



**Multinationales Kommando Operative Führung**  
***Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm***

EU focus  
operational UN  
military exercise  
command Nato joint  
combined experience  
multinational european  
experience force  
multinational EU focus  
military joint  
further development  
joint planning EUBG  
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# Experts for EU Crisis Response Capability





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Contents

- A German Contribution to the Further Development of EU Common Security and Defense Policy ..... 4**
- Joint and Combined Contribution to Europe: Experience Meets Transformation ..... 5**
  - Europe's political responsibility for security ..... 5
  - Reorientation of the MN JHQ Ulm: Experts for EU crisis response capability ..... 6
- Ready for EU Missions ..... 7**
  - EU Operation Headquarters: Highest military planning and command and control authority outside Brussels ..... 7
  - Extensive preparations ..... 9
  - Military Strategic Information Gathering Team (MSIGT) ..... 9
  - Planning Capability Package (PCP) ..... 10
  - Core staff of the Joint Logistic Support Group Headquarters (JLSG HQ) ..... 11
  - Experience and expertise ..... 11
  - Personnel augmentation concept ..... 11
  - Real-life support during routine duty: Headquarters & Base Support ..... 12
- Conclusion & Outlook: Stronger Focus on EU Comprehensive Approach ..... 13**
  - Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm Organizational Chart ..... 14



# A German Contribution to the Further Development of EU Common Security and Defense Policy

The Multinationales Kommando Operative Führung (MN KdoOpFü)/Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm (MN JHQ Ulm) provides the European Union (EU) with a military-strategic headquarters for military operations. Over many years, it has developed extensive expertise in exercising command and control of combined and joint operations, bringing substantial benefit to both NATO and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) of the EU.

Supported by multinational staff, the Ulm Command makes a significant German contribution to strengthening the EU's capability to take action in its role as an international anchor of stability and global player in international crisis management. By redefining its mission spectrum and reorganizing its structure in 2021, the MN JHQ Ulm has consolidated its orientation towards EU tasks.



Lieutenant General Jürgen Knappe, Commander, MN JHQ Ulm



Currently, soldiers from eight EU nations serve in the Ulm Command.

# Joint and Combined Contribution to Europe: Experience Meets Transformation

## Europe's political responsibility for security

Germany is working towards further developing the CSDP, and towards strengthening the EU's resilience and capacity for action in the area of security and defense—and towards deepening cooperation between NATO and the EU. Both organizations are integral and indispensable components of the European security architecture. During its Council Presidency in the second half of 2020, Germany managed to prove that its firm integration in the North Atlantic Alliance does not interfere with its European ambitions.<sup>1</sup>

The goal is to improve the resilience and response capability of a European Union becoming aware of its growing responsibility for security, and to put it on a sound organizational and strategic footing designed to tackle the challenges posed by an increasingly fragile security environment. By establishing permanent standing structures, such as the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the EU Military Staff (EUMS), the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), the EU and its member states have created a solid institutional framework to support and further develop the CSDP.

Complemented by the required capabilities, partnerships, and funds, this framework is meant to enable the EU to continue its seventeen ongoing missions and operations on three continents conducted within the scope of the CSDP, and to remain capable of responding to future crises and conflicts quickly and efficiently.

Another milestone will be the further development of the Strategic Compass aimed at aligning the CSDP to provide a common strategic direction. The EU member states will use the Strategic Compass to lay down their common goals and interests to be pursued on the basis of the threat analysis. By completing its first common threat analysis during the German EU Council Presidency in the second half of 2020, the EU has laid an important foundation for establishing further structured political dialog between the EU member states in 2021. It is the first-ever document to formulate a common strategic and security vision shared by the members of the European Union.

<sup>1</sup>Cf German Ministry of Defense  
press release dated 27 January 2021.



The EU and its member states have redoubled their efforts to advance the Common Security and Defense Policy.



## Reorientation of the MN JHQ Ulm: Experts for EU crisis response capability

The Ulm Command was established in 2013 to serve as Germany's key contribution to strengthening the CSDP aimed to substantiate the EU's capacity for action and crisis response capability by enhancing planning and command and control capabilities at the military-strategic and operational levels. Its activation was Germany's response to the international challenges posed by ongoing crises in Europe's immediate neighborhood.

