



HOUSE OF LORDS
European Union Committee

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The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan KCMG MP
Minister of State for Europe and the Americas
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London, SW1A 2AH

15 September 2017

Dear Sir Alan,

UNNUMBERED DOCUMENT Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/1425 of 4 August 2017 on a European Union Stabilisation Action in Mopti and Segou

Thank you for your Explanatory Memorandum and letter of 14 August, which were considered by the External Affairs Sub-Committee on 14 September.

We were disappointed by the quality of the Explanatory Memorandum (EM). It provides no political context for the Committee on the challenges facing Mali, or detail on the sources of instability which the new Stabilisation Action is designed to address. The budgetary analysis section was incorrect, and we had to request an amended section from your officials.

We accept that it was not possible for Parliamentary scrutiny to be completed prior to adoption of the Council Decision, making an override of scrutiny necessary. However, we reiterate the value we attach to being kept informed by letter about items under discussion at the EU level, before decisions are taken, for example that the Malian authorities had requested further EU support (which your EM states was requested in June) and that options were under discussion in EU working groups. Keeping the Committee informed in this way would assist us to undertake our role of scrutinising EU documents.

We have a number of questions, as follows. First, your EM states that the Government “fully supports this Mission as an important tool to deliver UK objectives in the Sahel”. Please set out what these objectives are, and how they will be met by the mission.

Second, your EM states that Mopti is a priority for the UK in Mali, but does not mention Segou. Do the same challenges exist in both areas, and are they of equal significance to the UK? How will the mission’s activities be divided between these two areas and Bamako?

Third, by what date will the mission be operational?

Fourth, do you anticipate that any UK personnel will participate in the mission?

Fifth, how does planning for a CSDP Action under Article 28 differ from planning for a full CSDP mission, and what are the other principal differences between these two formats?

Finally, your EM states that “a full implementation report” will be produced by the end of the mandate. We request that, in due course, you provide information to the Committee on this report and your assessment of the Stabilisation Action.

We have decided to retain the document under scrutiny. We look forward to your response in the usual 10 working days.

I am copying this letter to The Chair of the Commons European Scrutiny Committee; Lynn Gardner, Clerk to the European Scrutiny Committee; Arnold Ridout, Legal Adviser to the European Scrutiny Committee; Les Saunders, DExEU; Lynne Smith, FCO Select Committee Liaison Officer; and Andrew Bell and Dominic Cleydon, FCO Departmental Scrutiny Coordinators.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Verma', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Baroness Verma on behalf of Lord Boswell of Aynho
Chairman of the European Union Committee