Brussels, 8 July 2015

10692/15

CSDP/PSDC 405
EUMC 28

COVER NOTE
from: European External Action Service
to: European Union Military Committee
Subject: EU Military Lessons Learnt at the Political Strategic Level Concept

Delegations will find attached document EEAS 02422/6/14 REV 6.

Encl.: EEAS 02422/6/14 REV 6
NOTE

From: European Union Military Committee (EUMC)
To: European Union Military Committee
No. Prev. doc.: EUMS 8562/11 EU Military Lessons Learned (LL) Concept, 1 July 2011
Subject: EU Military Lessons Learnt at the Political Strategic Level Concept

Delegations will find attached the EU Military Lessons Learnt Process at the Political Strategic Level Concept, which was agreed by EUMC on Friday, 3 July 2015.
EUROPEAN UNION
MILITARY LESSONS LEARNT PROCESS AT THE EU POLITICAL STRATEGIC LEVEL CONCEPT
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C. EUMS 8562/11 dated 1 July 2011 – EU Military Lessons Learned (LL) Concept.

D. EEAS 02065/13 dated 7 October 2013 – Suggestion on a way forward on the implementation of lessons learned, including in field operations.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. One of the tasks stated under the EUMS Terms of Reference and Organisation (Ref. A.) is to 'contribute to the necessary lessons learned process'. The development of lessons from CSDP military operations and exercises will continue to be an essential part of improving and extending the EU capability. Additionally, the provision of EU military lessons must play a role in defining future capability requirements and concept development.

2. The current EUMS Lessons Process (ELPRO) was agreed by the EUMC on 26 November 2007. Since then this process, supported by the Council General Secretariat (DGA V) software database tool (EUMS Lessons Management Application – ELMA), has captured lessons from a variety of EU CSDP Military Operations and Exercises. As a result of calls to develop the utility of the lessons process further and specifically to link the process more directly both to related EU projects and, as part of the Comprehensive Approach (CA), to other EU instruments in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) domain and the European Defence Agency (EDA), an initial EU Military Lessons Learned Concept was published on 1 July 2011 (Ref. C.).

3. Progress has been made in the collection, management and development of military lessons and, coupled with an increasing desire to enable greater development of a Lessons Process across the EEAS, the PSC mandated CMPD to offer suggestions on the more effective implementation of Lessons. The result of this collaborative work was presented to PSC on 7 October 2013 (Ref. D.). With the added level of an EEAS CSDP Lessons process created as a result of that paper, a revision of the first EU Military Lessons Learned Concept is now required, to reflect related requirements and to highlight that an effective Military Lessons process needs a constant synergy between the civil and military components.

B. AIM

4. In order to replace Ref. C., this document provides a new overarching Lessons Learnt Concept, the core of which is a revised process to describe how EU military lessons (and, where appropriate, civilian lessons) can be learnt, in order to develop and improve the military contribution to CSDP.
C. SCOPE

5. The document will outline the key areas to which lessons at the EU political strategic level will contribute and support. It will highlight both the important factors which need to be considered when collating and developing lesson observations and the linkages which must be developed and maintained between the process and associated EU projects. Lastly, it will provide details of the mechanism which draws together the key inter-connecting elements into one efficient and intuitive process in order to develop lesson observations from CSDP activities into lessons identified and finally into lessons learnt. This concept will facilitate connectivity with other CSDP crisis management principles and measures by determining the method by which military lessons should be contributed for consideration to the CSDP lessons process.

D. KEY WORKING TERMS

6. In the context of this concept the following definitions apply:

a. Lesson Observation (LO)\(^1\) – Any occurrence(s) or finding(s) that could have an impact on EU operational output and has the potential to become a Lesson Learnt. It might require an improvement or it can constitute a Best Practice (see 6. d. below).

b. Lesson Identified (LI) – A statement (based on a verified LO) defining the detailed nature of the problem for which remedial action has to be developed; it is the outcome of the analysis phase.

c. Remedial Action (RA) – An activity (or more activities) aimed at correcting an issue identified for improvement (LI).

d. Lesson Learnt (LL) – A lesson that has been fully staffed and the associated improvement and implementation action(s) identified and taken. A lesson can only be declared 'learnt' once the full remedial action has been successfully implemented.

e. Best Practice – Best Practice is an activity which conventional wisdom regards as more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, procedure or methodology. Ideally, a Best Practice must be flexible and immediately usable.

