



## **Seventh Annual Meeting of the European Association of Peace Operations Training Centres**

Belgrade, Republic of Serbia,  
16th - 18th April 2019

*“A peacekeeping operation is not an army, or a counter-terrorist force, or a humanitarian agency. It is a tool to create the space for a nationally-owned political solution.”*

**UN Secretary-General António Guterres**

The 7th annual meeting of the European Association of Peace Operations Training Centres (EAPTC), hosted by Conflux Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Mediation, took place in Belgrade from the 16th – 18th of April, 2019.

Special address was delivered by the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Serbia. The program included presentations by keynote speakers from the UN, EU, and the OSCE. There were four panel discussions on specific topics. The hosts of last year's annual conferences of IAPTC and EAPTC briefed about their main conclusions and outcome.

There was a separate session on the role of EAPTC, and an open-ended working group was created to facilitate an exchange of views on this topic. A summary of the discussions held within the working group on the margins of the meeting in Belgrade is distributed separately to the members of the EAPTC to serve as a basis for follow-up discussions.

Cyber Lab was set up alongside the meeting. It showcased various new technologies that can be applied in peacekeeping, from 3-D printers, crypto currencies, virtual reality films, augmented reality films, animated training videos, etc. Participants had access to this section to try and experience the new technologies throughout the meeting.

Ideas Bazaar, which was organized on the first day, provided space for the participants to present their institutions, programs and publications, and to interact with other participants.

\*

\*

\*

The meeting came at a time of unprecedented challenges for peacekeepers, as well as dynamic initiatives to strengthen the performance and facilitate concrete positive results. Peacekeepers face complex conflicts, characterized by multiple adversaries, absence of viable political processes, transnational terrorism and organized crime. They are increasingly deployed in complex and violent operating environments, and confronted by asymmetric and unconventional threats. This does not only have repercussions on the security and safety of peacekeepers, but also on their ability to operate effectively and implement their mandate.

A number of initiatives, such as the UN Secretary-General “Action for Peacekeeping”, the reform of the UN Peace and Security Pillar, as well as regional initiatives, have been launched in order to address these challenges.

The focus of these initiatives is to address primary issues such as:

- Strengthening the relationship between a peacekeeping mission and its host country;
- Improving the capacity to protect civilians;
- Expanding partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations;
- Strengthening leadership, increasing accountability, and addressing shortfalls in performance;
- Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers;
- Taking innovative approaches on training and equipment, including triangular partnerships and co-deployments;
- Strengthening the role of women in peacekeeping;
- Addressing resolutely allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and providing support to victims and seeking justice.

The seventh annual EAPTC meeting focused on several of these topics to act as a platform for discussions on how training development can follow the ever-changing demands in peace operations and help overcome the gap between aspiration and reality. The primary objective was the alignment of training to operational needs and new realities in the field to make peacekeeping more effective and safer, with well-equipped and well-trained forces.

These are the links to various video, photo, audio and written reports on the meeting:

The 7th annual EAPTC meeting video report: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx49HVVe-KQ>

Interviews with some of the participants: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC637K1gPvU-0gXcz9LyvQ3w/featured>

Presentations and other meeting materials: <https://www.confluxcenter.org/presentations-other-meeting-materials/>

Photo Gallery: [https://www.confluxcenter.org/gallery\\_category/eaptc-2019/](https://www.confluxcenter.org/gallery_category/eaptc-2019/)

\*

\*

\*

## Panel 1: Peacekeeping Intelligence

*'We are fully aware of your long-standing limitations in gathering information. The limitations are inherent in the very nature of the United Nations and therefore of any operation conducted by it.'*

**UN Secretary-General U Thant** to the Commander of the UN Operation in the Congo (UNOC), Lt-Gen. Kebede Guebre, in a coded cable on 24 September 1962.

