



2024/1715

14.6.2024

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2024/1715

of 13 June 2024

on an assistance measure under the European Peace Facility to strengthen the capacities of the Beninese Navy

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 28(1) and Article 41(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 ⁽¹⁾ establishes the European Peace Facility (EPF) for the financing by Member States of Union actions under the common foreign and security policy to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security pursuant to Article 21(2), point (c) of the Treaty. In particular, pursuant to Article 1(2) of Decision (CFSP) 2021/509, the EPF is to be used for the financing of assistance measures such as actions to strengthen the capacities of third States and regional and international organisations relating to military and defence matters.
- (2) On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, the Union and its Member States reiterated their support for the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) region and renewed their commitment to enhancing maritime security in the area.
- (3) On 4 May 2022, the Council approved the concept of a possible assistance measure benefiting the GoG coastal States, with the overarching objective of supporting African-led maritime security and anti-piracy activities conducted by military actors in the GoG ultimately to reduce the incidence, duration and intensity of violence and criminality, and to protect maritime vessels and resources, and coastal populations and their livelihoods.
- (4) The northern regions of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo have been experiencing deteriorating security conditions in connection with the crisis affecting the central Sahel.
- (5) In light of the deteriorating security environment, the need to strengthen the defence and security forces is an important element to enable and support stabilisation efforts in Benin. In this context, and fully cognisant of the fact that the situation requires an integrated response, ensuring long-term peace, strengthening security to foster sustainable development in Benin is a key priority for the Union.
- (6) On 22 April 2024, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy received a request from Benin for the Union to assist the Beninese Armed Forces with the procurement of additional key equipment, services and training to enhance the operational capabilities of the Beninese Navy, with the aim to strengthen its capacity to patrol the exclusive economic zone of Benin and conduct operational activities, including in the framework of the Yaoundé architecture.
- (7) Assistance measures are to be implemented taking into account the principles and requirements set out in Decision (CFSP) 2021/509, in particular compliance with Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP ⁽²⁾, and in line with the rules for the implementation of revenue and expenditure financed under the EPF.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528 (OJ L 102, 24.3.2021, p. 14).

⁽²⁾ Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment (OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99).

- (8) The Council reaffirms its determination to protect, promote and fulfil human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles and to strengthen the rule of law and good governance, in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Establishment, objectives, scope and duration

1. An assistance measure benefiting Benin (the 'beneficiary') to be financed under the European Peace Facility (EPF) (the 'assistance measure') is hereby established.
2. The objective of the assistance measure is to enhance the operational capabilities of the Beninese Navy, with the aim of strengthening its capacity to patrol the exclusive economic zone of Benin and to conduct operational activities, ultimately to reduce the incidence of criminality, protect maritime vessels and resources, and to protect coastal populations, and their livelihoods.
3. To achieve the objective set out in paragraph 2, the assistance measure shall finance the following types of equipment not designed to deliver lethal force, and the following services, including technical training, where needed:
 - (a) support in defining a resilience plan for maritime assets;
 - (b) training in naval education;
 - (c) assistance to bring back maritime capabilities under operating conditions;
 - (d) diagnostic and evaluation equipment and training kits;
 - (e) engines, and related support to ensure that designated outboard engines already owned by the Beninese Navy are maintained in acceptable operational condition;
 - (f) surveillance boats; and,
 - (g) personal protective equipment.
4. The duration of the assistance measure shall be 36 months from the date of adoption of this Decision.

Article 2

Financial arrangements

1. The financial reference amount intended to cover the expenditure related to the assistance measure shall be EUR 5 000 000.
2. All expenditure shall be managed in accordance with Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 and in line with the rules for the implementation of revenue and expenditure financed under the EPF.

Article 3

Arrangements with the beneficiary

1. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative') shall make the necessary arrangements with the beneficiary to ensure its compliance with the requirements and conditions established by this Decision as a condition for the provision of support under the assistance measure.
2. The arrangements referred to in paragraph 1 shall include provisions obliging the beneficiary to ensure:
 - (a) compliance of the units of the Beninese Navy supported under the assistance measure with relevant international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law;
 - (b) proper and efficient use of any assets provided under the assistance measure for the purposes for which they were provided;

- (c) sufficient maintenance of any assets provided under the assistance measure to ensure their usability and operational availability over their life cycle;
 - (d) that any assets provided under the assistance measure are not lost, or transferred without the consent of the Facility Committee established by Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 to persons or entities other than those identified in those arrangements, at the end of their life cycle.
3. The arrangements referred to in paragraph 1 shall include provisions on the suspension and termination of support under the assistance measure in the event of the beneficiary being found in breach of the obligations set out in paragraph 2.

Article 4

Implementation

1. The High Representative shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Decision in accordance with Decision (CFSP) 2021/509, and in line with the rules for the implementation of revenue and expenditure financed under the EPF and with the Integrated Methodological Framework for assessing and identifying the required measures and controls for assistance measures under the EPF.
2. The implementation of the activities referred to in Article 1(3) shall be carried out by *Défense Conseil International* — DCI Group.

Article 5

Monitoring, control and evaluation

1. The High Representative shall monitor the compliance by the beneficiary with the obligations set out in Article 3. That monitoring shall be used to provide awareness of the context and the risks of breaches of the obligations set out in with Article 3, and to contribute to the prevention of such breaches, including violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the units of the Beninese Navy supported under the assistance measure.
2. The post-shipment control of equipment and supplies shall be organised as follows
- (a) delivery verification, whereby EPF delivery certificates are to be signed by the end-user forces upon transfer of ownership;
 - (b) reporting, whereby the beneficiary is to report annually on the activities conducted with the equipment provided under the assistance measure and on the inventory of designated items until such reporting is no longer deemed necessary by the Political and Security Committee (PSC);
 - (c) on-site visits, whereby the beneficiary is to grant the High Representative and the EPF auditors access to conduct on-site checks and EPF audits, upon request.
3. The High Representative shall conduct a final evaluation upon completion of the assistance measure to assess whether the assistance measure has contributed to reaching the objective set out in Article 1(2).

Article 6

Reporting

During the period of implementation, the High Representative shall provide the PSC with six-monthly reports on the implementation of the assistance measure, in accordance with Article 63 of Decision (CFSP) 2021/509. The administrator for assistance measures shall regularly inform the Facility Committee established by Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 on the implementation of revenue and expenditure in accordance with Article 38 of that Decision, including by providing information on the suppliers and subcontractors involved.

Article 7

Suspension and termination

1. The PSC may decide to suspend wholly or partially the implementation of the assistance measure in accordance with Article 64 of Decision (CFSP) 2021/509.
2. The PSC may recommend that the Council terminate the assistance measure.

*Article 8***Entry into force**

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Luxembourg, 13 June 2024.

For the Council

The President

N. DE MOOR
