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Realising the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity: opportunities and pitfalls

When the European Union's Strategic Compass had almost been completed in late February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Consequently, the language on Russia in the Compass text was adapted to a more bellicose content. However, the military level of ambition remained unchanged as it had already been agreed informally by the EU member states. At the end of March, when the Council formally adopted the Compass, the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) became the new focal point for crisis management tasks in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Although the attention of strategists, defence planners and armaments experts has shifted further towards strengthening collective defence as a result of the war in Ukraine and the outcome of the NATO Madrid Summit, instability in the areas to Europe's south and south-east remains the norm rather than the exception. The EU RDC has to provide the EU with the military capability to be deployed in crisis situations when needed, also taking into account that the United States (US) is less likely to act in Europe's southern neighbourhood in the future. Ambitious targets have been set with regard to the flexible composition of the RDC and to the timeline of its initial operational status in 2025.

This policy brief examines the milestones to be reached towards the year 2025 – in other words 'what should be done in the near future'. Three aspects are given particular attention: the question of using the existing format of the EU Battlegroups as building blocks for the RDC; the issue of how to speed up decision-making; and the question of capability shortfalls. This is followed by conclusions on the opportunities and pitfalls that the EU and its member states may encounter up until 2025 and beyond.¹

Objectives and milestones

In order to be able to act when crises or conflicts occur outside its borders, the EU should be able to act, amongst other things,

by sending an intervention force, known as the Rapid Deployment Capacity.² The EU RDC would consist of a maximum of 5,000 troops, should be swiftly deployable and has to be operational by 2025. Contrary to the EU Battlegroups, the composition of the EU RDC will be *modular*, depending on

1 The methodology used for this policy brief consists of a combination of literature scanning and a limited number of interviews. The authors would like to thank the interviewees for their valuable input that was given under the application of the Chatham House Rule.

2 European External Action Service (EEAS), *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*, March 2022.

the crisis at hand, and tailor-made containing land, air and maritime components plus the necessary strategic *enablers*, including cyber defence and satellite communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. The EU RDC can be deployed in all kinds of scenarios, including in non-permissive environments. Examples include the initial phase of a stabilisation operation, reinforcement, and as a reserve force to secure an exit.³

To ensure that the EU RDC will be fully operational in 2025, there is still a great deal of work ahead as depicted in figure 1.

At the Council meeting in mid-November this year, the EU Ministers of Defence are expected to agree on two operational scenarios for the deployment of the RDC: the initial entry of a stabilisation operation and a rescue & evacuation operation. The choice for these two scenarios as the kick-off for realising the EU RDC is understandable. The initial entry scenario is not new as it was already used for the development of the EU Battlegroups. The idea behind such a scenario is still a relatively short engagement by an intervention force after which the EU, the United Nations or a regional organisation (such as the African Union) will follow up with a long-term stabilisation operation.

The question may be asked if such a scenario is very likely to happen. Practice of the last two decades shows that intervention operations have often resulted in a complex combination of ‘fighting & stabilisation’ (for example in Afghanistan and Mali), with failure as a result. Remarkably, four former Soviet republics – Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – are considered by the European External Action Service as possible scenarios for deployment of the RDC.⁴ The rescue & evacuation scenario follows the events in Kabul in August 2021, when the US provided the nucleus of the protection force and a significant part of the military transport aircraft. Naturally, the lesson learned is that the EU should be capable of conducting such an operation itself, but choosing the last crisis as a point of departure for scenario development feels a bit like ‘the generals conducting the previous war’.

It is of crucial importance that flexibility is introduced in scenario planning – in order to be prepared for all possible crisis situations, including at the high end of the spectrum. Furthermore, scenario work has to be followed up by advanced planning, indicating what force packages are required for which sort of crisis. Advance planning providing the basis for the required forces – to be listed in a comprehensive database – is foreseen as the next stage after November 2022.⁵

Figure 1 Roadmap EU Rapid Deployment Capacity – Source: European External Action Service*



* EEAS, *European Union Rapid Deployment Capacity*, Factsheet, March 2022.

4 ‘Carnet de la géopolitique européenne (25.10.2022). Défense. OTAN. Diplomatie. Crises. Sécurité. Pouvoirs’, *Bruxelles2*, 25 October 2022.

