

DRAFT CONCEPT PAPER

First Central, Eastern Europe and the Balkans Roundtable on UN Peace Operations: Regional Perspectives on Strengthening Support and Advancing the Role of Training Centres

Date: 8 - 9 June 2026

Venue: Peace Operations Training Centre, Jable Castle, Loka pri Mengšu, Slovenia

Host: Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, in cooperation with the Peace Operations Training Centre

Working Language: English

1. Background and Rationale

Despite the current strategic focus of many European countries on the security environment in Ukraine and on NATO commitments, maintaining readiness and engagement in United Nations peace operations remains an important dimension of international security cooperation and multilateral crisis management. United Nations peace operations are undergoing a comprehensive strategic review in response to evolving geopolitical dynamics, increasingly complex and multidimensional mandates, and persistent budgetary constraints. These trends, together with adjustments in mission configurations, are reshaping the scale, composition, and nature of military, police, and civilian contributions. In this context, effectiveness and performance, operational readiness, the safety and security of peacekeepers, strengthened partnerships, and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women are emerging as central priorities in shaping the future of United Nations peace operations.

These reflections are taking place within the framework of key UN policy documents, including the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and its implementation strategy (A4P+), the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, and the Pact for the Future. They are further informed by commitments made by 134 Member States at the 2025 Berlin UN Peacekeeping Ministerial. Together, these frameworks underscore collective responsibility, performance and accountability, strengthened partnerships, and gender-responsive and inclusive approaches to peace operations and the need to maintain ready capabilities in a rapidly evolving security environment.

In parallel, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has entered a phase of transition and drawdown. As personnel levels decrease, troop- and police-contributing countries are reviewing their medium- and long-term engagement, capability allocation, and strategic priorities within the UN peace operations architecture. The anticipated closure of UNIFIL, three years after the closure of MINUSMA (to which European Member States were also actively contributing) further underscores the importance of capturing

lessons learned and ensuring that operational experience informs future deployments and training standards. This evolving context has implications for regional peacekeeping training centres, particularly in terms of training demand, specialization, sustainability, and opportunities for strengthened regional cooperation. These developments provide an important opportunity for participating countries to reflect on operational lessons learned from recent missions, including MINUSMA and UNIFIL, particularly in areas such as multinational cooperation, logistics, interoperability, and capability development.

Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans have demonstrated a sustained commitment to UN peace operations through personnel contributions, capability development, and investment in training. Regional training centres, capacity-building providers, and partner institutions play an increasingly important role in supporting operational readiness, developing specialized capabilities, and facilitating cooperation among contributing countries. During its tenure as an elected member of the Security Council (2024–2025), Slovenia actively contributed to discussions on the future of peace operations, reinforcing the region’s engagement at both operational and policy levels. Building on this engagement, Slovenia is convening this roundtable in an expanded “regional-plus” format, engaging selected major contributors, key partners, and relevant UN entities and training organizations, to provide a forward-looking platform to reflect on the future profile of regional engagement in peacekeeping, the evolving role of training centres, and strengthened cooperation with UN and partner institutions.

This first regional roundtable is organised with the support of the *Light Coordination Mechanism in the United Nations Department of Peace Operations*.

2. Objectives

The roundtable aims to:

1. Exchange national perspectives on future participation in UN peace operations in the context of the evolving operational landscape and the UNIFIL transition.
2. Identify shared regional priorities and explore coordinated forms of support beyond personnel contributions, including training, capacity-building, partnership, financial contributions, and in-kind support.
3. Examine the evolving role and long-term sustainability of regional peacekeeping training centres, including innovative approaches to training delivery, specialization, and strengthened regional cooperation.
4. Strengthen policy dialogue and regional coordination among participating countries, including the promotion of gender-responsive approaches to training, capability development and operational performance in UN peace operations.
5. Capture lessons learned from past and ongoing peace operations to inform future engagement and enhance effectiveness and preparedness.

3. Format

The roundtable will be conducted in an informal, discussion-oriented setting and will consist of three sessions.

I. Regional Perspectives on Supporting Peacekeeping: Challenges, Partnerships, and Future Opportunities

The session will be structured in two parts, followed by a consolidated moderated discussion with Q&A.

Part I – Strategic Outlook and National Perspectives

- Introductory framing by the moderator
- The future of UN peace operations
- Update on the 2025 Berlin Peacekeeping Ministerial
- Short national interventions

Guiding Questions

1. How do countries envision their future engagement in UN peace operations, and which factors will shape the scale and priorities of their contributions?
2. How can countries maintain visibility and influence within the UN peace operations architecture?
3. How could closer regional cooperation enhance collective influence and long-term sustainability?

Part II – Thematic Presentation

- Lead presentation – “Regional Peacekeeping Cooperation in action: Lessons from Germany’s experience with the ISR Task Force in MINUSMA”

Interactive Exchange

- Moderated discussion with Q&A and summary of key takeaways

II. The Future of Regional Peacekeeping Training Centres – Adaptation, Cooperation, and Harmonization

The session will be structured in two parts, followed by a consolidated moderated discussion with Q&A.

Part I – National Perspectives

- Introductory framing by the moderator
- Short national intervention

Guiding Questions

1. How can regional peacekeeping training centres adapt while remaining sustainable and relevant?

2. Could regional centres expand through mobile training teams, third-country support, or capacity-building initiatives in mission areas?
3. How can regional peacekeeping training centres enhance efficiency and impact through networking, specialisation, and coordinated division of labour?
4. What lessons learned from past and ongoing missions should inform future training priorities and standards?

Part II – Thematic Presentations

- Research Presentation: Flexibility and Adaptability of UN Missions (UNIFIL Case)
- Lead presentation – “Training, Preparedness and Operational Adaptation: Lessons from Italy’s Experience in UNIFIL”
- Lead presentation – “Lessons from France’s Experience in UNIFIL” **(tbc)**

Interactive Exchange

- Moderated discussion with Q&A and summary of key takeaways

III. Strengthening Peace Operations through Coordination, Training and Capacity Development: Institutional Perspectives

This session will examine the role of specialized UN entities and partner institutions in strengthening peace operations through policy support, training, and capacity development, with attention to reinforcing regional cooperation and improving operational effectiveness.

The session will feature institutional presentations followed by a moderated discussion with Q&A and summary of key takeaways.

4. Participants

Participating Member States are expected to be represented at the Defence Policy Directors level (or equivalent). Delegations shall participate strictly in a 1+2 format, consisting of one Head of Delegation and two additional delegates. It is recommended that the two additional delegates be military and police experts in peace operations or representatives of a national or regional training centre.

Slovenia is convening 23 countries to participate in this roundtable.

The roundtable will also bring together regional training centres, UN entities, and partner institutions.

Further practical information regarding participation and logistics will be communicated separately.

5. Communication and follow-up

The host and partners will prepare a short communiqué summarizing key messages from the discussions. Communication products may include social media outreach, press engagement and a post-event report capturing lessons learned and policy reflections, to be shared with all participants.

6. Expected Outcomes

The roundtable is expected to:

- Promote a shared understanding of future regional engagement in UN peace operations;
- Identify opportunities for strengthened regional cooperation and interoperability;
- Generate reflections on training centre adaptation and sustainability;
- Capture lessons relevant to future peace operations;
- Strengthen networks among participating countries, training institutions, and partners.