While the use of the term “intelligence” in the UN peacekeeping context was seen as early as 2000 in the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (the “Brahimi Report”), it did not result in an immediate push for its formalization. In the meantime, however, the environments in which peacekeeping missions operated became more complex, and casualties among peacekeepers remained high. It was in this context that the need for intelligence as a peacekeeping enabler became more urgent. Following a number of key developments – the first time that the Security Council explicitly requested a UN peacekeeping mission to utilize intelligence in the implementation of its mandate (S/RES/2227 of 2015), directions indicated in the Secretary-General’s report on the future of United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682), and reference to peacekeeping intelligence in the Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/71/19 of 2017) – in May 2017, the DPKO-DFS Policy on Peacekeeping Intelligence was promulgated.

It was decided that there should be a Panel on Peacekeeping Intelligence since the UN had now developed a policy and Missions would increasingly be asked to implement that policy. The members of the Panel covered a wide spectrum of experience and had varying opinions on the subject, but Meeting participants were enthusiastic about the opportunity to discuss this issue.

After some excellent interventions by the Panel members it was agreed that Peacekeeping Intelligence is a methodology to conduct intelligence that is tailored to the UN peacekeeping context, and is always conducted in a non-clandestine manner. The ultimate objectives of peacekeeping intelligence are to contribute to improving the safety and security of peacekeepers and the protection of civilians, and to enhancing situational awareness.

Intelligence in the United Nations is a contentious subject, and this panel successfully covered all the points at issue under the careful and well-informed guidance of the Department of Peace Operations in New York. While there was clarity on the general UN approach, participants stressed that more concrete direction and training parameters and modules are needed to effectively design and implement training programs.

Његошева 92, 11000 Београд  
Република Србија  
тел/факс: (+381) (0) 63 779 7498;

е-пошта: [office@confluxcenter.org](mailto:office@confluxcenter.org) • нет: [www.confluxcenter.org](http://www.confluxcenter.org)

Njegoseva 92, 11000 Belgrade  
Republic of Serbia  
Tel/Fax: (+381) (0) 63 779 7498;

E-mail: [office@confluxcenter.org](mailto:office@confluxcenter.org) • Web: [www.confluxcenter.org](http://www.confluxcenter.org)

## **Panel 2: Conflict Analysis and Mediation Skills Training for Peacekeepers**

The focus of this session was to stress the need for conflict analysis and mediation skills training for peacekeepers who are engaged locally on a daily basis. They are the first to be called to address communal conflict, and their role is vital in preventing, managing or resolving conflicts at the local and subnational levels.

The nature of warfare has been undergoing profound changes with the growing number of non-state armed actors, brutal waves of organized violence, record long-term displacement, the spread of violent extremism, etc. Many of the contemporary conflicts are so intractable that it is difficult to devise ways to resolve them, or decide on steps to at least mitigate them. They are intertwined with international terrorism and organized crime, and often take a regional or transnational dimension. They are characterized by blatant violations of International Humanitarian, Human Rights and Refugee Laws, with a devastating impact on civilians. Women and children are particularly at a heightened risk in conflict situations, and are the main victims of sexual and gender based violence, exploitation and abuse, human trafficking, forced displacement, etc. All these factors make prevention and mediation more complex and challenging.

The overall conclusion was that the expectations of local populations are high, and peacekeepers need skills to respond to communal conflict in an effective way. While a number of peace operations training centers do provide training on mediation, it is necessary to have more training possibilities designed and structured specifically for peacekeepers who operate daily at local and sub-national levels. To reach a peaceful and lasting resolution, it is no longer sufficient to negotiate a settlement only among political and military leaders. Large segments of these societies, especially women and other vulnerable groups, face challenges in having their voices heard and needs addressed. Inclusive mediation requires paying greater attention to the gender dimensions of conflict, including conflict-related sexual violence and the gendered impact of decisions around post-war reconstruction. It is also essential to encourage and support the participation of young men and women in a peace process. Effective mediation processes must therefore be inclusive and engage actors at the subnational and local levels to address communal conflicts and build peace from the ground up. Local authorities, civil society, traditional and religious leaders all have critical roles to play.

