

EUROPEAN UNION



UNION EUROPÉENNE

EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY COMMITTEE

*General Patrick de Rousiers
Chairman of the European Union Military Committee*

Officers, Non Commissioned Officers, soldiers, sailors and airmen of the European Union Operation EUFOR in the Central African Republic,

This day is highly symbolic as it marks the end of the activity in Bangui (Central African Republic) of EUFOR Operation after 12 months of engagement in the service of peace. Since the start of the Operation on 01 April 2014, just under 2000 soldiers from the EU Member States and other Partner Nations have successfully served in this theatre.

The primary objective was to secure a safe environment and bring peace and stability back to the streets of Bangui. In doing so, EUFOR paved the way for the deployment of the United Nations Mission, MINUSCA, which shall continue to provide reassurance to what was previously a traumatised population.

Your engagement, under UN Security Council Resolution 2134 (2014) was swift and decisive and no doubt has left a mark on all participants. The Operation, always professional, required delicate diplomacy in sometimes dangerous and often intense situations. One of our soldiers lost his life during his tour of duty in Bangui, and 16 of our personnel were wounded in the course of their duties. Their sacrifice reminds us of why we were called to duty; our chosen career is often dangerous even if carried out in the name of keeping the peace.

Under the leadership of your Commander, Major General Philippe Pontès, and of your two Force Commanders, Brigadier General Thierry Lion and Brigadier General Jean-Marc Bacquet, you continually adapted to the changing situation and evolved with it. Through your efforts, stability returned allowing the Internally Displaced to live and return home to normality in large numbers. Life flourishes in your wake.

Today in Bangui, EUFOR RCA hands the baton of responsibility to MINUSCA. You have made this transition possible. To you, and all those that have served the Operation before you, I express the recognition that you merit for the perfect military collective and individual behaviour you have shown.

Brussels, 15 March 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick de Rousiers', written over a horizontal line.