\(^1\) A Lesson Observation is:
- a problem that is not resolvable by the employment of current concepts, tactics, procedures, equipment or training;
- a statement of a specific or one-off fact or occurrence, or a statement of accumulated experiences over time;
- NOT a report of failure to follow relevant concepts, tactics or procedures.
f. Intellectual Capital – Intellectual Capital can be defined broadly as the collection of all information resources that can be used to improve effectiveness. In this particular sense, it means the adoption of validated lessons into the normal activity of the EEAS.

E. LESSONS LEARNT – AREAS FOR IMPACT

7. An overall lessons culture must be engendered, to make it part of routine business and to adopt a 'lessons-cycle' of which all stakeholders are aware and can contribute towards effectively. The concept and supporting process are focused to impact in the following key areas, which are not prioritised:

   a. To contribute to the development of the CA in the EU.
   b. To contribute towards the improved planning and execution of current and future CSDP activities.
   c. To support EU Capability Development in general and the Capability Development Plan in particular.
   d. To contribute towards EU concept development.
   e. To contribute to the development of EU Standard Operating Procedures.
   f. Where appropriate, to facilitate the sharing of Lessons information between EU bodies, Member States and, *inter alia*, appropriate international organisations.

F. PRINCIPLES FOR ACHIEVING AN EFFECTIVE LESSONS ORGANISATION

8. An effective Lessons organisation is underpinned by the following principles:

   a. **Effective leadership.** Leadership direction, engagement and support are the cornerstones of an effective lessons process. Leadership direction and engagement should result in articulation of the lesson collection priorities, allocation of resources and tasking of specific bodies. Leadership support can create incentives, particularly when combined with pro-active lessons sharing and can demonstrate an organisation's value by exploiting the lessons capability. In terms of the ELPRO, and the EUMC's role in this regard, regular direction and guidance will be sought.

   b. **Committed stakeholder involvement.** Lessons can be a real driver for improvement across many areas, but only if there is demonstrable commitment applied across all levels. Cooperation, coordination, communication and information are key elements required by stakeholders to add real value to the process and committed involvement is
essential. This is particularly true when endorsing LO, developing action plans for remedial actions, overseeing action-plans through to the implementation of LL and regularly updating the database, thereby making optimum use of the EUMS Lessons Management Application (ELMA) real-time capability for all actors within the EU having access to the database.

c. **Quality information assurances.** The ELMA software is a stand-alone database available through the classified EU OPS WAN which is used to facilitate the collection, storing, management, development and dissemination of EU military lessons; it is the lynchpin of the EU military lessons process. The system is versatile and intuitive and acts as a 'pool' of corporate knowledge from which to draw on for a variety of purposes. The data contained within it is, however, only as good as the information supplied to it by individuals and organisations. There must therefore be qualitative rigour applied to all the information uploaded to ELMA and in particular to the rigorous verification of all lessons observations and endorsement of lessons identified, which set the benchmark for downstream lessons implementation action. A copy of the ELMA software is envisaged at the unclassified level to assist in the more rapid dissemination (sharing) of relevant, unclassified lessons, to those with a verified 'need to know'.

d. **Robust lessons structures at EU HQ level.** Activated EU and national HQ have a pivotal role to play in the production and collation of both properly validated LO and endorsed LI, as well as the implementation of LL. However, it has been shown that, due to a range of factors, principally the temporary nature of the EU activated HQ and the frequent rotation of personnel, this is not always achieved to the maximum extent. There is therefore a requirement for military-strategic and operational level HQ to develop and maintain durable and enduring lessons structures that are immediately able to support the launching of an operation.

e. **Appropriate level of lesson observations.** Given the wide-range of key areas to which a military lessons process aims to contribute, it follows that the collection of LO across the spectrum of levels (tactical, operational and military / politico-strategic) should be equally broad. However, the EU Military Lessons Process must necessarily limit itself to those lessons that concern political-strategic level CSDP issues. Tactical, operational and military-strategic lessons must be managed at the appropriate EU HQ level. The CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal and particularly the military element in ELMA, should be viewed as a reservoir of political-strategic CSDP knowledge that could be pulled and/or pushed, through information sharing, in order to support a range of
differing activities. Careful consideration will therefore be required initially so as not to disregard lessons observations which, although not obviously relevant in a particular niche area, may have wider implications for other domains. That said, chain of command responsibilities must be respected and maintained and there may be occasions when it is determined that the specifics of a particular LO requires development at the EU HQ level only, and will therefore not necessarily warrant inclusion into the wider database.

