extra financial cost factor for them.

88 NATO does not provide any information on BAP deployments. Wikipedia offers a clear overview of all contributions from 2004 till today, including the types of fighter aircraft deployed.

89 Information provided by the Lithuanian MOD.

90 From interviews.

Employment

The BAP rotation schedule is coordinated by NATO. So far, there have been no serious problems in filling the rotation slots. However, the history of the BAP commitments show an uneven distribution among NATO member states. The total number of rotations since 2004 to autumn 2016 has been 58. Larger member states⁹¹ – in terms of the number of fighter aircraft – contributed 24 rotations (41%) while smaller countries⁹² provided fighter aircraft for 34 rotations (59%). The group of six smaller Allies flying F-16 contributed 20 rotations or 34% of the total number of rotations. This can be regarded as an uneven share, though it should be recognised that countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania have limited capabilities and as ‘new’ NATO members they joined the rotation schedule later than the ‘older’ member states. The data show another interesting fact: with the exception of Spain and Portugal the contribution of southern European Allies is low. In particular the total absence of Greece is striking. Although it should be noted that Italy and Greece carry out the air policing tasks for Slovenia and Albania, this seems to confirm the different security priorities of NATO Allies who are mostly confronted with the spill-over effects of the turmoil and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (migration flows in particular).

Baltic Air Policing rotations		
Belgium	-	6
Canada	-	1
Czech Republic	-	2
Denmark	-	5
France	-	6
Germany	-	8
Hungary	-	1
Italy	-	2
Netherlands	-	2
Norway	-	3
Poland	-	6
Portugal	-	3
Romania	-	1
Spain	-	3
Turkey	-	1
United States	-	4
United Kingdom	-	4

91 France, Germany, Italy, UK and US.

92 Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey.

The increasing amount of air violations by Russia has justified the continuation of the BAP enhancement. However, it should be noted that the standard enhanced BAP package as of the last quarter of 2015 consists of eight (2 x 4 fighter aircraft), half of the size in the years 2014–2015 (4 x 4). This quadrupling was probably more driven by showing NATO's flag in response to the Ukraine crisis than by purely operational needs to increase BAP. In 2014 there were 140 Alpha scrambles (launches to intercept) and in 2015 the number had further increased to around 160.⁹³ The reduction from sixteen to eight deployed BAP fighter aircraft as of the autumn of 2015 is in contradiction to these air space violations – thus, sixteen fighter aircraft cannot be the operational norm. Showing the flag has also been a reason for using a second air base in Estonia. There are operational reasons as well, in particular the shorter response time to the increasing amount of air space violations over Estonian islands. Nevertheless, realising a visible presence of Allied aircraft near Tallin was an important (political) factor behind the Estonian offer.⁹⁴ This political factor also explains that it took a while and interference of the highest political level in the Baltic States to agree on the deployment package.⁹⁵

Future

For the near future BAP is most likely to continue on the basis of the current model, which has been described as the sustainable solution from the political, operational and financial perspectives.⁹⁶ The fact that rotation slots have already been filled up to 2021⁹⁷ is proof that BAP is not raising serious objections of Allies providing fighter aircraft. With seventeen NATO countries participating in BAP solidarity is consistently expressed by real commitment.⁹⁸ However, in the more distant future problems may occur when European countries replace their current fleets of fighter aircraft. Numbers will go down, reducing the available pool of aircraft for deployment. In particular smaller countries like Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway might find it more difficult to commit

93 In the period 2004–2010 BAP conducted an annual average of around ten Alpha scrambles. The number increased to approximately 50 annually in the period 2011–2013. Information published by the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence. NATO does not release detailed statistics on intercepts for operational security reasons.

94 From interviews.

95 One detachment at Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania and one at Ämari Air Base in Estonia. In case the need arises to deploy a third detachment it will be stationed at the air base in Lithuania. Information from interviews.

96 By interviewees. The Lithuanian MOD has conducted a study on alternatives. An in-house capacity with a minimum of twelve fighter aircraft would only be feasible in financial terms when the country would completely disband its navy and land forces.

