



**Statement at the first Ministerial meeting of the
Coalition for the Sahel held by videoconference,
12 June 2020**

**Mr. Petko Doykov,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria**

I would like to thank the High Representative and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France and Mauritania for organizing this very important event in the context of the serious challenges the countries from Sahel are facing. It is really important to better structure and coordinate our efforts and contributions towards the region.

The EU has a long-term commitment in the stabilization of Sahel. We are very concerned about the persisting security threat and challenging humanitarian situation in Sahel. It is very important that the countries from the region have committed to their own security and to the restoring of state presence in fragile areas.

We recognize the importance not only to apply a comprehensive effort towards Sahel, but also to do it in a coordinated manner with the UN, African Union and ECOWAS. That is why we consider the Coalition and the current meeting as a very significant endeavor.

Bulgaria will continue to contribute to the security and stability of Sahel through its participation in CSDP missions in the region. We reaffirm our contribution of four military medical staff to EUTM Mali regardless the worrisome situation on the field and expect to find logistical solutions to ensure their rotation in the coming weeks.

We are also reflecting on the possibilities for contribution in the humanitarian field.

Another important strand for EU contribution is related to the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Sahel. More efforts should be focused towards education, job creation, human development and the reduction of the inequalities.