5 Information from interviews.

3 Ibid.

At this stage, it remains unclear if member states will be willing to move from a voluntary basis to a firm commitment. If the crisis at hand demands rapid action, then the RDC's activation and deployment can no longer be based on the principle of 'we will see what is needed and which forces we might make available'. Ultimately, political will is the decisive factor for using the EU RDC, but anything that can be done to speed up its deployment should be explored and hopefully agreed to by the member states.

The next milestone challenge is the conduct of live exercises, which is completely new in the EU context. The EU Battlegroups were never trained and exercised under strategic level EU command and control. The Strategic Compass has broken with this heritage of the past: the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) is to plan and lead EU exercises and, by 2025, it has to be ready to do the same in reality. At present, the first of those exercises is scheduled for the second half of 2023 and, according to available information, is to include land, air and maritime components.⁶ The question arises whether the MPCC will be ready in that timeframe to play its full role in the exercise, due to the simple fact that adequate numbers of personnel are still lacking and a secure communications network is absent.

Another complicating factor is that in the current schedule no Battlegroups will be available in that period.⁷ Spain, which will hold the EU Presidency in the second half of 2023, has raised its hand for taking the lead in the organisation of the first live exercise, but it is unclear if Madrid's condition of the common funding of the exercise will be accepted. Also for 2024, there is a lack of clarity on the 'if, what and where' of live exercises.⁸ Whatever will be ultimately decided, it is essential that troops of several EU member states participate.⁹ As time is short before the EU RDC has to reach its operational status, not only exercises in

the period up to 2025 should be planned but in the subsequent years as well. Alert exercises should also be included in order to train for the most demanding operations in terms of the time factor (such as for rescue & evacuation), naturally without prefixed dates on which they will be held. A final question on exercises relates to certification. NATO has the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) system for certifying units ahead of their readiness period. Perhaps the EU should not opt for this rather bureaucratic model, but the topic of certification (by whom, how) of units to become 'ready' for the RDC should be addressed.

From Battlegroups to the RDC

There has been much discussion about how the EU RDC is related to, and most importantly different from, the EU Battlegroups. In 2007 the EU Battlegroups became fully operational, but, to date, none of them has been deployed, mainly due to a lack of political will. In the negotiations on the Strategic Compass, member states insisted on using the Battlegroups as building blocks for the RDC.¹⁰ However, there are distinguishing features that set the EU RDC apart from the EU Battlegroups:

- The size is different: EU Battlegroups consist of approximately 1,500 personnel¹¹, while the EU RDC is going to consist of a force up to 5,000 troops.
- The Battlegroups have a fixed composition of national contributions for a land-based capability, while the EU RDC is modular and, depending on the operational requirements, consists of land, air and maritime components.
- The composition of the EU RDC will build on very concrete and well-thought-out scenarios, while this has not been the case for the Battlegroups with the result that those at a state of readiness were not always prepared and suitable to be deployed to the crisis area at hand.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 EEAS, [Common Security and Defence Policy: EU Battlegroups](#), last updated: April 2013.

- The EU Battlegroups were designed and established without incorporating the strategic enablers, while the EU RDC is supposed to deploy those alongside.
- The EU RDC will also benefit from available forces on longer standby periods (12 months) as compared to those of the EU Battlegroups (six months; in some instances multiples thereof¹²).
- Another distinguishing feature is that modules within the EU RDC architecture will be characterised by different levels of operational readiness¹³, the so-called staggered readiness.

Many of these differences will create problems for incorporating the EU Battlegroups in the EU RDC. The Strategic Compass states that the Battlegroups will be “substantially modified” for this purpose, but it remains unclear what such modifications will entail. Ideally, the EU RDC will consist of pre-identified permanently available forces (land, air, maritime) in order to deploy a capacity that is tailor-made for deployment to a crisis area. This is not only contrary to the fixed land-based composition of the EU Battlegroups, but also raises the question of the overall volume of forces that have to be available for rapid deployment. A modular, tailor-made EU RDC will require that the member states will have collectively a considerably higher number of troops (and related equipment, including enablers) at high readiness status than the maximum number of 5,000. This requirement is a huge challenge for many European countries as they are facing personnel shortfalls.

