



15 YEARS
2020
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The **European Security and Defence College** and its contribution to the **Common Security and Defence Culture**

A 15 year journey



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The European Security and Defence College and its contribution to the **Common Security and Defence Culture**

A 15 year journey

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The document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union



Imprint

Editor: Dr. Ilias Katsagounos

Publication of the European Security and Defence College

Graphic design and layout: Publications Office of the European Union

Manuscript completed in July 2020

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

Print	ISBN 978-92-95201-29-3	doi:10.2855/721679	QW-01-20-212-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-95201-28-6	doi:10.2855/459605	QW-01-20-212-EN-N

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The voice of DG ECHO

Alessandro Mattiato, and Apostolos Nikolaidis

The European Commission Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) is a close partner of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). DG ECHO systematically contributes to the Pre-Deployment Trainings (PDT), the Orientation Courses and Advanced Modular Trainings, as well as other courses that relate to its mandate. Occasionally also DG ECHO engages directly with Member States' Defence Academies and War Colleges.

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DG ECHO and ESDC: a successful partnership for the promotion of humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination.

”

DG ECHO's contribution is focused on presenting and explaining its activities in both the civil protection and humanitarian assistance domains, fleshing out its role as part of the EU Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises⁽³⁰⁾, and focusing in particular on its principled interaction with military and security actors in the framework of Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord).

⁽³⁰⁾ Council Conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises, doc.5413/18, 22 January 2018.



Visual representation of EU's Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) Strategy, ranging from cooperation, coordination and coexistence depending on the context.

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Today's challenges and realities on the ground have brought the military and humanitarian and disaster responders to share the same operating environment.

For example, in contexts like Mali, Somalia and the Central African Republic, the EU deploys a wide range of instruments as part of its Integrated Approach in order to address the needs of the affected population and support the countries' stability, governance and economic development. This EU engagement includes also humanitarian assistance and, currently, 3 EU military Training Missions (EUTMs).

It is therefore crucial that humanitarian and military actors first of all engage in an effective dialogue and interaction, in order to avoid competition, minimise inconsistencies and pursue common goals, when possible. Protecting and promoting humanitarian principles remains fundamental for all EU actors. The degree of civil-military interaction differs depending on the context. In addition, dialogue is built on and strengthened through exercises, trainings and mutual sensitisation.

In this regard, the partnership between the ESDC to DG ECHO has been extremely beneficial and only underlines that Effective Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) is a priority for the EU including in the area of education and training. As a matter of fact, the constant engagement between EU military actors and DG ECHO has led to the adoption by the EU Military Committee (EUMC) on 30 January 2019 of the new EU 'Concept on Effective Civil-Military Coordination in Support of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief' ⁽³¹⁾.

The concept was developed by the EU Military Staff, in close contact with DG ECHO, and operationalises in the EU the UN 'Recommended Practices for Effective Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination' ⁽³²⁾, providing operational guidance to EU Common Security and Defence (CSDP) Mission and Operation Commanders on military support to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.

It aims at increasing mutual understanding between the humanitarian and the military communities, presenting concrete ways to work together in a principled manner. The concept captures also key lessons learnt and best practices from interactions between the EU Military Staff and DG ECHO. In addition, the document highlights several examples of military assets used in support of EU disaster

⁽³¹⁾ Available online at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5536-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

⁽³²⁾ Available online at: <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/180918%20Recommended%20Practices%20in%20Humanitarian%20Civil-Military%20Coordination%20v1.0.pdf>



DG ECHO delivers a presentation on humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination during the international Military Academic Forum in May 2019 in Reichenau (AT).

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relief operations, from the Ebola response in West Africa to the response to hurricanes and cyclones in the Caribbean (through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism).

One of the core elements of the concept is the importance for both humanitarian and military communities to be sensitised on the respect and promotion of the humanitarian principles. Being familiar with the humanitarian way of working and the specific sensitivities deriving from the need for humanitarians to be perceived -at all times- neutral, impartial and independent is the foundation for any humanitarian civil-military interaction and activity, from information sharing and task division to coordinated planning.



EU humanitarian aid being unloaded from a plane.

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The interaction between DG ECHO and the ESDC is specifically mentioned in the concept, highlighting that dedicated trainings with mixed (civilian and military) audiences, including specific lectures by humanitarian actors, are among some of the good practices presented.

Looking at future trends and challenges, this partnership has the potential to make a substantial contribution to a much-needed change in mind-sets towards the inclusion of CMCoord as key element of training curricula for both humanitarian and military actors.

For example, given the possible effects of more frequent and severe weather events due to climate change, EU Member States' armed forces may be also called upon more often to support disaster management and relief efforts, both within and outside the EU. They could assist in case civilian capacities are overwhelmed with logistical and other operational capacities, if or rather when requested by the civilian side.

In this case, effective CMCoord would foster operational effectiveness by helping to pursue the common goal of responding to the disaster. Joint planning could be required, for which –once again– appropriate education and training will be a precondition.

In this regard, the EU civ-mil concept highlights the benefit of humanitarian input for military planning: humanitarians can share their appreciation of the specific crisis for a better operational picture and specific expertise on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination. DG ECHO is involved at all stages and in all planning documents, including in exercises, from the beginning until the final Operation/Mission Plan (OPLAN/MPLAN). This process has resulted, for example, in the inclusion of dedicated modules on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as part of the training that is currently delivered by the 3 EUTMs to local forces in CAR, Mali and Somalia.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) itself is already at the core of military educational programmes and is embedded in the European military culture. In the future, it will be crucial to maintain its central role and to further enhance not only its understanding but also its active promotion at all levels, including in particular through military-to-military training which has proven to be effective, in line with the principle of leading by example. Complementarities with the related work carried out by humanitarian actors (like the ICRC and certain NGOs), is also essential.

In conclusion, if, as mentioned above, the whole idea behind CMCoord is to build bridges between two communities –humanitarians and military– that on the surface seem to think and act differently, the partnership between the ESDC and DG ECHO has been successful



DG ECHO participates in a panel discussion with the Chairman of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) on the security challenges in Europe and opportunities deriving from the EU Global Strategy organised by ESDC, the Hellenic Supreme Joint War College (HSJWC) and University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki

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in creating the conditions for better understanding each other and a solid basis for principled and mutually beneficial interaction.

This level of cooperation, as well as the EU civ-mil concept, have the potential to serve as inspiration for similar national approaches, for example between national military academies in EU Member States and the humanitarian and disaster relief communities.

Future educational programmes could ensure the inclusion of lessons learnt and good practices from the interactions between military and humanitarian actors in operations, joint trainings and exercises. Many good practices can already be identified in each Member State, especially in relation to the use of military assets in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

DG ECHO is very grateful to have been a part of these first 15 years of the ESDC and is strongly committed to continue offering its contribution to the excellent work done by the College, aiming at further strengthening Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination in the EU.