97 Information from interviews.

98 Although interviews showed that the relatively low participation of some Allies in southern Europe (Italy-2, Turkey-1 and Greece-0) has raised eyebrows in the Baltic States.

regularly to BAP participation as it will hamper other operations.⁹⁹ Committing 5th generation fighter aircraft (F-35) to BAP might also raise other objections: the Alliance's most capable air assets will be used for the lowest risk level mission. Perhaps Allies with 4th generation fighter aircraft should take the main burden of BAP. However, the Baltic States might not be in favour. Deploying the most modern and capable aircraft provides the best deterrence in their view.¹⁰⁰ Another alternative could be a regional solution with Central and Eastern European countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland providing all aircraft. But this solution could put too much burden on regional partners. More importantly, it could be seen as a lack of Allied solidarity and, thus, weakening NATO's deterrence and defence posture. The Baltic States themselves, in particular Lithuania, are promoting the extension of BAP. For example, Allies could use their presence in the Baltic States for training air defence missions, close air support (CAS) and other combat tasks. With the NATO Warsaw Summit decision to deploy semi-permanently a battlegroup to each of the Baltic States (and one to Poland) this proposal is likely to attract even more support in order to train for protection and support to Allied troops on the ground.

Pros

The following elements can be regarded as positive factors of BAP:

- BAP is a showcase of Alliance solidarity in political-strategic terms. It contributes to NATO's deterrence and defence posture – even in its current set-up of air policing only. This factor will become more important if BAP is extended to air defence and other combat tasks.
- In operational terms BAP offers the opportunity to fly air policing missions which fighter aircraft pilots have to train for anyhow. The increasing number of incursions of Baltic airspace by Russian airplanes adds a 'real-life' factor.¹⁰¹
- Financially, sending states carry out BAP at almost zero costs as the three Baltic States have raised their host nation support expenditure considerably in recent years.

99 Taking into account the reduced number of fighter aircraft in the future Belgium and the Netherlands have already agreed to joint air policing for the whole Benelux airspace on rotation. This will become effective as of 1 January 2017.

100 From interviews.

101 From interviews.

Cons

The following elements can be regarded as negative factors of BAP:

- Allies are reducing their air force capacities by deploying fighter aircraft to the Baltic States, which can hamper other operations. This problem will grow after the replacement of current fighter aircraft by lower numbers of next generation fighters, in particular in the case of smaller Allies.
- In a worst-case scenario Allies might have to withdraw their fighter aircraft completely from the Baltic States due to urgent operational needs elsewhere. However, BAP is a NATO responsibility which implies that Allies would collectively have to agree to leave Baltic airspace undefended.
- Member states with the most capable fighter aircraft take the largest share in BAP, while those with less capable fighter aircraft contribute to a smaller share. This uneven distribution hinders optimal use of the Alliance's air power capabilities.

Conclusions

Baltic Air Policing is a unique example of 'negative' role specialisation: three NATO Allies as 'non-haves' receive an essential military capability from a large group of other member states, without any direct return except for delivering extensive host nation support. In that sense BAP is not a real test-case for role specialisation, which in a 'positive' way is based on the principle that 'non-haves' compensate each other with their own 'have' capability. As a 'negative' role specialisation case, BAP is working well. There is wide Allied participation in BAP, thus turning solidarity into practice by delivering an essential operational capability to protect Baltic airspace. However, at least two important factors explain why this example of role specialisation works well. Firstly, BAP is an integral part of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence. This is probably the best guarantee: if BAP fails, then NATO fails. This overall umbrella more or less obliges NATO member states with fighter aircraft to contribute to BAP – although it should be noted that the burden is not equally shared by all such Allies. In other words: without NATO, it would have been more difficult for the Baltic States to arrange BAP and the number of countries deploying fighter aircraft to their territory most probably would have been lower. Secondly, BAP comes almost at no additional cost for the sending states. It is striking that the Baltic States have more than doubled their expenditure for host nation support from 2011 to 2015, thus preventing any counter-argument of sending states. Adding additional tasks such as air defence and close air support training to BAP – promoted by the Baltic States but also likely to happen to reinforce NATO's deterrence and defence capabilities in the East – seems to be the next step to lock in the commitment of NATO Allies in the longer term.

