

## **NATO-EU Cooperation - A CBRN Civil-Military Cooperation Experiment**

NATO has several tools, capabilities, and partnerships, such as with the EU, it can use to enhance Allied CBRN defence capabilities. These include Civil Preparedness, a fundamental part of NATO's approach to CBRN defence. Civil Preparedness aims to raise awareness of the CBRN environment, advise NATO Allies and partners on managing the consequences of a CBRN incident, and share best practice.



In addition, NATO's Centres of Excellence (COE) are a successful and enduring model for taking strong multinational solutions forward, thus providing extraordinary benefit for the Alliance. The Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (JCBRN) Defence COE is a forerunner for NATO-EU Cooperation, having established a high level of cooperation with different EU entities. This encompasses particularly activities with the EU Military Training Group (EUMTG), acting as EU Discipline Leader for WMD/CBRN Defence, and close cooperation with European Network of CBRN Training Centres (eNOTICE). Those examples demonstrate the value of good cooperation between NATO and the EU.

CBRN incidents can have affects beyond national borders. Imagine the following Scenario: A chemical incident occurs within a NATO ally's territory, its civilian capabilities are exhausted and it calls on its national military to bolster its civilian authorities. The combined civil-military response is unable to deal with the incident due to a lack of resources or expertise, and the affected nation requests NATO and EU assistance.

### **The Civil-Military Discovery Experiment**

In order to the improve NATO's ability to respond to such an incident, the International Military Staff (IMS) tasked HQ SACT to design and conduct a discovery experiment that would inform the implementation of comprehensive CBRN civil-military capabilities in a large-scale CBRN incident. The JCBRN Defence COE was requested by HQ SACT to facilitate this task.

The experiment included two workshops attended by specialists from NATO, the EU and the CZE Fire Rescue Service. The expert groups examined how the use of existing civilian capabilities can be optimized to support military forces, and vice versa.

The screenshot shows a virtual meeting interface. On the left, a blue vertical banner contains the text "Civil-military cooperation in eNOTICE" and "Priorities and opportunities". To the right, a white text box contains the following text: "CBRN Training Centres act as perfect operational intermediary between all civilian and military CBRN actors, EU relevant bodies and policy-makers, and thus serve as the best cradle for expansion of a CBRN network of professionals in the frame of strengthened **civil-military cooperation**." The eNOTICE logo is in the top right corner. At the bottom, a participant bar shows several icons and names: "+16", "DP", "LG", "ph Nybl", "Alita Cooke", "Jef Peels (Host) (Guest)", "Sebastian Eben", "Blond, Steven Jurg Cdr (SG-DMed...)", and "Brend Alent". The number "7" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide area.

eNOTICE statement from 2<sup>nd</sup> virtual Workshop of the CBRN Civil Military Discovery Experiment.

The workshops showed that, while NATO's CBRN doctrinal background should give a robust foundation to all capability components, it is complex and can be contradictory, especially in the case of Civil Military Interaction (CMI) and CBRN Defence-related content. Nor are there any coherent guidelines supporting military and civilian capabilities. Civilian publications focus on CMI during consequence management, so there is a need to provide information on how civilian capabilities could support the military. However, considering the three pillars of CBRN Defence (prevent, protect, recover) the existence of the first two pillars in civilian publications and procedures supporting CMI was crucial to the success of the discussions.

Moreover, civilian stakeholders from the EU provided valuable information about CBRN training opportunities and upcoming events at a European level. Their involvement enabled the identification of shortfalls in the legal framework, contributed to a better comparison of military and civilian requirements, and shared challenges related to standardization, procurement strategies and legal constraints unique to cross border cooperation. Civilian experts from eNOTICE particularly supported the drafting of recommendations to improve civil-military interaction.



The final experimentation report will be ready in May 2021, when it will be forwarded to NATO HQ IMS as well as the International Staff Political Affairs and Security Policy Division for their review.

### **Context**

The COVID 19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of a civil-military cooperation in a crisis and the potential of contributing role of CBRN defence capabilities. It has further demonstrated the need of two-way civil military interaction and a whole of government approach to support resilience, in cooperation with other relevant actors, including the European Union, as appropriate.

NATO's response to a CBRN mass casualty incident of the type outlined in the scenario is primarily based on the recovery element of the Alliance's CBRN Defence Policy. This describes NATO's preparedness to respond to, and recover from, a CBRN incident in a member state and/or during missions outside of NATO territory. In such an incident, civil-military cooperation will be mutually beneficial in order to enable national resilience and ensure continued support to military operations where CBRN casualties could be sustained and require rehabilitation at home.

Recognizing effective civil-military cooperation as an important element of CBRN preparedness and response, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Feb 2019 agreed "Non-Binding Guidelines for enhanced civil-military cooperation to deal with consequence of large scale CBRN events associated with terrorist attacks". These guidelines ensure a mutual understanding of military and civilian plans and procedures as a baseline for cooperation whilst respecting autonomy in decision-making based on, and supported by, national legislation.

In addition to these guidelines, NATO's Comprehensive CBRN Defence Concept (MC 603) articulates a two-pronged approach to the Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) Action Plan. Firstly, the Concept helps facilitate national preparations for, responses to, and recovery from CBRN incidents through the development of national capabilities. Secondly, it strengthens Alliance capabilities and mechanisms for

supporting nations and enhances national civilian cooperation with the NATO Military Authorities in areas where a joint civil-military response may be required.

## **Conclusion**

CBRN incidents within national borders require a collaborative civil-military response; for successful resolution, a more inclusive approach to the use of military and civilian forces and services is necessary. The discovery experiment highlighted that, while civil and military doctrines and policies facilitate national preparations and responses to CBRN incidents, neither NATO nor civilian publications provide coherent direction on the integration of civil and military capabilities. The involvement of civilian specialists, especially from the EU, identified a number of opportunities, including training, to address these challenges and improve civil-military CBRN cooperation.

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