

Transparency initiative input to NATO website - ESTONIA

During 2008, Estonia maintained an average contribution of 250 personnel to international operations, which, in terms of agreed sustainment targets, equals to about 8.5 percent of its land forces total. Estonian troops were deployed to NATO and EU operations, as well as to United Nations' and other coalition operations, and were on standby for NRF and the EU Battle Groups. Estonia seeks to maintain the same level in 2009.

Participation in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan is the priority for Estonia, in the context of international military operations. Estonian contribution to ISAF operation in 2008 increased from 120 to approx. 150 troops, to include staff officers in ISAF and RC (S) HQ; as well as an infantry company, a fire support element and a logistics element as part of the UK-led Task Force Helmand in Southern Afghanistan. A close protection Team (CPT), and an Air Force Cross Service Team (CST) are serving in Kabul. Estonian civilian contribution to ISAF to date includes an advisor to the Afghanistan MoD within the CSTC-A (Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan).

Estonian troops in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in 2008 consisted of staff officers in the KFOR HQ and the MNTF (N) HQ, and a reconnaissance platoon ESTRIF (26) within the Danish Battalion in Northern Kosovo. In 2008 we increased our contribution in the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) from 2 to 3 staff officers. At the same time we decreased our contribution in EU led EUFOR ALTHEA HQ (from 3 to 2 staff officers).

The UNSC mandate for the international Operation Iraqi Freedom expired on 31 December 2008, to concurrently conclude the Estonian participation in the coalition, to which we had previously maintained a contribution of about 40 personnel.

To the UN mission in Lebanon (UNTSO) Estonia in 2008 contributed two military observers.

In the context of the NATO Response Force (NRF) Estonia in 2008 maintained one MCM vessel (mine hunter "Admiral Cowan", 38) on standby for NRF-11 in 2008. Currently Estonia has a 15-strong EOD Team in high readiness as part of NRF-12. In 2010, Estonia together with Latvia and Lithuania will form the Baltic mechanized infantry battalion within the Danish-led Land Component Command of NRF-14.

Together with Sweden, Finland, Norway and Ireland Estonia formed the EU Nordic Battle Group (NBG), that was on standby in the first half of 2008. Estonia contributed 50 personnel to the NBG and plans to commit an equal amount to the next NBF rotation.

The mandates for every operation (except for UN missions) are valid until the end of 2009. The rotations are 6 months long (except for UN missions). Valuing flexibility, Estonian troops have no other caveats than those stemming from international law and conventions.

For up to date information on current deployments see:
<http://operatsioonid.kmin.ee/index.php?page=156&>