3 Conclusions

There are many forms of defence cooperation between countries and there are different ways to categorise them. This study has categorised five different types of military operational cooperation: (i) multinational deployable headquarters; (ii) modular operational formations with countries maintaining the option to withdraw their contribution and deploy it nationally; (iii) integrated operational formations with mutual dependencies to deploy; (iv) permanent transfer of command with loss of national sovereignty; and (v) role specialisation in which countries provide non-haves with a required capability. In practice it turns out that cooperation models often have a mix of these characteristics – as shown by the case studies. The Franco-German Brigade is a combination of a modular and integrated operational formation. Both are options for deployment. In case the Brigade is deployed ‘as a whole’ it is an integrated formation. But subunits can also be deployed under national command. EATC is an example of permanent transfer of command (and thus in principle loss of sovereignty) by the participating countries. Yet the arrangements include a permanently guaranteed revocability of the transfer of authority. EATC could thus be described as a ‘conditioned permanent transfer of authority to a multinational level, without loss of national sovereignty’. Benesam – the Belgian-Netherlands Navy Cooperation – has elements of three types of cooperation: an integrated naval headquarters (which also allows for national command chains), modularity of assets (same ships, which can operate closely together but also separately) and role specialisation in education and maintenance (Belgium as the single provider for the minehunters and the Netherlands for the M-frigates). An important general lesson learned is that categorising defence cooperation models in single types of cooperation is difficult. Mixed forms of cooperation can even be regarded as a success formula in itself. The transfer of military air transport command to EATC has been accepted on the condition that transfer of authority is revocable. The integrated Franco-German Brigade (staff and Support Battalion) with the option of deploying subunits nationally provides the two contributing nations with different options and flexibility.

Assessing the pros and cons of the five case studies against the success and fail criteria as defined in the literature (chapter 1) the following conclusions can be drawn:

- **Trust, confidence and solidarity – the basis for success.** Multinational defence cooperation is per definition more difficult than ‘doing it alone’ as no country is like another and no national army, navy or air force is the same as those of partner nations. The negative fall-out of these national differences can only be overcome when partners can rely on each other, when they trust their colleagues and are confident in their contributions and performances. The case studies underscore

this factor, but it should be underlined that trust, confidence and solidarity grow over time and have to be supported by practical measures and arrangements. In bilateral formats this is easier than in larger multinational formations. Nevertheless, in the Eurocorps smaller and bigger countries 'feel equal' as key posts in the headquarter rotate amongst all of them. A feeling of 'shared responsibility' (and, therefore, solidarity) is also the result of all participation states delivering equipment. In EATC the built-in guaranteed revocability of transfer of authority and the options for delegation of authority contribute to building trust and confidence. Trust and confidence is also the basis of Benesam, but without the practical 'win-win' for both parties, the cooperation would not have gone this far.

- **Sovereignty and autonomy – not black and white.** The traditional view of the limits of multinational defence cooperation – when national sovereignty over military means is at stake – no longer holds. Several case studies, in particular EATC and Benesam, show that countries are prepared to transfer national sovereignty or, in other words, to become dependent on partner(s) for a military capability. But it does not come easy or natural. In Benesam, post-Cold War defence cuts were a driving factor for reducing onshore footprint to maintain maximum capabilities at sea. The resulting mutual dependencies of Belgium and the Netherlands for training personnel and maintenance of the M-frigates and minehunters respectively were thus acceptable. EATC participating states agreed to transfer of command authority on the condition it could be revoked in case of national needs. In the case of Baltic Air Policing Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania simply could not afford to operate their own fighter aircraft, with the consequences that as 'have-nots' they would per definition become dependent on Allies.
- **Similarity of strategic cultures – important, not crucial.** It seems that countries who do not necessarily share the same strategic culture are still able to operate together. France, an experienced interventionist, and Germany, reluctant to engage in operations at the high end of the spectrum, have deployed their common Franco-German Brigade on several occasions. Although some of these employments – such as in the Kabul area – were certainly not in a benign environment, it is nevertheless doubtful if Germany would agree to a deployment in a real fighting scenario, such as for example the French intervention Operation Serval in Mali in 2013. The usability of a common capability such as the Franco-German Brigade can still have its limits due to the lack of similarity of strategic cultures.
- **Geography and history – influential but adaptable.** In general, neighbours work more easily together than distant friends, but geography and history have no absolute value as a success factor. It is true that bilateral cooperation models – Benesam and the Franco-German Brigade are proof of this – consist in most cases of neighbouring countries. But today several participating countries in EATC do not share borders. The same is true for multinational headquarters such as

the Eurocorps. Apparently, if geography and history are obstructing multinational defence cooperation this can be overcome in practice.