Furthermore, the new NATO Force Model (NFM), agreed at the Alliance’s Summit in Madrid (June 2022), beefs up the number of Allied forces at high readiness from 40,000 to more than 300,000 troops. The war in Ukraine has reinforced the already existing trend of giving priority to defence planning, training and exercises as well as investment to strengthen capabilities for collective defence. Although military capabilities suited

for collective defence can also be used for crisis management, placing forces at high readiness for the EU RDC and in the context of the NFM may raise issues of priority as countries that are members of both organisations have only one set of forces. To a certain extent, the various categories of high readiness will help to reduce the problem, but the EU and NATO should first and foremost agree on using the same criteria for defining the parameters.¹⁴

Decision-making and money

One of the claimed virtues of the EU RDC is that it should benefit from more flexible decision-making procedures. Two main obstacles are blocking ‘rapid decision-making’ for ‘rapid deployment’: first, the required unanimity of Council decisions and, second, the often cumbersome procedures at the national level which were very often not synchronised either. The Strategic Compass states that the EU RDC should profit from “more flexible decision-making arrangements [...] to contribute to the rapid and efficient deployability of this capacity”¹⁵. It is not yet specified, however, what is meant by ‘more flexible decision-making’.

The Strategic Compass does however mention the option of using Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union. This article allows (a group of) EU member states to execute CSDP tasks. However, in order to activate Article 44, the Council has to take a decision by unanimity. If one or more member states have fundamental objections against an EU military operation, it is very likely that such

12 Ibid. The ‘substantially modified EU Battlegroups’ will also be on stand-by for 12 months.

13 EEAS, *European Union Rapid Deployment Capacity*, Factsheet, March 2022.

14 In the NFM these readiness categories are defined as: tier 1 – up to 100,000 up to 10 days’ readiness; tier 2 – approximately 200,000 around 10–30 days’ readiness; and tier 3 – at least 500,000 up to 30–180 days’ readiness. Within the first category, 40,000 troops will constitute the Allied Reaction Force (ARF), to replace the NATO Response Force (NRF). See: Dick Zandee & Renze de Keiser, ‘[The NATO Madrid Summit and the consequences for the Netherlands](#)’, *Atlantisch Perspectief*, No. 4, p 30–34, 2022.

15 EEAS, *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*, March 2022, p. 26.

a decision by unanimity will not be taken. Thus, the merits of using Article 44 should not be overestimated.

Article 44(1) Treaty on European Union

“Within the framework of the decisions adopted in accordance with Article 43, the Council may entrust the implementation of a task to a group of Member States which are willing and have the necessary capability for such a task.”

The biggest advantage may lie in speeding up the planning and preparation phase of an EU operation, assuming that member states accept that the lead nation assumes that responsibility instead of the EU institutions. In addition, the EU is exploring the instrument of constructive abstention, which would mean that an EU member state does not explicitly block a Council decision to launch an EU operation, in case it opposes such an operation or wants to abstain from participating in it.¹⁶

An even bigger obstacle for a quick decision-making process is the requirement of a mandate from the UN Security Council (UNSC). For all EU member states, a UN mandate is the preferred option and for some it is a necessity for the establishment of an EU operation. The present circumstances, in which Russia is at loggerheads with the Western world due to its unlawful invasion of Ukraine, will make this very complicated.¹⁷ The Russian Federation has veto power in the UNSC and can block any majority decision on establishing new missions or renewing the mandate of existing ones. Intervention operations by deploying the EU RDC, in particular to countries and regions with a Russian presence or interest, are for that reason unlikely to obtain a

UNSC mandate – at least as long as relations between Russia and the West remain at a low point. A UN mandate is, however, not a hard prerequisite for deployment. The EU may also be asked to deploy to a crisis-affected area upon request by the host country.

Finally, there could be an option of a ‘coalition of the willing’ operating without a Council decision but with an ‘EU blessing’ – based on the Coordinated Maritime Presence model that is already used for anti-piracy naval activities in the Gulf of Guinea executed by a limited number of EU countries.¹⁸

Financially, the Strategic Compass highlights that the EU RDC will benefit from “common funding and enhanced solidarity”. As no agreement could be reached on changing the existing rules and parameters of common funding, the Compass states that the EU will “re-assess the scope and definition of common costs to enhance solidarity and stimulate participation in missions and operations”¹⁹. Currently, the largest part of the financial burden of EU military operations lies with the contributing countries, the so-called principle of ‘costs lie where they fall’. This is also one of the reasons why the functioning of the EU Battlegroups is constrained.²⁰ The question arises, though, whether consensus can be reached among the member states to change the rules of the game. The UN system of paying per diem for each participating blue helmet

16 For a further explanation of the benefits and limits of using Art. 44 and constructive abstention, see: Dick Zandee, Adája Stoetman, Bob Deen, [The EU's Strategic Compass for security and defence – Squaring ambition with reality](#), Clingendael Report, May 2021, p. 29-31.