f. **Capturing Best Practices.** Best practices can be considered as the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time and as a method by which to replicate desired outcomes. The use of best practices has clear linkages with the lessons process to the extent that as much can be learnt from the events conducted correctly as from those where there are shortfalls\(^2\). These should therefore be made available for others to draw on, as required, through the lessons database.

g. **Transparency and lesson sharing.** *Inter alia*, lessons are created to reduce the waste of resources by eliminating duplication of effort; to benefit from collective wisdom and to create new knowledge as a benefit of the sharing process. Therefore, lessons contribute to gain a competitive advantage in challenging new environments. This can only be achieved by being transparent and candid in the articulation of LO; this requires a significant step-change in culture. The nature of some lessons is frequently linked to difficult (political), sensitive and often re-occurring issues, which may require cross-agency solutions. Moreover, effective trend analysis can only be properly achieved through broad exchange of quality information. The EU military community should (wherever possible and ensuring that reciprocity and inclusiveness are preserved) continue to encourage and facilitate improvements to exchange lessons and best practices from within and outside the EU.

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\(^2\) The use of the shipping industry's 'best management practices' has been one of the cornerstones for combating piracy as part of CSDP Operation ATALANTA.
G. LINKAGES WITH RELATED EU PROJECTS

9. The EU military lessons output has specific linkages with a number of EU related projects:

a. **Capability Development Plan (CDP).** The lessons database provides an important source of information for the CDP and ELMA technical upgrades have further enhanced its utility in this regard. Expansion of the database includes shared access to EU civilian CSDP lessons and the provision of a document library to include lessons reports from activity originating from other EU bodies, as well as non EU-specific reports from MS, Third Parties and other international organisations. These initiatives broaden and deepen the availability of relevant data and provide significant additional information from which CDP stakeholders can draw upon to inform their work; this is particularly beneficial to the EUMC input to the CDP Strand D work and the EDA in general. The intent to replicate the ELMA software into the unclassified domain will particularly enhance this capability and will allow for greater sharing of relevant unclassified lessons by means of a password protected site.

b. **Concept Development Implementation Programme (CDIP).** Closely allied to the capability development process are concepts, which are considered a key element. An efficient lessons process should clarify the extent to which any conceptual work might be necessary for particular lessons to be learnt and the process can only be complete once all the developmental aspects have been resolved, including the writing or revision of associated concepts. Quality LI should act as a driver for concept development and provide a rich source of information (gained from experiences of operations) which should be central for development of the key and supporting military concepts contained within the CDIP.

c. **Civilian-Military Lessons Synergies.** In order to contribute effectively to the EU's CA through the provision of a quality CSDP lessons output, there must be a well-defined and symbiotic relationship between the civilian and military domains. Synergies in this area will improve the transparency between civilian and military lessons and result in a more coherent approach to developing, resolving and implementing common lessons and developing EU Best practices for the CA. Specifically, the introduction of a shared civilian-military database to manage, develop and implement lessons, has increased the awareness and understanding of lessons within each area and assist in common trend

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3 This includes the introduction of mandatory fields to improve the overall depth of the lessons observations and specifically to more clearly articulate the operational impact of specific observations.
analysis. Additionally, combining the lessons reporting processes has helped to support combined and integrated planning for CSDP missions and operations and contributes to learning lessons, both common and individual, from CSDP activities, which can be distributed widely to all relevant EU stakeholders.

d. **Incorporating Lessons into CSDP Planning and Conduct of Activities.** Within the framework of planning for future CSDP activities, it is paramount that relevant lessons are utilised practically in the planning process, to avoid repeating mistakes, and therefore robust mechanisms should be in place within the planning (and conduct) process. This includes the advanced incorporation of EU military lessons by the EU HQ staff. Additionally, within the EUMS, the nomination of appropriate individuals to act as lessons coordinators who are embedded into the Crisis Planning Teams and the Mission Monitoring Teams to *(inter alia)* provide previous relevant lessons for the planning process, and to collate and manage the lessons originating from on-going operations.