## **Panel 3: Peacekeeping in the digital age: from online training to cyber-attacks**

Digital technologies have penetrated every single aspect of our lives. They are both 'boon and a bane', bringing new opportunities, as well as challenges. Peacekeeping is no different. Opening the panel, the moderator reminded that, even if peacekeepers decide not to use technology, it has a significant impact on peacekeeping – such as that of social media on the relations with local communities, leaked sensitive documents on negotiations, or 3D-printed guns or cryptocurrencies on peacekeeping missions. One panellist offered a more positive example: while ICT can be used to enhance training in peacekeeping missions, it can also serve as an enabler in field operations. He alerted, however, that cyberspace also adds complexity to peacekeeping – what he referred to as 'cyber-peacekeeping' - in

Његошева 92, 11000 Београд  
Република Србија  
тел/факс: (+381) (0) 63 779 7498;

е-пошта: [office@confluxcenter.org](mailto:office@confluxcenter.org) • нет: [www.confluxcenter.org](http://www.confluxcenter.org)

Njegoseva 92, 11000 Belgrade  
Republic of Serbia  
Tel/Fax: (+381) (0) 63 779 7498;

E-mail: [office@confluxcenter.org](mailto:office@confluxcenter.org) • Web: [www.confluxcenter.org](http://www.confluxcenter.org)

particular in relation to understanding the nature and consequences of a contemporary conflict, how international law and instruments apply to cyber-attacks (including the UN Charter), what are the means of control of proliferation of cyber-arms, and how should diplomatic methods for dispute resolution evolve to address cyber-conflict.

## Online learning

Focusing on the online learning as an obvious example of benefits for peacekeepers, some global good practices were presented by several lead institutions in field of online training. One panellist explained that online programmes run by her institution are human-centred and result-based, used to complement face-to-face training of peacekeepers with learning activities ranging from online webinars to self-paced lectures shared on USBs and CDs. They also provide training for trainer online programmes, which are of particular relevance for regional organisations.

A member of the panel presented online learning approach of her organization which is also based on self-paced learning, yet includes a mandatory pre-test for all the participants. Emphasizing the need for continuous innovations, she underlined the importance of interactive engagement pedagogy, and managing the community of trainees, particularly through social media platforms; equally important are technical innovations, such as mobile versions of the training programmes which they are introducing, and blending online and in-situ activities, as well as various platforms for and approaches to online learning.

Another panellist presented “Gaming for Peace” (GAP), funded by the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union, which develops soft skills of peacekeeping personnel through an online role-playing game. GAP allows individuals to run through stories based on testimonies of experienced professionals by bringing their own decisions to a number of practical challenges in a safe environment. GAP can be delivered through an online classroom, with a trainer, or stand-alone after the free download. She stressed the assessment system which is based on behavior and decisions taken during the game, as well as on pre-play and a post-play quizzes, and stored in ‘skills passport’ as a public record. Future developments of GAP may include virtual and augmented reality tools, as well as blockchain certificates.

A different e-learning approach, presented by another member of the panel, focuses on collaborative group-work and bases the learning process on knowledge exchange between experienced lecturers and the group of 15-25 participants. Variety of interaction tools allow exchange of opinions and experiences on weekly readings asynchronously (i.e. whenever participants can devote time), which ensures a high completion rate. According to the panelist, learning methodology matters more than the platform used, and an assessment needs to consider both the quantity and the quality of contributions by the participants.

A quick poll in the room showed that a number of participants had taken online courses, but only a few institutions have actually implemented such programmes. Further discussion crystallised the main advantages of online learning, such as cost-effectiveness and the ability to learn any time without absence from work. Important aspects to be taken into consideration when devising online learning

programmes were also outlined: developing a sustainable business model (blending external funding, free content, tuition, and third-party scholarships), properly targeting the audience (from field operations to leaders), checking on the conditions for learning (connectivity, devices), ensuring interaction, linking learning objectives and activities with current participants' responsibilities, taking into account time-zones and language and cultural specificities, blending online learning with in-situ training where applicable, and planning post-training activities, among other. It was concluded that, in order to enable institutions to run their online programmes, partnership should be encouraged on development of content, learning methodology and platforms.

