

General Knud BARTELS

Chairman
NATO Military Committee
Brussels, Belgium

May 2014

Dear General Bartels,

As you may be aware during the NATO defence ministers' meeting in February the members of the Visegrád Group announced that they would like to link the certification exercise of the 2016 V4 EU Battle Group with the NATO's high visibility exercise "Trident Juncture 2015". That intention had been expressed during the EU defence ministers' meeting on 15 April in Luxembourg as well. Hereby we, the Chiefs of Defence of the V4 countries, would like to inform you and the Military Committee briefly about the background of that decision.

The countries of the Visegrád Cooperation support the Connected Forces Initiative aiming at preserving the level of cooperation and interoperability achieved among Allied nations and their partners. Moreover, connecting the V4 EU BG certification exercise with TRJE 15 would facilitate the calls for linking of national and NATO exercises.

The V4 countries believe that TRJE15 should have its high visibility value more evenly distributed geographically and should have a footprint on the territory of the Central-Eastern European Allies. Thus, it would better show NATO's resolve and provide more visible assurance.

Another aspect we considered was cooperation with partners. We concluded that the participation of interested partners in TRJE15 would be fully in line with CFI's basic goal, the Council's guidance and the basic exercise design, namely that TRJE15 is to be open to partners. Council has recently approved the participation of Austria and Ukraine in TRJE15 as Ukraine also intends to contribute to the 2016 V4 EU BG.

Our TRJE15-linked exercise has a number of aspects inherently related to our strategic partner, the EU. Our assessment found that linkage militarily feasible and beneficial since the criteria and standards for the NRF have been applied to EU BGs by member states as much as



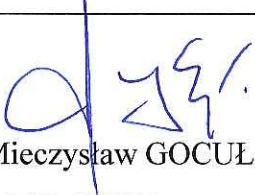

possible. We see our linked exercise as the practical embodiment of developing capabilities irrespective of the label of the organization they might be used for.

As there is no official relationship between the EU and NATO at this stage of TRJE15 exercise planning we would welcome if ultimately certain greater degree of cooperation was established concerning TRJE15 or any future exercise. However, for now we remain well within the boundaries of the agreed framework.

In summary, we believe that linking the 2016 V4 EU BG certification exercise in Poland to TRJE15 would serve multiple purposes. On one hand, it would provide for a geographic footprint of TRJE15 in Central-Eastern Europe. On the other hand, it would also reinforce CFI by linking a regional multinational exercise to NATO, by spreading NRF criteria and standards, by facilitating partner involvement, and potentially allowing for more cooperation with the EU.

Finally, we, the Chiefs of Defence of the V4 countries, are confident that TRJE15 is going to be a successful high visibility event and we assure you of our continuous support.

Signed by:

| | |
|---|---|
|  GEN Petr PAVEL CZE CHOD |  GEN Tibor BENKŐ PhD HUN CHOD |
|  LTG Mieczysław GOCUŁ POL CHOD |  LTG Milan MAXIM SVK CHOD |