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## CHAPTER 5

# The changing character of EUFOR Althea: power politics or learning?<sup>61</sup>

### 5.1 Introduction

The development of the EU as an international security actor cannot be separated from the Yugoslav crises of the 1990's. Hence, the EU's involvement with Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) is of particular interest to assess the position and role of the military instrument in the EU's foreign policy. In 2004 the EU launched EUFOR Althea and this operation is still ongoing. Hence, the case of the EU's involvement with Bosnia in general and the deployment of EUFOR Althea in particular runs parallel to, and is part, of the EU's development as an international security actor. That is not to say, of course, that all changes in Althea necessarily reflect broader developments. Still, as the EU's longest running operation, this case can be expected to yield some insights in of the mechanisms that have driven the evolution of the EU's military operation at large.

While the EU's involvement with BiH has received considerable attention from very different (theoretical) angles (e.g. Juncos 2005; 2012a/b; Noutcheva 2009; Bassuener and Ferhtovic 2008; Sebastian 2009; 2014), and the change of the EU's

<sup>61</sup> An article based on this case study and elements of chapter 3 has been accepted at Cambridge Review of International Affairs.

involvement over time is recognized, it has hardly systematically been explained so far. To enhance our insights into the mechanisms (as developed in Chapter 3) that have driven the development of EUFOR Althea, this chapter aims to answer the question: *How has EUFOR Althea evolved over time and how can this be accounted for?* To this end, this chapter analyses the key changes in the character of EUFOR Althea in relation to the position of the different advocacy coalitions and their interaction.

#### 5.1.1 Althea in context

From 1992-1995 the Bosnian War took the lives of a hundred thousand people (RDC 2007). While the European Economic Community (EEC), together with the UN, was involved in several diplomatic attempts to find a constitutional solution to the conflict (Cutileiro-plan, Vance-Owen Plan, EU action plan), NATO airstrikes eventually led to the signing of the Dayton Agreement in 1995 (Sebastian Aparicio 2014). NATO also deployed troops (IFOR and SFOR) to ensure the implementation of this peace agreement. Initially, the role of the European Union was limited to the provision of humanitarian assistance and financial aid for reconstruction and development (Recchia 2007). This changed in 2004 when the EU took over from NATO with Operation Althea.

Such a succession had not been obvious from the start, as the US in 2003 had blocked a proposal of the European Council (2002) to take-over from NATO's SFOR, because the US was concerned over EU autonomy in the field of security and defence (EUobserver 2003). Initiatives that emphasized the ambition of an autonomous capacity for the EU to act as security actor, which may explain the US' reluctance to support a transfer from a NATO to an EU military operation, included: a call for a separate EU Head Quarters (OHQ) by France, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg, and the EU's first autonomous operation (Artemis), led by France, in Congo. Also, the tensions over Iraq fuelled fears on the side of the US that the EU might develop into a competitor of NATO (see Menon 2004; Dijkstra 2013).

Eventually an agreement was reached on the EU's use of NATO assets and capabilities, the Berlin Plus arrangement, which was put into practice in 2003 with the launch of the EU's first military operation in Macedonia, operation Concordia. This provided not only the EU but also the US with the confidence that the EU would be able to live up to the expectations in taking-over the BiH military operation from NATO. At the same time, NATO would remain present with a military headquarter involved with defence reform and counter-terrorism.

Research on the relationship between NATO and the EU points at both instances of interorganizational learning (i.e. the EU copying NATO in terms of institutional set-up regarding its military structures) and efforts to make the EU's operations

distinctive from NATO, as will become clear below (Varwick and Koops 2009). In relation to the US the EU has to “strive to assert its standing” (Kurowska and Seitz 2011). In this chapter I focus on the internal EU dynamics. In this regard, the fact that EUFOR Althea took over from a preceding NATO-operation using NATO assets (Berlin Plus arrangement) acts as an important “constraint” which affects different advocacy coalitions in different ways. On the one hand, the Berlin Plus arrangement provides room for institutional learning as there is a common preceding experience. On the other hand, it may fuel power politics among the coalitions as the relationship with NATO is one crucial issues of contention between them.

### 5.1.2 Structure of the analysis

The analysis is organized around the critical decisions that have affected the character of EUFOR Althea (explanandum). Logically, the analysis departs from the year that the decision (Council Joint Action) to launch EUFOR Althea was taken, 2004 (section 5.2). The circumstances surrounding the launching decision help to identify the different coalitions at the time and the main issues of contention. Thus, it serves as a baseline for the rest of the analysis.

While the 2004 Council Joint Action has not been officially amended, there have been two moments at which the character of the mission has been significantly revised. First, in 2007 the initial number of troops of 7000 was brought back to 2500 and the position of the EU Special Representative was strengthened (section 5.3). Secondly, in 2010-2012 non-executive tasks were included in the operation and the number of troops was further decreased (section 5.4). For each of these critical decisions, I use the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 to examine whether they were primarily the result of the changing power constellations between political actors or whether they were primarily driven by processes of learning. Additionally, I consider whether there are dynamics of entrapment and cooperative bargaining.

## 5.2 The launch of EUFOR Althea (2004)

### 5.2.1 Mapping the advocacy coalitions

The key issues that divide the different coalitions (presented in chapter 3) in the case of EUFOR Althea are the relationship of EU military engagement with NATO and the scope of the military mandate. These are essentially key issues that run throughout the development of the CSDP. In the context of EUFOR Althea, the particular issue of contention concerning the scope of the military mandate focused in particular on the question whether or not to include the fight against organized crime in EUFOR’s mandate.

### *Euro-Atlanticists*

The *Euro-Atlanticist* group welcomed EUFOR Althea to underline the EU-NATO complementarity, and hence, emphasized the continuity with the preceding NATO operation. However, on the inclusion of the fight against organized crime in EUFOR’s mandate, the UK and Italy took a different position from the Netherlands. Whereas the Netherlands did not see crime fighting as part of EUFOR’s mandate, the UK and particularly Italy were in favor (cf. Friesendorf and Penska 2008; Dutch Ministry of Defence 2004).

The UK was a “staunch” supporter of the military operation (Financial Times 2003), reflected in the decision to take the first lead of the mission (European Scrutiny Committee 2004 a/b/c). As Minister MacShane (2004) put it:

We have absolute confidence in the EU force. For one reason, professional, British soldiers will be leading it. British officials have played a key role in the negotiation of the force’s mandate, learning lessons of the 1990’s.

It shows that the UK minister aims to convince those in favour of keeping the NATO-operation by highlighting the UK’s influential position, both in operational terms and in the political negotiations over the mandate.

The Netherlands, holding the EU Presidency in the second part of 2004, did support the transition in BiH to an EU-led operation, emphasizing that it should be clear that EU and NATO share a common goal. At the same time, though, it emphasized that “the operation will be gradually become less military and more civilian” (Dutch Parliament 2004a), and that “EUFOR Althea is initially military, but should be converted in a military police mission, or even a normal police mission” (Dutch Minister of Defence in: Dutch Parliament 2004b). To legitimize its troop contributions, the Netherlands explicitly refers to the responsibilities that come with the EU Presidency: “it is difficult to ask other countries for contributions when you yourself leave” (Dutch Parliament 2004c). The Netherlands aimed at withdrawing its troops within two years, expecting that “East-European countries would fill the gap” (ibid.).

Concerning the fight against organized crime the Netherlands did not follow the UK position. The Dutch Ministry of Defence (2004) did not see crime fighting as part of EUFOR’s mandate, but as a task for the local authorities. Moreover, it noted that the UNSC resolution did not assign this task to EUFOR and it expressed fear that the changing character of the operation from green (military) to blue (police) would increase the possibility of mission creep (Dutch Ministry of Defence 2004). Hence, the Dutch government was reluctant to participate in operations fighting crime and corruption without input of local authorities.

In the case of EUFOR Althea, Italy's position is of importance as well.<sup>62</sup> Italy took an active stance concerning the fight against organized crime and its institutional set-up, i.e. the position of the Integrated Police Unit (IPU), a kind of military police like the Italian Carabinieri. In contrast to France, Italy did not want its military police to be placed under non-military command (i.e. the EU's police mission in BiH) and felt that EUFOR should have a say in the struggle against organized crime (Ragaru 2008).

### **Global Power EU**

The *Global Power EU* coalition welcomed the initiation of EUFOR Althea to succeed NATO's SFOR, albeit for different reasons than the Euro-Atlanticist group. Central to the support of this coalition is the emphasis on the distinct character of EU security policy, which by implication would also apply to operation EUFOR Althea. While Solana has been one of the key actors promoting EUFOR Althea, France took a more reserved position.

Solana (2004) proclaimed the "new and distinct" character of the EU-operation in his 'Report on a possible deployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.' The inclusion of the fight against organized crime would be part of making EUFOR distinct and help to give EUFOR a distinct profile from NATO's SFOR. Interestingly, this line of thinking was conveyed as well by UK Force Commander Leakey: "NATO succeeded in bringing stability to Bosnia in the nine years it was responsible for security in this country. What we now want to do is to move Bosnia further away from Dayton and closer to Brussels" (Evans 2004). Solana and France aimed at a full transfer from NATO to EU, including the task of tracking down war criminals (Nováky 2015).

Solana (2004) also proposed a "reinforced coordinating role for the EUSR [*EU Special Representative*]. He needs to be able to function as *primus inter pares* among the heads of the different EU missions in BiH. In particular the EUSR should ensure complementarity between the implementation of the Dayton/Paris provisions and progress in the Stabilisation and Association Process."<sup>63</sup>

France was much less of an active proponent of EUFOR Althea – especially compared to its leading role in launching Artemis in Congo in 2003. It was very concerned with the division of labour between the EU and NATO (see Dutch Parliament 2004b). Concerning the fight against organized crime and the relationship

between EUFOR and EUPM, it took a position similar to that of the Netherlands (Dutch Ministry of Defence 2004; see also Dijkstra 2013; Friesendorf and Penska 2008). It feared that this supporting task would come to determine the size of the mission and did not want the Integrated Police Unit (IPU) to be under military command (Juncos 2013, see also Ragaru 2008).

### **Human Security**

The *Human Security* coalition supported EUFOR Althea taking over from NATO's SFOR. Particularly the European Parliament (2004a) turned out to be a vocal supporter of an operation in line with Solana's proposals. It "insisted" on a full EU take-over from NATO, including the responsibility for the counterterrorism operations and the apprehension of war criminals – tasks that remained with NATO. Concerning the position of the military instrument as part of the EU's foreign policy, the European Parliament (2004) was in favour of a more activist military operation, which would include the fight against organized crime in its mandate, while the EU Member States in this coalition opposed this broadening of the mandate as they considered that it would be at odds with promoting local ownership (cf. Friesendorf & Penska 2008: 688). Sweden did support EUFOR Althea, yet its troop commitment shows that its support is rather symbolic: 70 persons, part of a multinational logistics unit, in the Northern sector led by Finland (Swedish Foreign and Defence Committee 2004).

### **Bystanders**

The *Bystander coalition* was not fiercely opposed to EUFOR Althea. Germany positioned itself as a moderate supporter, while the Commission emerged as the most critical actor (Dijkstra 2013; Bundestag 2004).

The European Commission challenged the proposed objective of fighting organized crime (Dijkstra 2013). Yet, the opposition of the European Commission was not restricted to the fight against organized crime. With a similar line of argument, the Commission also did not appreciate linking Althea to the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), because it feared that the executive military presence would undermine the emphasis of SAP on local ownership (ibid.). However, the European Commission's position was not one of outright rejection. In a session of the EP on the military operation in November 2004, External Relations Commissioner Patten rejected the idea that an EU military operation would send the wrong signal and noted that he was confident that the troops would not continue to stay unnecessarily (European Parliament 2004b).

Germany did support EUFOR Althea, contributing 1100 troops (Bundestag 2004). It justified its military contribution as "complementing" the civil commitments of the international community (ibid.)

62 While Italy is not a typical Atlanticist actor, it was during the Berlusconi-era (Croci 2008).

63 Although this study does not engage in a systematic assessment of non-governmental actors, note that Amnesty International (2004) urged "the EU to establish a centralized system of civilian control over EUFOR", which would differentiate EUFOR from SFOR whose "failures to upholding human rights standards were partly due to a lack of adequate civilian oversight and monitoring."

### 5.2.2 The outcome: winners and losers

EUFOR Althea was given the mandate to “provide deterrence, continued compliance with the responsibility to fulfil the (...) General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH and to contribute to a safe and security environment in BiH, in line with its mandate, required to achieve core tasks in the OHR’s Mission Implementation Plan<sup>64</sup> and the SAP [Stabilisation and Association Process]” (Council of the European Union 2004a).

Obviously, the driving advocacy coalitions behind EUFOR Althea were the Euro-Atlanticists and Global Power EU. Specifically, the most notable advocates of EUFOR Althea were Solana and the UK, albeit for very different reasons. Whereas Solana, supported by the European Parliament, aimed at making EUFOR Althea a showcase of the EU’s distinct security and defence policy, the UK insisted that the EU operation would be closely aligned to NATO, and hence the US. The fact that Solana was a former NATO Secretary General may have helped his ability to cooperate with the UK. A general shared “feeling” to set the record straight after the inability to effectively deal with the Balkan crises of the 1990’s was also shared by the Bystanders. In the end, with the exception of the Commission, the operation met no significant opposition.

Turning to troop contributions, we can observe that with important contributions from different advocacy coalitions, EUFOR Althea was not dominated by one particular coalition. All Member States contributed to EUFOR Althea but for Cyprus, Malta and Denmark. Most troops were provided by Germany, the UK and Italy, followed by considerable contributions of the Netherlands, Spain and France (Table 5.1). And while the transition from NATO’s SFOR to an EU operation obviously involved the withdrawal of the US, most EU troops remained. The US presence was primarily taken over by Finland, which was succeeded by the end of 2005 by Austria (Recchia 2007).

<sup>64</sup> OHR is the Office of the High Representative, which is responsible for the implementation of civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Table 5.1 Troop contributions

Year	Number of troops	Force Commander <sup>1</sup>	Main contributors (>10%) <sup>2</sup>
2004/2005	7000	UK	Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, UK
2007/2008	2500	Germany/Spain	Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain,
2012/2013	600	Austria	Hungary, Austria

<sup>1</sup> Derived from ISIS (2013)

<sup>2</sup> Derived from IISS Military Balance

While the differences between the advocacy coalitions did not prevent the launch of the operation, they were reflected in different views on what the operation should look like. In line with the Euro-Atlanticist position, the mandate and number of troops of EUFOR remained similar to SFOR. Moreover, NATO remained present with a more robust operational capability than just an advisory or support presence (Kim 2005). However, with the reference to the Stabilisation and Association Process a clear link to the EU’s broader engagement with BiH was added, which reflects the preferences of the Global Power EU and the Human Security coalition.

Yet, this linking EUFOR to the SAP was against the wishes of the European Commission. Indeed, the Joint Action clearly subordinated the European Commission to EUFOR, asserting: “the intention of the Commission to direct, where appropriate, its action towards achieving the objectives of this Joint Action” (Council of the European Union 2004a; see also European Council 2004). This would mean that SAP, an instrument of the European Commission, would follow EUFOR rather than the other way around. The fear of the military logic taking the upper hand was further fuelled by the fact that the function of the crises response coordination teams, in which the European Commission was present, was limited to being a forum where the European Commission was “informed”, rather than being an equal partner (Schroeder 2007: 27).

As indicated, another contentious issue concerned the importance of the fight against organized crime as part of EUFOR’s mandate. Eventually, the fight against organized crime was not included in EUFOR’s mandate but ended up as a key supporting task in the concept of operations, as drawn up by Operation Commander Leakey (Dutch Ministry of Defence 2004). In practice, EUFOR’s proactivity regarding

the fight against organized crime would differ per geographic area of the military operation, i.e. the UK-led area did contribute to this key supporting task, while in the Finnish- and Spanish/French-led areas EUFOR's mandate was understood more narrowly (Ibid.: 10).

Finally, Solana proposed strengthening the *position of the EUSR*. However, this did not make it into the Council Joint Action, which limited the role of the EUSR to giving "political advice" (Solana 2004).

In sum, while the Euro-Atlanticist and Global Power EU coalitions were successful in initiating an EU military operation, they did not manage to get the fight against organized crime written into the mandate. This was only included as a key support task in the Concept of Operations. The explanation for this may be found in the fact that, next to the Bystanders and Human Security coalition, important actors in both coalitions were more hesitant towards EUFOR's activism. Thus, while a small number of actors have been active in pushing the operation, the particular character of EUFOR Althea shows that there was a deal between different coalitions, taking it beyond the lowest common denominator outcome.

### 5.3 The 2007 changes of EUFOR Althea: reducing troops and strengthening the position of the EUSR

While the Council Joint Action that launched EUFOR Althea in 2004 has not been officially amended, there have been considerable changes in the character of the operation. I zoom in on two periods of change: 2007 and 2010-2012. In sections 5.3 and 5.4 the changes in these two periods are examined as well as the internal and external factors that occasioned them. Thus we can assess whether these changes are best understood as reflecting shifts in the power balance between the coalitions or rather as processes of collective learning.

By the end of 2005, and coinciding with the succession of Force Commander Leakey by the Italian Commander Chiarini, the attention for fighting organized crime disappeared (Dijkstra 2013; Friesendorf and Penska 2008). Subsequently, in 2007, two substantial changes were adopted. First, the number of troops was reduced to 2500, accompanied by a change in the configuration of troops. The Netherlands and the UK withdrew their involvement, while Italy and Spain stepped

in as main contributors, followed by Germany, Poland and Austria.<sup>65</sup> Second, the position of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) was strengthened. Whereas the position of the EUSR vis-à-vis the EUFOR Commander was initially described as "giving local *advice*", this changed by the end of November 2007 into "providing political *guidance*" (Council of the European Union 2004b; 2005a; 2007a). These two changes were complemented by an important non-change: the mandate continued to underline the peace-enforcement character (Council of the European Union 2007b).

#### 5.3.1 Troop reductions: external demands and unilateral withdrawals

The reduction of troops was first of all justified for external reasons, namely the rather positive evaluation of developments in BiH, as reflected in the Quarterly Reports to the United Nations (Council of the European Union 2005c; 2006e). Yet, the way the reduction was executed and the actual reconfiguration that took place suggest little of a collective learning process, but rather the strategic behaviour of particular coalitions. For sure, there were clearly positive developments on the ground. Thus, the EUMC could conclude that the security situation in BiH had become stable enough for a "reposture" of the number of troops (EU Military Committee 2007). Already in the first years of EUFOR Althea the EU reported considerable progress in BiH, and the EU Special Representative noted that "BiH authorities are assuming increasing responsibility" (Council Secretariat 2006). On this basis, negotiations for a Stability and Association Agreement (SAA) were started in November 2005, which were concluded in June 2008. Similarly, the Six Month Review of September 2008 stated that EUFOR had accomplished its mission to a great extent (Dutch Ministry of Defence 2008).

Yet, in practice, the EU Military Committee (2007) noted that the reduction took account of 'Member State aspirations', which reflects the fact that the troop reductions were primarily motivated by instrumental reasons. In particular, the UK referred to its 'overstretch' in Iraq and Afghanistan, to justify a reduction of troops in BiH (Oliver 2007). This was perceived by France and Germany as "rather brutal" (cf. Pohl 2014: 62). In 2009/2010, France and Finland reduced their troops to a minimal contribution as well, which was qualified by the Netherlands as a 'unilateral

<sup>65</sup> By the end of 2005 Austria took over the command of the Northern area from Finland. Defense Minister Platter stressed that this demonstrated Austria's upcoming leadership role in EUFOR's Althea mission with an interest in stability and peace in the region (Bundesheer 2005; see also US Embassy Vienna 2005). Austria's involvement with Althea points out that proximity may activate a country that would normally take a position on the side-line (Kammel 2013).

withdrawal' (Dutch Ministry of Defence 2008), although it had withdrawn most of its own troops by then as well.<sup>66</sup>

Still, despite the withdrawal of troops of its main proponents, the UK and the Netherlands, the operation largely retained its main characteristics. Most notably, the mandate of the operation was left unchanged, i.e. the executive mandate was neither removed nor expanded.

### 5.3.2 Strengthening the position of the EUSR: Internal learning

In contrast to the logic underlying the decision on troop reduction and reconfiguration, the strengthening of the position of the EUSR does seem to reflect an internal learning process.

While High Representative Solana had not been able to strengthen the position of the EUSR from the start, he continued pushing the issue. It figured prominently in a joint report that he published in 2006 together with EU Commissioner Rehn "Reinforced EU presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Solana 2006b). Moreover, strengthening the position of the EUSR was one of the main recommendations that resulted from a case study prepared for the Council on the "coordination and coherence between EU Special Representative, the EU military operation and the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Council of the European Union 2006a/b; Politico-Military Group 2006). The evolution of positions on the strengthening of the EUSR was most visible in the changing position of the European Commission, which now actively supported the strengthening of the EUSR, as is indeed visible in the joint report of Solana and Rehn.

In sum, the troop reduction and reconfiguration were primarily an issue of strategic calculations of the different coalitions rather than a process of collective learning, although the consensus on the positive development in BiH provided a common ground for discussion. In contrast, the strengthening of the position of the EUSR was a clear instance of internal learning.

<sup>66</sup> In their communication with the US, Finland explained its position (US Embassy Tallinn 2009). It argued that it did no longer consider Althea a military crisis management operation. Finland believed the mission should come to a close and the EU should focus on training and mentoring. Concerning its "sudden withdrawal", Finland claimed that its position was known for a long time. Moreover, Finland stated that its minority-position increasingly got more support.

## 5.4 The 2010-2012 changes of EUFOR Althea: another reconfiguration of troops and the inclusion of non-executive tasks

While the EU has not amended the 2004 Joint Action that laid out the mandate and objectives of EUFOR Althea, in 2010 the executive mandate was extended (not replaced) by including 'non-executive capacity-building and training support' for the BiH authorities (Council of the European Union 2010b). Also, in 2012 another troop reconfiguration reduced the number to 600 and put even more emphasis on capacity building & training (Council Secretariat 2012; Politico-Military Group 2013). The 2012 reduction in troops left Austria and Hungary as the main contributors. These changes cannot be separated from the broader debate whether or not to terminate EUFOR Althea, which had already started in 2008 (NRC Handelsblad 2008).

How come that the extension of the mandate had not been possible in 2007, but was possible in 2010/2012? Had there been a process of learning? Or did the balance between the different coalitions change?

### 5.4.1 Another troop reduction and reconfiguration: limits on learning

The troop reduction and reconfiguration of 2012 took place in a considerably different context from 2007. The economic crisis made it difficult to maintain the troop levels. Moreover, the developments in BiH itself were increasingly evaluated negatively, referring to the lack of dialogue and "devisive" rhetoric's of the local BiH elite (Council Secretariat 2010 a/b; Politico-Military Group 2011). Just as in 2007, the troop reductions primarily reflected strategic calculations of different coalitions and cannot easily be understood as a coordinated response.

The Euro-Atlanticist coalition understood the lack of political progress in Bosnia Herzegovina as a confirmation of the need for continuing Operation Althea. Notably, this was also the coalition with which the main contributors to EUFOR Althea in this period, Austria and Hungary, had most affinities (Póti and Tálás 2004).

However, the Euro-Atlanticist reading of the situation in BiH was challenged by others (primarily the Human Security and Global Power EU coalitions) who rather came to the view that the military operation itself actually inhibited political progress.

Starting with the problem: there is no longer a problem that will be solved with a military operation. Rather they need a signal that they are moving forward (former member of Cabinet Solana C 2013).

To the extent that this view can be seen as a form of learning, it largely took place within the boundaries of specific coalitions rather than being a collective process.

Another development that casts doubt on collective learning is the completion of the EU's Police Mission in BiH in 2012. The usual trajectory for the EU to phase out its external involvement is to have a military operation succeeded by a police mission. In that light, the termination of the EU's police mission in BiH, while at the same time keeping the military operation, gives contradictory messages and rather suggests an awkward settlement between the different advocacy coalitions, than a collective learning process based on the developments on the ground.

In sum, the troop reduction and reconfiguration of 2012 shows how a common evaluation of the lack of progress in BiH still allowed very different views on the added value of EUFOR Althea. This finding casts doubts on the ability for EU actors to engage in a process of collective learning.

#### **5.4.2 The inclusion of non-executive tasks: a negotiated settlement**

The discussion on changing the mandate of EUFOR Althea cannot be isolated from the overarching debate on whether or not to terminate the operation. The Global Power EU and Human Security coalitions, mainly France and Sweden, were ready to end the EU's military presence in BiH.

After the informal EU-meeting of Defence ministers during the French Presidency in 2008, the French Minister of Defence Morin indicated: "it makes sense that European states at some point give the signal to civilians that when we are able to start a mission, we are also capable of closing one" (NRC Handelsblad 2008). Following up on this, the Swedish Presidency in the second half of 2009 launched a discussion on EUFOR Althea, proposing to turn it into an advisory military mission. The position to turn the operation into a non-executive mission was also endorsed by Germany (Bundestag 2011). Most notably, even the (Italian) EUFOR Force Commander at that time recommended not to ask for a new executive mandate, but to transform Althea into a smaller training mission without an executive mandate (US Embassy Sarajevo 2009).

Yet, despite the fact that a majority of EU Member States was in favour of closing down EUFOR Althea, the need for consensus has prevented this from happening (Sweden Parliamentary Committee 2013; Bundestag 2010). So, while in 2010/2012 the focus of EUFOR Althea changed to training and capacity-building, it remained under the mandate of a military operation.

Essentially, it is the Euro-Atlanticist coalition that insists on keeping the executive mandate and prevents the ending of EUFOR Althea. The crucial reason for this insistence is the fact that the executive mandate serves to 'keep Berlin Plus alive',

i.e. to maintain the visible ties of CSDP with NATO and the US.

The EU military operation in Bosnia. We know that it has to be transformed. We know that this is not the right answer to what Bosnia is facing right now. Since five years we have been saying so, but we cannot close the mission: it is the only and last EU mission with NATO assets (former member of Solana cabinet A 2013).

CSDP will remain important for the EU. Althea's executive mandate is an example of this. (...) It is the only "real" military operation that is left (PMG-member B 2013).

While it was decided already by the end of 2009 to transform the operation into a training mission, the Euro-Atlanticist coalition (the UK, supported by Member States closest to Bosnia-Herzegovina, like Austria and Hungary) was able to delay the time line for doing so, with a reference to the Bosnian general elections of 2010. Moreover, by 2009, the proponents of a more activist military policy saw Solana leave office, which weakened their position in pushing for a change at the operational level. The policy of his successor, Ashton, turned out to be much more aligned with the Bystander coalition.