With its military and civilian staff from currently eight nations (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Romania) and from all service branches, the Ulm Command has since made considerable contributions to the EU's CSDP.

In 2018, the MN JHQ Ulm received its first NATO certification as an operational-level Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF HQ). The same year, the Ulm Command was tasked with building up a new operational-level NATO headquarters, the Joint Support

and Enabling Command (JSEC). In future, the new Command will cease to be part of the MN JHQ Ulm to become a separate HQ exclusively available to NATO.

The MN JHQ Ulm itself has been subject to reorganization since early 2021. The reason for this structural adjustment is a redefinition of its mission using the valuable EU expertise gained in Ulm over the years. The new structure is intended to reach the central goal of strengthening the EU's military planning and command and control capability.

The mission portfolio of the new MN JHQ Ulm will comprise a supporting role within the Ulm garrison to be assumed by the Headquarters & Base Support Directorate (HBSD). In addition, the MN JHQ Ulm will essentially perform two headquarters roles: the Headquarters Directorate (HQ Dir), entirely responsible for EU tasks, and the Core Staff Element (CSE) of the Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG), in charge of both NATO and EU tasks.

### History of the Ulm Command

In 2005, the former II. German-American (GE/US) Korps — a traditional Army corps — was reorganized to become Response Forces Operations Command (RFOC). Initially, its primary mission was to provide a deployable EU Force Headquarters (EU FHQ) capable of exercising operational command and control of joint and combined operations involving up to 60,000 troops, particularly for the European Union. Based on the lessons learned from the European Union mission in the Congo (EUFOR RD Congo), the Ulm Command's mission was extended in 2009 to include the provision of an EU OHQ at the next-higher level of command, the military-strategic level.

The establishment of the MN KdoOpFü/MN JHQ Ulm in 2013 was Germany's response to international security challenges. In addition to its EU commitments, the Command was now directly accessible to NATO as well. Following certification as a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF HQ) in 2018, the Command was kept available for NATO operations for a period of one year.

In 2018, framework nation Germany and, subsequently, the MN JHQ Ulm, were tasked with establishing a new operational-level NATO headquarters, the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC). JSEC achieved initial operational capability (IOC) in late 2019. Following an evaluation exercise, full operational capability (FOC) is expected to be declared by October 2021. The buildup phase also will be finished by October 2021. German MN JHQ Ulm personnel has helped accelerate the buildup process by rendering considerable support to efforts for the new headquarters, and will continue to do so. By fall 2021, JSEC will reach the status of an independent international agency without any dependencies on the MN JHQ Ulm in terms of personnel or materiel, allowing the Ulm Command to refocus on its EU tasks.



## Ready for EU Missions

### EU Operation Headquarters: Highest military planning and command and control authority outside Brussels

The MN JHQ Ulm has consolidated its clear focus on EU tasks. It is available to the EU as a military-strategic EU Operation Headquarters (EU OHQ), making a visible German contribution to strengthening the CSDP. The Federal Republic of Germany has pledged to the EU the provision of MN JHQ Ulm capabilities. Along with five other national EU command headquarters in France (Paris), Greece (Larissa), Italy (Rome), Spain (Rota), and—on a case-by-case basis—in Poland (Krakow), the MN JHQ Ulm is available to serve as the highest military planning and command and control authority outside Brussels for operations across the entire Petersberg task spectrum.

If the EU's political leaders decide to activate the Ulm Command as an EU OHQ in the event of a crisis, the Command will be placed under the direct authority of the competent EU committee, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), provided the German parliament authorizes the mission. From its base in Germany, it translates the political requirements defined by the EU Council into military directives and orders to the subordinate operational headquarters, the EU Force Headquarters (EU FHQ) in the country of deployment. Currently, the EU is conducting eleven civilian missions and six military missions and operations.

With its new structure focused on the immediate availability of initial capabilities for the purpose of analysis, reconnaissance, and planning, the Ulm Command is ideally suited for conducting rapid response forces operations. In addition to this full-time role as an EU OHQ, it is regularly available to the EU rapid response forces as a preferred OHQ, an assignment it successfully accomplished several times before. The Command assumed this task in 2012 and 2016, and recently served as a preferred OHQ to the German-led EU Battlegroup 2020-2 (EUBG 2020-2) in the period from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021. During this time, Germany exercised command and control of an approximately 4,100-strong EU Battlegroup (EUBG) including approximately 2,500 Bundeswehr soldiers.