17 Information from interviews.

18 In January 2021, the Council launched the pilot case of the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) concept in the Gulf of Guinea. Participating member states retain national command over their contributions and coordinate the employment of their ships in the area with each other. The EU Military Staff coordinates information exchange, but there is no formal EU command and control involvement. The CMP concept is referred to in the Strategic Compass as a model that could be expanded to other areas of maritime interest. For further information, see: EEAS, [Coordinated Maritime Presences](#), last updated: 3 December 2021.

19 EEAS, [A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence](#), March 2022, p. 31.

20 Nora Vanaga, [Challenges and Solutions for EU Battlegroup Deployment within the Existing Legal Framework](#), 2015.

soldier is not an alternative, as it rewards quantity instead of quality. A model for EU operations could be to compensate contributing countries from the European Peace Facility (EPF) budget, based on the number of troops they make available taking into account the GNP key. In this model, it is not a per diem per soldier that would be the norm, but the extra costs that contributing member states have to incur additionally to the salaries for deployed military personnel. To prevent member states from producing different calculations which would result in an unequal distribution of the common costs budget, a standard would have to be agreed upon that would be applicable to all contributing member states.

Capabilities

In the EU Strategic Compass, the words quickly, ready, available, flexible and robust show up frequently in the text on the EU RDC – no doubt reflecting the member states' intentions with regard to the military intervention force. From a capability perspective, in particular the requirements for the enablers seem to be very ambitious: member states will “commit the associated assets and the necessary strategic enablers, in particular strategic transport, force protection, medical assets, cyber defence, satellite communications and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities”, which “We will develop (...) where necessary”.²¹ Here follows a breakdown of the various capability requirements that have to be addressed between today and 2025.

Modular force

Modularity is the right concept for the EU RDC in order to compose a force that is tailor-made for deployment to a crisis with its own characteristics in terms of geography, conflicting parties, expected opposing forces and other factors of influence. However, this concept implies that member states have a wide range of land, air and maritime units

earmarked for the EU RDC. Consequentially, the number of available troops will also have to be substantially higher than the maximum of 5,000. The current EU Force Catalogue, which lists the units that member states have earmarked for EU operations, needs to be adapted – not only with regard to the sort of forces but also with indicators of various stages of readiness. As the demands increase – quantitatively and qualitatively – and, at the same time, the NATO readiness requirements have become more ambitious²², it might be difficult to switch units at high readiness from ‘available to the EU’ to ‘available for NATO’ and vice versa. It is unlikely that all EU member states that are also NATO members will be able to apply such a system, in particular the smaller nations. The alternative would be to have forces at various readiness categories available to both organisations at the same time – a system of ‘dual-hatted readiness forces’. This seems to run counter to the existing system that units can only be available to one organisation for a fixed period and to the other organisation for another time slot. However, real-life circumstances will be decisive for political decision-making regarding the priority of deployment – not the availability boxes to the EU or NATO. From this perspective, double hatting for readiness is possible. In fact, the new Allied Reaction Force – replacing the NATO Response Force of 40,000 troops – could serve as the same pool of high readiness forces also available to the EU RDC²³, that is for the European countries that are members of both organisations. This would also contribute to EU-NATO cooperation and standardising the capabilities for the rapid response operations of both organisations.

