

General Lázaro receives the Eurocorps' banner from Admiral López Calderón (CHOD).





The Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff attend the handover ceremony.



A SPANIARD AT THE HELM OF EUROCORPS

Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro takes charge of the multinational unit, ready to act under EU and NATO command

THE European Army Corps, or Eurocorps, held its Change of Command ceremony on 18 September 2025 at the famous Place du Château, located on the banks of the Rhine in the heart of the French city of Strasbourg, close to the German border. A Spaniard, Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro, has taken command of this military force for the next two years. With its eleven member countries,

the force is a symbol of Europe and its common defence, and is at the forefront of geopolitical and strategic changes.

During the ceremony, General Lázaro received the Eurocorps banner from the Spanish Chief of Defence Staff (CHOD), Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón, which had previously been handed over to him by Polish General Piotr Blazeusz, thus symbolically ending his term in command of the multinational unit.

The CHOD travelled to Strasbourg with Defence Minister Margarita Robles, who represented our country at the ceremony. "In these difficult and unstable times, European unity is more important than ever", said Lieutenant General Lázaro, while thanking Minister Robles for his appointment.

The new Eurocorps commander praised the efforts made by his predecessor and the great job he had done over the

years in promoting peace, common protection and security. "I will continue to work along these lines of cooperation", Lázaro said. "I wish to reaffirm my commitment to maintaining the standard of excellence of Eurocorps, a military force that also serves as a diplomatic tool", he emphasised.

This is the fourth time that a Spanish general has taken command of this multinational headquarters, where over a thousand troops, 120 of whom are Spanish, are stationed.

AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

Eurocorps was founded after careful consideration of the devastating consequences for Europe of the two world wars of the past century, in which France and Germany played leading roles. In 1963, French President General De Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer signed the Élysée Treaty, which mentioned defence cooperation for the first time. Later, in 1989, France and Germany created a joint unit, the Franco-German Brigade, made up of units from the armies of the two countries.

As a follow-on from this initiative, in 1992, during the Franco-German summit held in La Rochelle, Presidents François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl agreed to establish an Army Corps headquarters in



Eurocorps soldiers bearing the flags of the six framework nations (Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Luxembourg and Poland).

More than 120 Spaniards are stationed at the headquarters of this military force founded in 1992

Strasbourg. Immediately afterwards, they invited other countries to participate in the project, with Belgium joining in 1993, Spain in 1994, Luxembourg in 1996 and, more recently, Poland in 2022.

Today, besides the six framework nations there are five associated nations: Austria, Greece, Turkey, Romania and Italy.

HIGH READINESS

Despite certain distinctive features, Eurocorps is a unit that is substantially similar to other high-readiness headquarters within the NATO force structure. The first unique characteristic is a balanced contribution of resources by the framework nations (Spain is the third largest contributor after France and Germany). The second one is its duality, as it is at the service of both NATO (at SACEUR's disposal since 1993 as part of the force structure) and the European Union.

This unit has participated in peacekeeping and crisis management missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan and EU training missions in Africa, operations that have consolidated its experience in multinational deployments and its ability to coordinate international forces.

Following the adoption of Vision 2026+ by the framework nations, Eurocorps' primary role is to form a joint headquarters focused on land-based crisis response operations, with multi-domain operational capabilities. It is capable of performing Initial Entry Force operations and also commanding up to 65,000 ground troops.



Polish General Piotr Blazeusz and General Lázaro, along with the Chief of Defence Staff, at the change of command ceremony held at the Place du Château.



A SUCCESSFUL MILITARY CAREER

Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro (born in 1962 in Sidi Ifni, a former Spanish territory in North Africa) has taken command of Eurocorps after three and a half years serving as Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where he led some 10,000 blue helmets from 48 different countries. He was awarded the Grand Cross of Military Merit with blue ribbon last July during a ceremony in which Defence Minister Margarita Robles acknowledged the importance of his work “in particularly difficult circumstances” due to the clashes between the Israeli Army and Hezbollah.

Among other posts and assignments in his 39-year military career, he has served at the Headquarters of the Euro Rapid Operational Force (Florence), the NATO High Readiness Land Headquarters (Valencia), as commanding officer of the 10th Mechanised Brigade ‘Guzmán el Bueno’ and commander of the Mechanised Infantry Regiment ‘La Reina’ (Córdoba).

In addition to his three deployments in Lebanon, where he also led the Eastern Sector, General Lázaro participated on three other occasions in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina under the United Nations (UNPROFOR), NATO (SFOR) and the European Union (EUFOR), respectively.

He was promoted to Major General in 2020 and appointed Army Director for Personnel Support and Social Welfare. His academic background includes courses at the General Staff College, both in Spain and NATO; the Civil-Military Cooperation course; courses on Gender Advisor in Opera-



tions; Recovery and Stabilisation Strategies; and Strategic Leadership in the Global Security Environment; and has participated as a speaker and student in numerous seminars and forums.

He speaks English, French and Italian, and has been awarded various national and international military decorations.

Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro has taken command of Eurocorps after three and a half years leading the UN mission in Lebanon

THE COMMON COMMITTEE

Given the nature of Eurocorps, it is jointly managed by the framework nations and any important decisions are taken by consensus.

The Common Committee is the highest decision-making body for all major matters related to Eurocorps, notably if the latter is made available for an operation. The Eurocorps commander receives his orders directly from the Common Committee, which is made up of the Chiefs of Defence Staff and the Political Directors of

each nation's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Eurocorps is structured according to the standard NATO model. Its Headquarters has the necessary expertise to prepare and conduct land operations in a complex environment. It is made up of three subdivisions, each of them commanded by a general. These subdivisions are made up of all branches needed for operations, ranging from human resources to civil-military cooperation, including planning and conducting operations, intelligence, logistics, and fund management.

In peacetime, the Eurocorps Commander has one main subordinate unit at his disposal, the Multinational Support Brigade, made up of military personnel from the various framework nations. They keep their national uniforms and status; however, they all wear the same dark blue beret and the Eurocorps badge.

Spain contributes by filling the posts advertised in the Official Gazette of the Spanish Ministry of Defence.

Victor Hernández
Photos: MDE