- **Number of participants – the more, not always the better.** Mathematical logic would imply that multinational defence cooperation would profit from a higher number of participants. The case studies show a more nuanced picture. Certainly when it comes to complex and multi-functional capabilities – such as in a combat brigade – binationality is the preferred option. But for ‘enabling’ capabilities, such as air transport or air-to-air refuelling commanded by EATC, a higher number of participating nations does not create unsurmountable problems (though a further extension might). In other words, the type of cooperation seems to be the decisive factor for the number of participants as a success factor, not the number itself.
- **Countries and forces of similar size and quality – not a golden rule.** This factor applies in particular to bilateral defence cooperation (as in wider groups there is often a mix of several bigger and smaller countries). The case studies of bilateral cooperation (Benesam, Franco-German Brigade) are examples of similarly sized countries (small-small, big-big). But in naval terms Benesam is not a case of two equals: the Netherlands Navy is larger and has a wider set of capabilities than the Belgian Navy. Benesam works well, despite the uneven fleets of both countries, apparently because other factors are more important (crucial among which are the efficiency gains for both countries). With regard to the Franco-German Brigade equal size of the contributors even has resulted in some inefficiency as illustrated by the use of two languages.
- **Top-down and bottom-up – both are needed.** The usual statement is that defence cooperation will not work without top-down political and military steering. This will be all the more the case when cooperation entails the loss of sovereignty. Benesam was brought to a higher level of cooperation after a ministerial agreement. EATC would not have started without the involvement of Ministers of Defence, in particular in solving the sensitive issue of the location. But it is equally true that bottom-up support is required to make defence cooperation a success. The direct involvement of practitioners in Benesam to explore and develop deeper forms of cooperation is important for its success. Comparable combinations of top-down steering and bottom-up support can be found in the other case studies; it is nothing less than bringing politics and practice together which is needed for being successful, not only in launching but also in sustaining defence cooperation over time.
- **Mind-set, defence culture and organisation – very helpful indeed.** Clearly, these elements are closely related to the factors ‘trust, confidence and solidarity’ and to ‘geography and history’. The case-studies of bilateral cooperation seem to confirm this factor, though one should not underestimate that even between neighbouring

countries mind-set, defence culture and organisation can show significant varieties. Both in Benesam and in the Franco-German Brigade these differences have not created big problems and neither does this seem to be the case in the Eurocorps or EATC. One should not forget that such military formations develop their own mind-set, culture and organisation – ‘esprit de corps’ becomes an important factor in itself.

- **Defence planning alignment – hand in hand with deepest forms of cooperation.** Only the Benesam case study underscores the importance of this factor. The prolongation of the existing success – in particular the task specialisation in training and maintenance of minehunters (Belgium) and M-Frigates (Netherlands), is completely dependent on both countries procuring the same replacement ships. This confirms that the deepest forms of defence cooperation – with mutual dependencies – will change the priority in defence planning from ‘national first’ to ‘with partner(s) first’. Similarly, it makes increasingly sense to take the availability of air transport within the EATC into account in national defence planning.
- **Standardisation and interoperability – multipliers for cooperation.** The Franco-German Brigade proves that alignment of concepts and doctrine offers huge potential for increasing the usability of a binational formation. The same applies to education, training and exercises, even when subunits and combat support units are national formations. Benesam shows the far-reaching potential when partners operate exactly the same equipment. It is also a key factor for reducing foot print (facilities, schools, etc.) and thus saving costs because operating the same equipment allows for task specialisation (mutual dependencies) in the support structure.
- **Realism, clarity and seriousness of intentions – no doubt, required.** All case studies confirm the importance of this factor. The Eurocorps and the Franco-German Brigade have sometimes been labelled as ‘symbolic’ or ‘window dressing’. The realistic approach of the participating nations – make it tailored to what it should do – and the clarity and seriousness of the intended cooperation have resulted in two very usable cooperation models as shown by their tracked record of deployments. This factor is closely connected to other and, more specifically, to the required combination of top-down steering and bottom-up support.
- **Involvement of parliaments – case dependent.** Naturally, for operational deployment this factor only comes into play when a contributing country to a defence cooperation model is dependent on parliamentary approval – as is the case in Germany. The Bundestag has not blocked deployments of the Franco-German Brigade, but this in itself is not proving the irrelevance of this factor. It is unlikely that the German Federal Government will bring a proposal for deployment to the