### **Harnessing emerging technologies**

“Zooming out” to the impact of digital technologies on peacekeeping, security came to forefront of the discussion. One panellist warned that sensitive information has become digital as well, stored in a common network, accessed from various devices around the world (our laptops and mobile devices, and increasingly by the ‘smart’ connected devices like autonomous cars or drones), by users that often have no clearance and lack data security awareness. Most missions do not have staff tasked with data security, but only IT administrators with no skills or mandate for security - often local nationals considered security risks themselves. He pointed that low data security reduces trust, which in turn reduces information exchange, thereby reducing effects of the mission. Without a data security system in place, users will turn to finding own solutions to protect data, such as encrypted messengers like WhatsApp, Signal or Telegram, which may add to an already complex mission. Illustrating the basic levels of the data (in)security problems in missions, a panellist stated that 90% of ICT information security breaches are based on human error, with phishing emails and messages still being the primary point of entry of intruders.

Another member of the panel reflected on a different type of risk, particularly related to how states use the online world to affect democracy and democratic processes – through impacting elections, hindering human rights and access to the Internet, and changing perceptions of conflicts and peace processes.

Another panellist presented a number of positive examples of the use of ICT in field operations. Of particular relevance for PKOs were observer kits loaded with drones, cameras and geo-location devices, smart-city surveillance cameras, and vehicle and personnel tracking devices – all coupled with software solutions that integrate and visualise variety of input data.

The main conclusion of the panel discussion was that developing a data security culture within peacekeeping operations is of utmost importance, along with appointing dedicated data security officers. Discussion also brought in ideas from the CyberLab corner on potentials of emerging technologies for peacekeeping, such as 3D printing for vehicle parts or necessities in refugee camps, augmented and virtual reality for simulations and training, and blockchain for maintaining multiple trusted records of exchange of prisoners.

#### **Panel 4: Mission Leadership Training**

The final session of the EAPTC 2019 explored key challenges to effective leadership in peace operations, and what developments in education and training had recently taken place or were necessary to be developed in order to optimize the effectiveness and impact of present and future UN or regional peace operations. As such, and building on the leadership panel held at the EAPTC 2018 in Geneva, the 2019 EAPTC session on mission leadership training aimed to continue the support for the EAPTC civilian, military and police peace operations training community and centres to strengthen their understanding of current or emerging challenges for preparing leaders at different levels for their missions, be informed of recent policy and practical developments in leadership training, and in the process, enable exchange of information and nurture alignment with the current UN and European leadership training concepts and development, while contributing with their own ideas, work and perspectives on the issues. The panel drew attention to the Action for Peacekeeping and the shared pledge to “collectively commit to ensuring the highest level of peacekeeping performance, and to hold all civilian and uniformed peacekeepers, particularly leadership, accountable for effective performance under common parameters while addressing performance shortfalls.”

The need to strengthen the performance and accountability of leadership at all levels of missions has come to the forefront in recent years. Key evaluations and reports, not least the dos Santos Cruz Report released in 2018, pointed to some critical gaps and shortfalls which called for urgent attention of the international community and all that have a role, responsibility and stake in the selection, preparation and deployment of leaders for and in missions and operations. The panel discussed the implications of the Cruz report and the four areas of prioritization: the mission footprint; accountability; capacity; and, mindset. One of the panelists suggested that the real gamechanger for improved peace operations is indeed the mindset. In the same vein, the UN system leadership framework launched in 2017 had stressed the need for mission leaders to actively defend norms and standards contained in the international treaties, resolutions and declarations adopted under the auspices of the United Nations. Secondly, the requirement for leaders to develop a prevention mindset, requiring better and more sophisticated forecasting, is central at this point.