**H. THE EU MILITARY LESSONS PROCESS (ELPRO)**

10. Successful lessons structures and organisations have at their core the *cognitive hierarchy model* which is derived from the inter-connecting relationships between Data, Information, Knowledge (both explicit and tacit\(^4\)) and Understanding. This is represented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. The Cognitive Hierarchy Model.](image)

11. When further broken down to its constituent parts, for the purpose of elaborating a sustainable lessons structure, the relationship can be summarised as follows:

\(^4\) Explicit knowledge is objective and can be captured and stored for development; tacit knowledge is more subjective and is based on intuition.
12. The EU lessons cycle is composed by two elements:

   a. A governance mechanism (that oversees all phases of the lessons cycle to guarantee the implementation of the lessons)
   b. The lessons cycle itself which is funded on the basic structural paradigm (Figure 2.) and is represented in its entirety in the figure at the Annex.

13. The ELPRO aims to track the lessons development of observations from CSDP activities. LO, from appropriate EU actors may be submitted for possible incorporation into the ELPRO, as outlined below. The ELPRO consists of four phases; Collection, Analysis, Development, and Output. Each of these phases is linked directly to LO, LI and LL.

   a. **Phase 1 – Collection / Lesson Observation (LO).**

      LO are the building blocks of the lessons process, they must be applicable (originate from, and have an effect on, strategic level CSDP activities), objective (based on fact) and clearly articulated. In order to achieve this, it is vital that LO collection processes across all levels are easily accessible, intuitive and efficient; they must allow for the collection of both raw and mature observations\(^5\). For military CSDP activities, the lessons observations will generally originate from those EU actors most closely associated with specific CSDP activities, including, but not limited to: EUMS, EU HQ, OPCEN, EU Battle Groups, CMPD, ATHENA administration and EU Member States\(^6\).

Before lessons observations are uploaded into ELMA, it is vital that there is a validation of individual observations, for reasons of quality assurance and to ensure that the LO is at the strategic level, is rational and does not duplicate operation-specific observations.

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\(^5\) Raw Observation: An observation which requires further study or analysis to fully understand the root causes. Mature Observation: An observation for which there is already data available regarding the root causes and thus may require no analysis.

\(^6\) Inputs may also be received from other EEAS Directorates regarding military CSDP related activity.
which are already included within the database. To this end, relevant EU actors are to forward LO to the EUMS Lessons Cell for collection and initial validation. Thereafter, the LO will be provided to the EUMS LMG for validation before being uploaded into ELMA.

b. **Phase 2 – Analysis / Lesson Identified (LI).**

Within the respective management levels, designated in ELMA, a lead authority (Directorate / Division / Branch) will be assigned by the EUMS LMG to lead on the analysis of the LO in order to define the LI. This analysis is a crucial element of the process and must result in establishing the origin of the problem which has been highlighted through the LO. There are a range of analysis techniques which might be adopted according to the specifics of individual LO. Collection of data (quantitative and/or qualitative) which relates to the observation may be required through document review, surveys and interviews. This data will then need to be categorised, possibly by linking with lines of development, to assist in determining the root cause of the problem and possible solutions (to include consideration of best practices); all of which will contribute to defining the LI. Following the completion of the analysis the respective lead authority must endorse the LI.

c. **Phase 3 – Development / Lesson Identified (LI).**

Following Phase 2, the lead authority will be required to develop an action plan to effect the change required to implement the remedial action into a fully resolved LL. This remedial action will require a number of key elements; including leadership endorsement, stakeholder commitment, appropriate resource allocation and tasking authorisation. Implementation may include one or more action bodies completing a wide variety of activities. To guide remedial action activities, the lead authority may propose to put into action a plan that includes consideration of remedial actions across the lines of development, required resources (finance, personnel, tools), timelines (milestones – near, mid, long) and, where appropriate, recommended validation techniques. This Action Plan is to be finalised by the LMG. Strategic level CSDP LI and its completed action plan will be reported to the EUMC WG for validation before implementation is agreed and initiated by the EUMC. If a LI cannot be validated by EUMC WG, it should be sent back to the originator or the EUMS for clarification.

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7 For this purpose management levels includes; EUMS, OHQ, FHQ and EU Battle Groups.
ensure maximum flexibility, the periodic provision of the Lessons to the EUMC WG will be driven by military activity requirements, rather than rigid pre-designated timings.

d. **Phase 4 – Outputs / Lessons Learnt (LL).**

On completion of the development action the lesson cycle can only be complete once the LI is implemented and becomes a LL. From this point, various outputs may be required along the lines of development; these are outlined at the Annex.

