

Courtesy translation

Senato della Repubblica
Camera dei Deputati

Via email:

UE2014@parlamento.it

July 2014

“EU Battlegroup Concept”

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the Chairman of the Defence Committee of the German Bundestag, Dr Hans-Peter Bartels, in response to your letter of 25 June 2014 on the subject of the “EU Battleground Concept”.

The “EU Battlegroup Concept” has frequently been the subject of discussion at the German Bundestag, both in the Defence Committee and in the plenary. The concept has, for example, been mentioned by Members of the Bundestag in their speeches to the plenary, or in questions submitted by the parliamentary groups to the Federal Government. The Defence Committee has deliberated on the issue a number of times, most recently on 12 June 2013, on the basis of a report produced by the Federal Ministry of Defence.

The parliamentary papers which exist on this subject consist mainly of short speeches by individual Members, in which, for example, ideas on further developing the EU’s rapid response capability (e.g. training missions) or possible deployment scenarios for the Battlegroups are discussed. Parliamentary questions have focused, amongst other things, on the restructuring of the Bundeswehr and possible impacts on the work of the Battlegroups or on the further development of the concept. This material can be found under the following references: 1) 18th Electoral Term: Bundestag Printed paper (*Drucksache*) 18/240, p. 3 f.; minutes of plenary proceedings (*Plenarprotokoll*) 18/30, p. 2530; minutes of plenary proceedings 18/5, p. 263; 2) 17th Electoral Term: Printed paper 17/13254, p. 7 f.; Printed paper 17/14290, p. 2 f.; minutes of plenary proceedings 17/9352, p. 39; minutes of plenary proceedings 17/7701, p. 57 f. (all this material can be found – in German – on the homepage of the German Bundestag at: www.bundestag.de).

The “EU Battlegroup Concept” may also be dealt with by a Commission established by the German Bundestag in spring 2014. The Bundestag has tasked this “Commission on the Review and Safeguarding of Parliamentary Rights regarding Mandates for Bundeswehr Missions” with examining how parliamentary rights can be safeguarded on the road to ever greater military integration at EU and Nato level, despite the increasing diversity of tasks (motion published as Printed paper 18/766). The aim of the Commission is to examine from a legal and political perspective what changes may be needed to the “Act governing Parliamentary Participation in Decisions on the Deployment of Armed Forces Abroad”. Using this as a starting point, the Commission is to formulate options for action, on the basis of consensus if possible, which could later be fed into formal legislative proceedings. The work of the Commission, chaired by former Federal Defence Minister Volker R  he, is to investigate the various forms of military integration which exist in the Nato and EU frameworks at present or can be expected in the future, and to assess any possible tensions between these forms of integration and the current situation in

Germany concerning parliamentary participation in decisions on deployment of armed forces abroad.

I hope that this information has been of assistance.

Your sincerely,

Sgd. Hans-Ulrich Gerland
Head of the Secretariat
of the Defence Committee