Bundestag when it is known in advance that a supporting majority in parliament will be lacking. In that sense the role of parliament is important because of its pre-decision-making effect. In general, it is preferable to involve parliaments in the early stages of defence cooperation. In the case of the EATC, for instance, it should be clear to parliaments that the pooled assets of their country can be made available for operations of another country.

The case studies have revealed that all success and fail factors, as mentioned in literature, play a role – though most of them need to be judged in a more nuanced way. There are additional factors of influence which can be learned from the five case studies:

- **EU or NATO deployment – possible adaptation problems.** The often heard argument that ‘there is only a single set of forces’ and, thus, the same capability has to be deployed when called by the EU or NATO, might not be completely correct. The Eurocorps is experienced in NATO deployments but also has an EU vocation which might further increase depending on the progress made in the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy. Switching real-life employments from NATO to the EU or vice-versa could create adaptability problems due to the different nature of both organisations.
- **International organisation as the guarantor of a capability – important in operational role specialisation.** Baltic Air Policing is a success story, but it is doubtful if the model would have worked without the overall NATO umbrella. The fact that air policing is part of NATO’s Integrated Air and Missile Defence makes it a collective responsibility. If Baltic Air Policing fails, NATO fails. This might be an important argument when considering future cases of providing capabilities to ‘have-nots’, for example in air reconnaissance or air-to-air refuelling.
- **Costs – low, zero or reducing.** A quite popular expression is that defence cooperation needs investment first and delivers savings at best in the longer term. It has been a defensive line against those (politicians mainly) arguing that savings can be made by increasing multinational defence cooperation. The five case studies show that very little new financial investment was needed, in particular as host nations were more than willing to offer infrastructure, facilities and related services in order to attract the (permanent) location of the multinational formation. By increasing the level of host nation support the Baltic States have prevented that Allies could use additional costs as an argument to object to continuation of providing fighter aircraft. Benesam through its role specialisation in training and maintenance has even reduced costs and a failure of continuing mutual dependencies would require serious new investment of schools, training and maintenance facilities in both countries – thus costing money. However, it should

not be forgotten that the preparatory phase of defence cooperation can be labour intensive and comes at great effort, particularly to smaller countries.

Many lessons can be learned from existing defence cooperation models such as the five case studies assessed in this report. Some success factors – like trust, the top-down/bottom-up combination, the same mind-set and realism – apply to all of them. The importance of other factors may vary, depending on the characteristics of the model. Clearly, the importance of these key factors is higher for models with mutual dependencies or task specialisation, such as training and maintenance in Benesam. But it should be noted that such far-reaching forms of defence cooperation are very difficult when it comes to combat units. The fact that the Franco-German Brigade has succeeded in realising this aim in theory does not automatically imply that the capability can be deployed in that manner in practice. In this case, different strategic cultures put a limit on deployment options in the highest part of the spectrum, which – contrary to what many critics have said – certainly does not mean that the Brigade is ‘unusable’ as proven by its track record of deployments. Several existing assumptions on defence cooperation might not be right in each and every case. ‘The less, the better’ – the number of participants – is true for the most complex combat capabilities, but certainly is no golden rule for deeper defence cooperation in enablers, as the EATC case study shows. The same applies to a factor like the size of countries or their armed forces. Finally, the report has shown that assessing case-studies as such is a useful method for detecting additional factors of influence such as saving costs which is often used as a pay-off for later but in some cases – like Benesam – it actually was a driving factor to realise much deeper defence cooperation.