A panelist observed that it remains a challenge for the training community to ensure that training delivered match the scope and pace of the evolution in mandates and doctrine, the constant rotation of personnel in missions, and the emergence of new threats against peacekeepers and the people they are mandated to protect. The UN speaker further suggested that there are three essential elements of leadership. First, technical competence – knowing the policies, practices, rules and regulations. Second, the ability to build and lead effective teams across professional and national cultures. Third, personal qualities – in particular integrity and resilience – being able to keep going and leading by example. Effective leadership through strong performance at the top of an organization helps to create an overall climate of excellence. It was argued that such effective leadership is critical to enabling the mission in overcoming deficiencies in equipment, tough living conditions, and the extremes of life in field operations.

Његошева 92, 11000 Београд  
Република Србија  
тел/факс: (+381) (0) 63 779 7498;

е-пошта: [office@confluxcenter.org](mailto:office@confluxcenter.org) • нет: [www.confluxcenter.org](http://www.confluxcenter.org)

Njegoseva 92, 11000 Belgrade  
Republic of Serbia  
Tel/Fax: (+381) (0) 63 779 7498;

E-mail: [office@confluxcenter.org](mailto:office@confluxcenter.org) • Web: [www.confluxcenter.org](http://www.confluxcenter.org)

Training requires practice to be properly absorbed, so that missions now run exercises involving all levels of the mission. UN HQ-led stress tests were discussed which assesses the missions' ability to manage crises at the leadership level. It was put forward that scenario-based exercises should not focus on achieving the right solution, but on achieving a sound process. Further, confidential Leadership partnering (mentoring), one on one relationships at the leadership level, has become a new tool in recent years in support of mission leaders, which has proven its worth.

It was observed that one of the main challenges is the lack of support account funding for the required training, hence, the future and predictability of the training is remains unclear. One recommendation for the long-term development of effective mission leaders is for Member States to deploy mid-level officers into staff positions in either military or police components. This will allow them to learn the intricacies of multi-national operations in multicultural contexts and thus strengthen their leadership skills. One panellist raised the importance of training and capacity building, the nurturing and grooming of current and future UN staff itself. She highlighted the importance of thinking long-term and ensuring that training development and capacity building in the future will need to harness the competences, expertise and experience of already employed but junior staff, while also truly implementing a gendered and inclusive approach addressing barriers to engagement of diverse backgrounds and expertise. If the international community do not invest the time, resources, political priority to groom, nurture, foster, support and empower current and future leaders, effective leadership and successful missions will remain an illusion rather than reality, which the international community / Member States have actually and already committed to.

**Leadership training from an EU perspective** and what further developments are required were also explored. Adopted in 2017, the EU Policy on Training for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSDP) made pre-deployment training for all CSDP personnel, including the leadership level, mandatory. The policy established that CSDP training should reflect and promote EU principles and policies through the support for democracy, rule of law, human rights and international law. The strategy highlighted leadership development as one of the key areas that requires special attention and prioritization. In particular, the importance of the Generic Standards of Behavior for the Missions and Operations, including the Heads of Missions, Commanders and Management at all levels was emphasized. To ensure that the implementation of the standards of behavior across the mission, leaders should act as role models and lead by example through upholding the highest standards of conduct, and respect and protect the rights and interests of mission members and the local population.

Further, the adequate resourcing of leadership developments at all levels is critical to the effective implementation of the WPS Agenda. A solid understanding of the positive dividends of greater gender equality and the women peace and security frameworks is critical for the leadership to be proactively gender responsive. The ESDC speaker encouraged EAPTC participating training centers to consider taking the lead or contributing to the coming development of training curricula for leadership / management for CSDP missions and operations. A Training Requirement Analysis (TRA) process would



be launched in the summer of 2019. There was a real and immediate need to develop more leadership training at the EU level in support of both pre- and in mission training for senior mission leaders and middle management. Following the EAPTC 2019, several participating centers came forward to participate in the discussed TRA process, with Germany volunteering to lead the process. The work will be pursued during 2019-2021.

END