



Foreign &
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Office

Minister for Europe and the
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King Charles Street
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29 September 2017

Baroness Verma
Chair
EU External Affairs Sub- Committee
Committee Office
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Sandip,

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

Thank you for your letter of 15 September regarding the council decision on the European Union Stabilisation Action in Mopti and Segou.

I am sorry about the quality of the Explanatory Memorandum. I understand that two different drafts of the Budget Impact Statement were issued in quick succession, which caused confusion around the budgetary analysis figures.

I have instructed officials to ensure that you are kept informed about items under discussion at the EU level. I apologise that this did not happen in this case.

Your letter sought clarity on UK objectives in the Sahel and how these would be met by the EU mission. Our primary objective is, working in conjunction with regional governments and key actors in the international community, to ensure a more secure and stable Sahel region that is increasingly able to tackle the significant threats it faces from terrorism, criminality, poor governance and violent extremism.

In recent months, these threats have migrated from north to south across Mali, with instability increasingly in the (central) Mopti region including as far south as the town of Segou. Terrorist groups, in particular, have taken advantage of the grievances of local populations (mostly from the Peul and Fulani ethnic groups) against the government to sow unrest. The town of Mopti is a key point on the north-south axis of the country, and re-establishing stability there is crucial if north-south commerce and communications are to be maintained. Segou, the former colonial administrative centre, is of some strategic importance., The challenges of unrest are very similar in both Mopti and Segou. However Mopti's challenges are currently deeper routed than Segou. The activities proposed for Segou will prevent it disintegrating into the same

position as Mopti. The proposed activities will be divided with similar unified efforts but the focus will be on Mopti as the challenge is currently affecting Mopti more than Segou.

Under the umbrella of the Malian government's latest strategic plan, the proposed EU Stabilisation Action in Mopti and Segou is designed to deliver direct support to local authorities in Mopti and Segou in building administrative capacity and developing their capacity to deliver services in the region. Particular priorities will be strengthening local governance, democratisation, human rights and law enforcement, in order to promote greater community cohesion and stability. The mission will provide ten temporary expert staff on secondment to the offices of the governors of Mopti and Segou (for security reasons those working on Mopti will be based in Bamako, making regular visits north). The presence in Mopti will therefore be focused on delivering outcomes that are fully aligned with UK strategic objectives for the region.

Following a recent EU scoping team visit, the mission is expected to be in place by mid-November 2017. It is not likely that there will be British participants in the mission, given the difficulties of recruiting British candidates with the requisite level of French language .

You asked for further information on the differences between a CSDP Action under Article 28 and a full CSDP mission. The planning phase for Article 28 is more stream-lined than a CSDP mission, and therefore quicker to deploy. Action is underpinned by a Terms of Reference document and a Council Decision, whereas Civilian CSDP missions generally require a detailed Concept of Operations and an Operational Plan, along with separate Council Decisions to establish and launch missions. With regard to day to day management, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability of the EEAS is responsible for operational planning of Civilian CSDP missions. However, in the case of the Article 28 mission in Mopti and Segou, The EEAS's Conflict prevention, Peace building and Mediation Instruments Division (PRISM) provides core support, monitoring action with DEVCO and relevant EEAS actors. The Head of the EU Delegation in Mali will be the Head of the Stabilisation Team and will be responsible for the operational and financial management of the action, reporting to MD Africa and PRISM. The PSC, supported by COAFR shall exercise strategic guidance and political direction of the EU Stabilisation Action within the framework of the mandate.

I will, of course, ensure that information obtained from the full information report and the FCO's assessment of the Stabilisation Action are communicated to you at the earliest opportunity.

I am writing in similar terms to the Chair of the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee, and copying this letter to the Clerks of both Committees, Les Saunders at the Department for Exiting the European Union, Philip Worley, FCO Departmental Scrutiny Head and Lynne Smith, FCO Select Committee Liaison Officer.

Alan Duncan

RT HON SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP