

Beat: Politics

EU Training Mission in Somalia gets new mission commander

Brigadier General Antonio Maggi

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USPA NEWS - Brigadier General Antonio Maggi has been appointed new Mission Commander for the EU Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia). General Maggi, from Italy, takes up his duties on 8 March 2015. He will succeed Brigadier General Massimo Mingiardi, who had been in the position since December 2013.

EUTM Somalia, launched in spring 2010, is part of the EU's comprehensive approach for a stable, democratic and prosperous Somalia and embedded in the EU strategic framework for the Horn of Africa. It has contributed to training over 4.000 Somali troops so far, with a special focus on officers, specialists and trainers. The mission delivers political and strategic advice to the Somali ministry of defence and the chief of defence forces on security sector development. It also advises on military training so as to lay the foundations of a Somali-owned military training system. Since January 2014, the mission has been based in Mogadishu, Somalia.

On 10 April 2010, the European Union launched a military training mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) in order to contribute to strengthening the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the institutions of Somalia. This support is part of the EU's comprehensive engagement in Somalia, which aims to support stabilising the country and to respond to the needs of the Somali people. Since 2010, EUTM Somalia has contributed to the training of over 4,000 Somali soldiers from the Somali National Army (SNA) with a focus on the training of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), Junior Officers, specialists and trainers.

Initially training took place in Uganda due to the political and security situation in Somalia, and in close collaboration with the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). The training focused on commander up to company level, in addition to specialist training in the areas of military police, civilian-military cooperation, intelligence, company commander and combat engineering. Modules on international humanitarian law and human rights, and the protection of civilians are also delivered.

On 22 January 2013, the Council of the European Union extended the mandate of EUTM Somalia to March 2015. This third mandate contained a significant change of Mission focus, with the addition of strategic advisory and mentoring activities to complement the training role. At this point, EUTM Somalia operated mainly in Uganda with the Mission Headquarters at Kampala and the training camp at Bihanga Training Centre (BTC) in Western Uganda, with a Liaison Office in Nairobi (Kenya), a Support Cell in Brussels but with a Mentoring Advisory and Training Element (MATE HQ) deployed forward in Mogadishu.

This laydown changed in the first months of 2014 when the centre of gravity of EUTM Somalia shifted with the relocation of the Mission HQ to Mogadishu, along with all advisory, mentoring and training activities, which then lead to closure of all locations in Uganda. Now complete in Mogadishu from January 2014, EUTM Somalia operates in close cooperation and coordination with other international actors; in particular, the United Nations, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the United States of America. With these actors and the wider the International Community, EUTM Somalia has become well known and highly respected for its ability to establish enduring cooperation with key stakeholders and players in the region.

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