By assuming command and control of the EUBG, Germany clearly reaffirmed its commitment to the EU's capacity for action, its response capability, and its credibility in the area of security and defense, serving as framework nation, and providing the Ulm Command as a preferred OHQ. The beginning of the standby phase of the German-led EUBG coincided with Germany's takeover of the EU Council Presidency on 1 July 2020.

In 2025, the MN JHQ Ulm will again contribute its expertise in support of the next EUBG when Germany will assume the role of framework nation as part of the future command and control structure at the military-strategic level.

## EU Battlegroup Concept

The EUBG Concept provides the European Union with its own military crisis management capabilities ranging from humanitarian relief operations and combat operations in the context of crisis management to peacemaking measures (Petersberg tasks). The rapid response forces are intended to provide the capability to rapidly and adequately respond to acute security challenges and crises. Two EUBGs each are generally kept on standby per six-month period. EUBGs have a multinational staff consisting of one lead nation (Framework Nation) and other nations. EUBG 2020-2 comprised a German-led battlegroup involving eight other nations, and a Spanish-Italian amphibious battlegroup. An EUBG is mainly composed of infantry forces reinforced by combat, logistic, and combat service support elements, and, if need be, by air and naval forces.

Its potential area of operations covers a radius of up to 6,000 km around Brussels. In the event of activation, the soldiers would be ready to move within a few days of a decision by the European Council. If required, the entire battlegroup can sustain operations in a designated theater without external support for up to 120 days.

To date, EUBGs are the only set of forces exclusively available to the EU without any restrictions. This is why they are indispensable for the EU's ability to act and respond within the framework of the Petersberg Plus tasks. This means, mission options may range from humanitarian relief to initial entry operations, e.g. in preparation of follow-on operations by UN peace forces.

The MN JHQ Ulm is the only Bundeswehr command capable of fulfilling the EU requirement of exercising command and control at the military-strategic level as an OHQ at short notice. In this case, it will operate from within Germany to exercise command and control of an operations staff deployed to a crisis area and responsible for exercising direct command and control of forces on site.



## Extensive preparations

The Ulm Command started preparations for EUBG 2020-2 three years in advance, hosting conferences, conducting exercises and training sessions, and ensuring multinational coordination to cross the finish line in good time after an HQ-internal battle staff training (BST) in late June 2020.

MN JHQ Ulm staff members personally prepared for the EU task to be rapidly available and ready to deploy to a crisis area in the event of activation by the EU. Preparations comprised small arms and live-fire training, NBC defense training, and medical examinations, to include immunization status. Every soldier also customized and completed their personal equipment and uniforms to be prepared for weather conditions in different climate zones.

## Military Strategic Information Gathering Team (MSIGT)

The personnel most affected by these personal preparations were the members of the Military Strategic Information Gathering Team (MSIGT), a kind of fact-finding team consisting of select subject-matter experts. The MSIGT lays the groundwork for military operations in areas of conflict and, if applicable, in neighboring countries at the politico-military

level while establishing initial liaison between the military-strategic headquarters and political leaders in the area of operation. It contributes to the situation picture and collects vital information in the future area of operation, providing essential input to the military planning process. If invited by a host country, the MSIGT may deploy to a designated area of operation even before being mandated.

The type of equipment and number of personnel varies from case to case, and is specifically tailored to the situation in the designated country of deployment. In an evolving crisis, a team of civilian and military subject-matter experts may be tasked to establish liaison with officials of the host country, while more robust delegations equipped with combat vehicles and combat gear may be needed in escalating situations to provide adequate force protection.

During the standby phases of the Ulm Command as a preferred OHQ for an EUBG, the MSIGT is placed on increased readiness. In addition to classroom training, the members of the MSIGT take practical lessons and undergo weapons, equipment, and vehicle training required to accomplish the important and complex tasks they may face in the event of activation and deployment to a crisis area.





Core competences: Planning and command and control. In its capacity as EU Operation Headquarters, the Ulm Command translates politico-military EU requirements into military action.

## Planning Capability Package (PCP): Capabilities and expertise for EU command structures

A key factor in taking swift and effective action as required by EU missions is to refine EU command structures for current and future CSDP missions and operations, and adapt them to new challenges and requirements.