Enablers

For more than two decades, Europe's most significant capability shortfalls have consisted of various enablers: intelligence and strategic reconnaissance (ISR); air-to-air refuelling (AAR) and strategic transport;

21 EEAS, *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*, March 2022, p. 14.

22 See footnote 14.

23 Proposed by: Sven Biscop, *The New Force Model: NATO's European Army?*, Egmont Policy Brief 285, September 2022.

precision munitions; medical support and others. Some of these, such as the AAR, have been reduced or are addressed in ongoing programmes. Other shortfalls, in particular ISR and precision weapons, still persist. The highest demand will come from NATO requirements. European Allies have to catch up and this will be time-demanding and will cost a lot of money – thus, sustained high defence expenditure is needed. For the EU RDC, the required quantity of available enablers will be lower, which implies that shortfalls can be addressed more easily. In particular, strategic transport and AAR should not be a big problem for deploying a relatively small force. On the other hand, qualitatively, the EU requirements – in particular for high-end operations – might not deviate much from those of NATO. For categories such as ISR and precision weapons, European countries will not have solved their shortcomings by 2025. Thus, it is unlikely that the EU RDC in its year of reaching operational status can be deployed to the most challenging crises. The solution could be to declare the EU RDC gradually operational for different scenarios, starting from the least demanding up to the most demanding operations.

Command & control

If the EU wants to deploy the EU RDC as of 2025 in all possible compositions and scenarios, and to place the intervention force under the military-strategic command of 'Brussels', then the MPCC has to be transferred from a small-scale, mini-headquarters into a full-fledged EU Military Operation Headquarters (OHQ) – albeit diplomats might still decide to keep the existing title. This implies the following four actions:

- the existing understaffing of the MPCC has to be resolved by 2022-2023, requiring the member states to send an adequate amount of military personnel soon;
- the staff size of the MPCC will have to be expanded in the timeframe 2023-2025 in order to be ready for planning and directing the EU RDC employment when it reaches its operational status;
- in the timeframe 2023-2025 the MPCC has to be involved in the exercises for testing the procedures for and the

- deployment of the RDC, either by full command & control or by associating MPCC staff in national EU headquarters;
- finally, it is now even more urgent than before to equip the MPCC with a secure communications system that allows for crypto connectivity with the Force HQ of EU-led operations in theatre and with other relevant EU actors.²⁴

If these MPCC requirements cannot be met, then the complicated situation of having OHQs available in five member states²⁵ and in Brussels will continue to exist.²⁶ As the EU's unique feature of having the ability to deploy military forces and to carry out civilian missions – plus having activities financed by the European Commission in the field at the same time – close coordination at the planning and strategic direction level between the military and the civilian actors remains of crucial importance. This argues against the use of national headquarters which are located at great distances from the EU capital and are lacking day-to-day routine in civil-military coordination with other EU actors. In Brussels, such coordination structures exist. They should also be tested in exercises in the coming years in order to optimise and, if needed, adapt them to the needs connected to the deployment of the EU RDC.

Effectiveness

Another aspect to be taken into account is effectiveness, in particular for high-intensity land operations. An intervention capability of brigade size, composed of various units (battalions, companies) of several member states, is unlikely to be a credible and

24 The modularity of the EU RDC will also increase C2 requirements at the theatre level in order to operate jointly (land, air and maritime forces).

25 France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain have a national OHQ which they can make available as a multinational OHQ for EU military operations, which implies that additional personnel from other member states have to reinforce such an OHQ after the Council has made the appropriate decision.

26 The EU Strategic Compass labels the MPCC as the "preferred OHQ", not as the "dedicated OHQ", which is the result of the diplomatic compromise that was agreed during the drafting of the text of the Compass. Information from interviews.

effective fighting force. The existing lack of interoperable communications systems, language issues at soldier level and the need for national logistic tails all increase the risk of failure in case of high-end operations. Thus, in the near future, one of the larger EU member states will have to provide the nucleus of a land operations-oriented RDC – that is a brigade – while other countries could contribute with additional force elements, such as air defence units, long-range artillery or ISR capabilities. Using multinational-composed brigades for such operations should remain an aim for the medium to longer term, depending on the realisation of having common communications systems, applying the same tactical doctrine and, preferably, operating the same equipment. The issue of effectiveness underscores the importance of declaring the RDC operationally ready for lower to high-end operations in a gradual manner, as stated above.

Conclusions

The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity is a key element of the Union's ambitions *to act* when military forces have to be used for crisis management in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy. Although the maximum number of troops is limited to 5,000, the ambition level is higher than for the EU Battlegroups, both in terms of quantity and quality. In particular the EU RDC's modular composition and the availability of enablers result in more challenging requirements for the member states that have to deliver the various components. The time schedule of having the EU RDC operational in 2025 is another ambitious target. What are the major opportunities and pitfalls on the road to 2025 and beyond?