In sum, the shift in the focus of EUFOR Althea to capacity-building and training indicates a negotiated settlement rather than a process of learning. While the Human Security and Global Power EU coalitions respond to the disappointing developments in BiH by pushing termination of the EU's military presence in BiH, the Euro-Atlanticist coalition does not want to close the operation. The different readings hamper a collective learning process. The unanimity that is required for an exit of EUFOR Althea favours the position of the Euro-Atlanticist group. So, while the main proponents of the Euro-Atlanticist coalition that want to keep EUFOR Althea alive, the Netherlands and the UK, are not putting their money where their mouth is, the Euro-Atlanticist coalition is still the key driver behind the continuation of the operation.

### **5.5 Discussion and conclusion**

In analysing the evolution of EUFOR Althea since its launch in 2004, evidence of both power politics and collective learning has been found. However, on the whole, power politics appears to have been the main driver (Table 2). Changes have been primarily informed by national strategic interests, shifts in actor engagement and

entrapment. From the start of the operation, the Euro-Atlanticist coalition, which favours an activist use of the military instrument, was able to put its mark on EUFOR Althea. As troops were subsequently reduced, these reductions were primarily driven by a decreasing support for keeping EUFOR Althea alive (e.g. Finland and France) and by competing external demands (UK). And even when the main initiators of the Euro-Atlantic coalition, the UK and the Netherlands, withdrew their troops, they were able to prevent termination of EUFOR Althea because of the unanimity requirement for doing so. The outcome was to keep the 2004 military mandate, while shifting the focus to capacity-building and training. This points at a negotiated settlement with the other coalitions which, led by France, had sought to close down EUFOR Althea. More generally, the study shows that the initial mandate has a strong lock-in effect, making it difficult to change, or end, the mission after it is actually launched. Despite the active involvement of actors aiming at changing the character of EUFOR Althea, this proved to be very difficult.

Table 5.2 Main observable implications

<b>Hard bargaining (power resources of different coalitions)</b>	<b>Learning (common experience)</b>	<b>Cooperative bargaining (give-and-take)</b>	<b>Institutional entrapment (stuck-together)</b>
Changing actor constellations: transition from Solana to Ashton	Limited – takes place within the boundaries of core beliefs of coalition	Keeping executive mandate, but shifting actual focus	Unanimity required for ending military presence in BiH
Unilateral troop withdrawals in 2007 (e.g. UK), 2012	Notable exception: strengthening position of EUSR	Fighting organised crime as secondary task	

This is not to deny that there have been instances of a learning process. First, the strengthened position of the EUSR did not immediately affect EUFOR Althea. However, it provided a message that EUFOR Althea would be more strongly embedded in the EU's overall foreign policy. Second, the different coalitions agreed on their evaluation of the lack of progress in BiH, but their assessment of what that would mean for EUFOR Althea differed. This suggests that learning takes place primarily within the bounds of coalitions 2013.

Finally, the study yields that Althea has informed cross-case learning.

Althea, and the preceding NATO-operation, have proven that that is the way how not to do it. We have been in Bosnia for 15 years without much progress. And the problems in Bosnia, for years, are no longer military. They are political, ethnical, and economical – that is where we should act. Because we did not handle this well from the beginning, we are now running into huge problems. (...) With Althea in mind we want that Somali's and Malians are able to do that. We don't want to be there for another 15 years (PMG member A).

Notably, the mandates of EU military operations after EUFOR Althea have always included an end-date. Such signs of cross-case learning point at the potential of the EU to develop as an international security actor on the basis of past experiences, but this potential appears severely constrained by deeply rooted strategic cultures. Thus the case of Althea suggests that the EU's use of force remains essentially contested and that the launch of any military operation remains to be decided by the balance of power between the different coalitions and their resources.

The case of EUFOR Althea has provided important insights into the dynamics of a long-running military operation and the importance of initial decisions for the later development of the operation. As such it is important to complement this case study with an analysis of a more recent operation, in which the EU could build upon its experience of the launch of five military operations: EUNAVFOR Atalanta. Moreover, this case study best represents the overall shift that was identified in Chapter 4, which makes it a well-suited cases for assessing the underlying mechanisms for this change towards increasing both utility-based justifications and policy-embeddedness.