The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) established in 2017 enables the EU to exercise centralized command and control of CSDP missions and operations directly from Brussels in accordance with an integrated approach. The advantage of this capability being continuously available in Brussels is that the EU does not have to rely on its member states in an emergency. As planning and command and control processes are mostly unaffected, this structural element provides a rapid and permanent crisis response capability.

In addition, MPCC personnel is firmly embedded in Brussels structures to allow for a regular exchange with civilian planning and command elements. Germany's Ulm Command is a key contributor in supporting MPCC capabilities and responsibilities.

In pursuit of Germany's politico-military objectives, the MN JHQ Ulm's initial capability includes capabilities and expertise designed to temporarily reinforce central EU command structures in the EU Military Staff and the MPCC, enabling the EU to increase its response capability.

The modular Planning Capability Package (PCP) can provide an essential contribution to take the EU's Military Planning and Conduct Capability to the next level, especially in the time-critical early stages of an operation.

The Ulm Command will use its many years of expertise in exercising command and control of joint and combined operations to further develop the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in this field as well.





The mobile command post operated by the Ulm Command provides a workplace for over 160 troops in exercises and operations.

## Core staff of the Joint Logistic Support Group Headquarters (JLSG HQ)

An integrated JLSG HQ Core Staff Element (CSE) will continue to be part of the future MN JHQ Ulm. Supported by the personnel pool of the Joint Support and Enabling Service (JSES), this element can be augmented to operate as a full-scale tactical headquarters. Key responsibilities include force deployment, redeployment and follow-on supply for either NATO or the EU. Provided by Germany, the JLSG HQ can render critical support to NATO's Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC), which is also headquartered in Ulm.

### Experience and expertise

Together with its multinational partners, the MN JHQ Ulm has developed unique and valuable expertise in both HQ roles: as EU OHQ, and as JLSG HQ. In 2005, the primary mission of the Response Forces Operations Command—as it used to be called—was to provide the European Union with a deployable Force Headquarters (FHQ) capable of exercising operational

command and control of up to 60,000 troops. Based on the lessons learned from the EU mission in the Congo, the Command's mission was extended in 2009 to include the provision of a headquarters on the military-strategic level. When the MN JHQ Ulm was established in 2013, this experience was incorporated into the new structure, and more expertise was gradually developed and put to the test to gain certification both as an EU and a NATO headquarters.

### Personnel augmentation concept

A novelty in the performance of both HQ roles is a greater focus on personnel augmentation. The Ulm Command will keep a nucleus, i.e. an initial capability to be used for analysis, initial planning, and reconnaissance in the area of operations both for the EU OHQ and the JLSG HQ, while operations and exercises of both HQs will be augmented by external personnel.



## Real-life support during routine duty: Headquarters & Base Support

National support at the garrison of Ulm takes on a new dimension by providing services to three different, multinational headquarters from a single source. By adopting this resource-oriented approach implemented in the Headquarters & Base Support Directorate (HBSD), Germany will honor the commitments it has made. Support services will be provided to NATO's newly established, Ulm-based Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC), the NATO-led Standing Joint Logistic

Support Group (SJLSG)—responsible for logistic coordination and support to NATO operations—the Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm, and the JLSG HQ Core Staff Element.

Services include infrastructure, family support to the multinational community, warehousing, IT equipment, transportation, medical care, and the provision of a deployable command post for the JLSG HQ.



The new multi-purpose building, completed in January 2021, provides 5,000 square meters of efficient workspace.



Multinationality at work: Different mindsets and work ethics produce positive results to the benefit of the Ulm Command's multinational plans and projects.