Opportunities

- Contrary to the land-based and more or less fixed composition of the EU Battlegroups, the EU RDC's modular approach of land, air and maritime elements will give the EU **a more flexible capacity** that can be composed as an intervention force that is tailor-made to each specific crisis.

- By conducting live exercises the EU RDC will gain **operational preparedness**, which reinforces the EU's credibility as an actor in crisis management.
- The build-up of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) to an Operation Headquarters (OHQ) able to conduct all EU military operations offers the opportunity to **centralise military-strategic command & control in Brussels**, back-to-back with the actors responsible for civilian crisis management and the activities of the European Commission.
- There is potential to **speed up decision-making** by using Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the option of constructive abstention.
- Although the Compass is not clear on adapting the common funding rules, new discussions offer the opportunity to enhance solidarity in **reassessing the scope and definition of common funding**.
- The EU RDC can become **the operational driver of solving key capability shortfalls** of the EU member states, in particular with regard to enablers in areas such as intelligence and strategic reconnaissance (ISR) and precision weapons.

Pitfalls

- The absorption of **the EU Battlegroups** into the EU RDC raises several issues – including the lack of flexibility, stand-by readiness duration, size and composition, land-based orientation – which will **complicate the process of developing the EU RDC as a flexible capacity**.
- There is a risk that the extensive work on scenarios, followed by advance planning in order to extrapolate the list of required forces and, next, by the member states providing the amount and sort of units they want to make available, ends up in a **time-consuming bureaucratic process**.
- The short period for organising the real-life exercises in 2023-2024 may result in **a suboptimal trained EU RDC** in view of reaching its operational status in 2025.

- The continuing manning problem and the delayed realisation of a secure communications network for the MPCC raise **serious doubts** about the goal of having **the MPCC available by 2025 as the preferred Operation Headquarters (OHQ)** for EU military operations.
- The **readiness requirements** of the EU RDC in combination with the much larger readiness needs of the NATO Force Model will **seriously challenge** the European nations that are members of both organisations to make the necessary forces available at high readiness status.
- The requirement of launching EU military operations on the basis of **UN Security Council (UNSC) mandates** creates serious problems in case a permanent member of the UNSC, such as Russia, uses its veto power for reasons of political obstruction (e.g. in response to EU sanctions on Russia).
- The most important advantage of **using Article 44** of the TEU – delegating operational planning and force generation to a lead nation – will be **nullified** if member states do not agree to such delegated authority.
- The EU RDC's availability for the **most demanding operations** can be reached **gradually**, depending on the timing for solving related shortfalls, even if this is beyond 2025.
- The EU RDC should also be used as a **driver for capability development**, in particular with regard to solving European shortfalls in the area of strategic enablers.
- The **Coordinated Maritime Presence concept**, already used for military activities not conducted by the EU but by a small group of member states, should be considered as an **alternative model** in cases when no agreement can be reached in the Council to launch an EU-led military operation.
- For increasing common funding a system could be considered in which member states are **compensated** by the European Peace Facility **based on their contributions** to EU military readiness initiatives and operations.

Avoiding these pitfalls will help to realise the ambitious targets for reaching the operational status of the EU RDC by 2025. Additionally, the following could be considered:

- The EU should interact with NATO in order to **align the readiness categories** of the EU RDC and the NATO Force Model.
- European nations which are members of the EU and NATO should be allowed to have the same forces at **high readiness for both organisations** during the same timeframe (dual-hatting).
- The EU has to address the question of **certification** (by whom, how) of capabilities that member states are making available for the readiness period.

Ultimately, the EU's new intervention force depends on the **political will of the member states**. The first element to be addressed is 'the will to commit'. The EU's CSDP has been characterised over more than two decades by the word 'voluntary'. The EU can never become a serious actor at a higher ambition level in crisis management, unless its member states replace this term by 'commitment' – in this case with regard to their contributions to the EU RDC. Naturally, EU member states themselves will take the political decision to participate with their own force contributions in an operation. Next, the member states should be prepared, not only in the EU but also nationally, to speed up decision-making when a crisis demands rapid action. Finally, sustained investment in solving Europe's military shortfalls – by European collaboration instead of seeking national solutions – will be required to realise the EU RDC and to assist in developing the EU as a serious geopolitical actor.

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