I. **OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES**

14. Overall responsibilities within the lessons process are:


   c. **EUMS LMG** – Director-level management group, chaired by the DDG EUMS, responsible for the endorsement of lessons identified and finalising the related Action Plan.

   d. **EUMS Lead Authority** – Responsible for the development and implementation of action plans.

   e. **EUMS Lessons Cell** – Specific responsibility for the collection and management of strategic lessons from CSDP military activities and of the wider development of the Lessons process inside the EU military community and also with civilian bodies across the EU. Responsible for the drafting of the EUMS Annual Lessons and Best Practices Report which forms the military contribution to the Annual CSDP Lessons Report. EUMS members of the CSDP Lessons Working Group.

   f. **EUMS Lessons Working Group (LWG)** – Action Officer-level working group, chaired by the EUMS Lessons Cell, each member of which is responsible to their Director for the development of lessons within their own Directorate.

   g. **EUMS Action Officers** – As instructed by EUMS Directors and advised by the EUMS LMG, are to provide specialist functional area advice and input to the ELPRO and, where appropriate, manage the overall development of specific lessons observations in

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8 At the end of any significant military planning activity, on completion of a specific phase of an EU military operation, on completion of an EU military operation or at any other appropriate occasion.
ELMA to ensure remedial actions are completed and that lessons become learnt.

h. Operation / Force Commanders – Responsible for the provision of strategic level CSDP lesson observations as directed, and for establishing and maintaining robust lesson organisations within their respective HQ through Command Groups / Lessons Management Groups (or equivalent), as appropriate.

i. EUMC WG – Responsible to the EUMC for final validation of the lessons identified and their action plans before implementation.

j. EUMC – Responsible for the approval of the LI and of the related action plan.

k. EU Member States – Responsible for the provision of strategic lessons observations of interest to CSDP.

J. THE EU MILITARY LESSONS CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH (CA)

15. In specific terms the process will contribute to the CA in the following areas:

a. Lessons Reporting Procedures.
   The EUMS Annual Lessons and Best Practices Report will be presented to the EUMC at the start of each year to reflect lessons from the previous calendar year. This report will list all validated LO received and all the Lessons that have been learnt over that year. Additionally, as part of the CA, other common thematic lessons reports (which may necessitate military input) may be initiated on an 'as required' basis. The provision of separate, periodic military reports to the EUMC may continue and will be complementary to, but inform, the annual CSDP lessons report. The EUMS annual Lessons and Best Practices report will be the military contribution to the annual CSDP lessons report that is the cornerstone for EU lessons reporting. This report will be staffed with EU civilian counterparts. Through military advice to the PSC, the EUMC will have a key role to play in the development of this document, which will allow the broad parameters or themes of the EUMC capability development priorities, within the lessons framework, to be set out and thus direct and guide future development of the most significant LI.

b. The CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal.
   All classified data relating to CSDP lesson activity (both military and civilian) will be contained within the CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal. This web-based application available through the EU OPS WAN on SOLAN includes (read only)
access\textsuperscript{9} to those individuals provided with appropriate accreditation. Through the portal, users will have access to both the EUMS Lessons Management Application (ELMA) and Civilian Lessons Management Application (CiLMA) lessons data, which incorporates all the information relating to the collection, analysis and development of individual lessons. The portal also contains search facilities for individual civilian or military lessons and those combined lessons which are relevant in both domains. An unclassified domain is also being created to allow password protected access to other relevant authorities and to allow information to be updated by persons without EU OPS WAN and SOLAN access.

\textsuperscript{9} Permissions will be given to key stakeholders for write access to the portal.
THE EU MILITARY LESSONS PROCESS (ELPRO)

LESSON OBSERVED
PHASE 1 COLLECTION

CSDP MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS:
EUMS, EU HQ, EU BG, CMPD, ATHENA
ADMINISTRATION AND MEMBER STATES

Validated by EUMS LMG

LESSON IDENTIFIED
PHASE 2 ANALYSIS

Analysis

Lessons identified

Analysis endorsed by EUMS Lead Authority

Lead Authority determines Lead Authority

Lead Authority develops action plan

Analysis and action plan submitted by EUMS for validation by EUMC WG

EUMC approval of Li and related action plan

EUMS to implement or archive with no implementation

ACTION PLAN FINALISED BY EUMS LMG

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPS ACTION PLAN

LESSON LEARNT
PHASE 4 OUTPUT

Closed and archived

Concepts, systems, structures, training, sharing, leadership, personnel, interaction, infrastructure, annual reports, & best practices

Information sharing