## Conclusion & Outlook: Comprehensive Approach

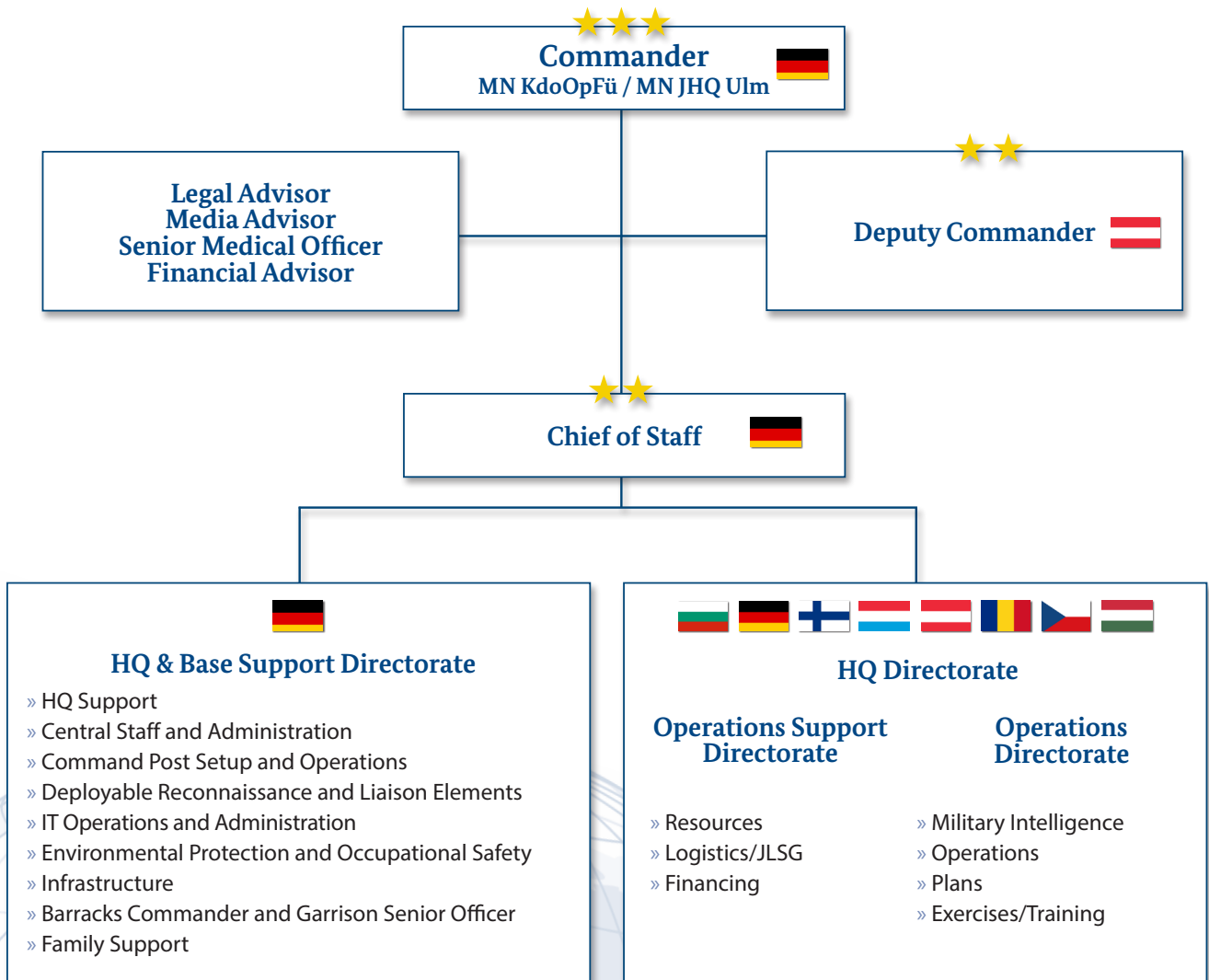
The last years have shown that Europe is gaining strategic independence by adjusting its responsibility for security to current challenges, and by creating the military capabilities needed.

This requires command structures to be continuously reshaped and refined, an effort the Ulm Command has supported providing many years of extensive, reliable EU expertise, and, even more importantly, providing exercise opportunities and, if required, relevant EU military planning capabilities.

In its new structure, the MN JHQ Ulm will continue to embrace its responsibilities to the EU and, with the help of its multinational partners, make an essential German contribution to strengthening the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy.

The Ulm Command will also continue to share its expertise and long years of experience to help enhance the EU's command structure in 2021, and prepare and provide another DEU-led EUBG in 2025.

## Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm Organizational Chart



### Allocation of MN JHQ Ulm Billets

- » Command group: approx. 30 German and multinational billets
- » HQ Base Support Directorate (HBSD): approx. 370 German billets
- » HQ Directorate: approx. 100 German and multinational billets







Panoramic View of the Old Town, the Ulm Minster, and the Danube River.

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