

**Invitation to the
Course on Comprehensive Protection of Civilians**
(Act. No. 25-26/30/1)

Stadtschlaining, from 10 to 14 November 2025

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence, the Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP) under the aegis of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) have the honour of co-organising the Course on Comprehensive Protection of Civilians, to be held in Stadtschlaining from 10 to 14 November 2025.

International legal frameworks call upon the international community and parties in conflicts to implement far-reaching measures to protect and support civilian populations in situations of armed conflict. The content of this course reflects a broad interpretation of protection, which goes beyond the provision of protection from physical violence but also includes the creation of larger protective environments and the implementation of activities that enhance the rights of individuals in accordance with international humanitarian law, human rights, and refugee law. The five-day course prepares mid- to senior level staff from the armed forces, police, political bodies, and non-governmental organisations, as well as individual civilian experts involved in peacekeeping and/or international crisis management at the operational level for the challenges of protecting civilian populations in contexts of armed conflict or post-conflict situations. They will gain enhanced knowledge of actors, and their roles and responsibilities related to the subject matter and will subsequently be able to analyse the specific threats, needs and rights of different vulnerable groups of civilians to develop and implement context-sensitive, comprehensive, integrated strategies and measures to improve the situation of civilians in armed conflicts. Latest international developments in the subject matter will thereby be considered.

The course was developed in close cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Defence and the Austrian Centre for Peace and has furthermore been supported by the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, the Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Interior. It confirms Austria's continuous effort to promote the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. Since 2014, the course has been part of the academic programme of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) and has furthermore been certified by the Integrated Training Service of the United Nations Department for Peace Operations.

We would be pleased if you could nominate suitable candidates for this training activity, which offers them an excellent opportunity to gain an insight into protection of civilians policies in the international context and CSDP and contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of the course, namely providing Member States and EU institutions with knowledgeable personnel, able to work in CSDP-related fields.

Please find attached details concerning the registration process and a tentative programme.


The course (residential formula) is open to third countries and international organisations.



Mr Bernhard FRANKL
Course Director
Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence



Mr Fergal O REGAN
Head of the European
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Ms Susanne J. GYÖRÖG
Senior Programme Manager
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ESDC Course on Comprehensive Protection of Civilians

10-14 November 2025

Administrative Information

- **Target group:** the course is open to national and international experts and mid- to senior level staff from the armed forces (from the rank of Capt/OF-2 and above) and police (equivalent levels of police officers and above) from EU Member States, relevant institutions and agencies, non-governmental/civilian organisations, and political/civilian administrations working with or in the context of peacekeeping operations in complex emergencies requiring the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations.

- **Application:**

applications from the EU Member States, EU institutions and agencies are to be made via the ESDC secure internet system ENLIST, by designated nominators, under <https://esdc.europa.eu/enlist/login>. A list of relevant ENLIST nominators can be found on the ESDC website at <https://esdc.europa.eu/nominators/>;

Applications from non-EU entities, third countries or candidate countries are to be made using the online application form on the ACP website over this link: [ESDC Course on the Comprehensive Protection of Civilians - ACP](#) and are subject to a selection process by the designated course admission board.

- The total number of participants is limited to 30.
- **Registration & deadline:** the registration period will end on **15 September 2025 COB**. Registration will not be final until confirmed by the ACP. Selected participants will be confirmed by the ACP within two weeks after the set application deadline.
- **Language:** The working language will be English, without translation.
- **eLearning:** The course will be preceded by a mandatory e-learning module, which needs to be finalised before the residential phase starts.
- **Attendance:** the participant's attendance during the course is mandatory on all days. A certificate will be awarded on the last day to those course participants who have completed the full course, including the e-learning module.
- **Course venue:** the venue for the entire course will be a selected hotel in Stadtschlaing, Austria.
- **Costs:** all costs for international travel and accommodation (including breakfast and lunch) are to be covered by the sending authorities or by the participants themselves. There is no fee for participation in the course itself.
- **Travel:** participants are expected to arrive on Sunday, 9 November around mid-day and may depart on 14 November in the evening.

- **Local transportation:** a free-of-charge collective bus transfer from Vienna International Airport (VIE) to the course location and back will be offered by the course host.
- **Hotel:** we have made some pre-reservations including a special package price of approx. 150 EUR per day (full-board accommodation) at the designated course hotel in Stadtschlaining, Austria; **details will be communicated to confirmed participants.**
- **Hosted Events:** on the evening of the first course day (Monday 10 November) there will be an ice breaker and an official networking dinner offered by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence and organised by the Austrian Centre for Peace.
- **Dress code:** civilian attire; smart casual (no jacket or tie required) for regular course days and dinners; formal dress code (jacket and tie, lady's equivalent) for the opening.
- **Liability and insurance:** in the event of a medical emergency, the costs must be covered by the participant's medical insurance provided by the sending country/organisation. The organisers will not provide health or accident insurance for participants taking part in the event.
- **Visa:** Participants needing a visa to enter Austria are advised to book an appointment at the appropriate embassy as soon as they apply to participate. The ACP will issue a supporting letter along with the confirmation of participation. Obtaining a visa in good time and all related costs are the responsibility of the sending entity/the participant.
- **Inclusivity:** the ESDC strives to create a gender-sensitive and inclusive environment in all its courses, activities and day-to-day work. Only in an inclusive environment can all people, and therefore also the ESDC and its partners, achieve their true potential. We do not and will not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation in any of our activities or operations. The ESDC and the training institutions will not tolerate any conduct that violates these values.
- **POCs:**

European Security and Defence College: Ms Maria Grazia ROMANO

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Austrian Centre for Peace: Ms Susanne J. GYÖRÖG

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Tentative Programme Overview

ESDC Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course (also UN certified)

10 to 14 November 2025 in Stadtschlaaining, Austria

Sun, 09 Nov	Mon, 10 Nov	Tue, 11 Nov	Wed, 12 Nov	Thu, 13 Nov	Fri, 14 Nov
Arrival Day	Official Opening Course Introduction	Human Rights and Int. Humanitarian Law Legal Framework of CPOC	Cross-cutting Issues in POC, incl. Child Protection Women Peace and Security Climate Change and Environment	Tools for CPOC Risk and Threat Analysis Implementation	Group Exercise Presentation of Results
	Group Picture				
	Introduction to the Concept of CPOC				11:00 – 11:45 Official Closing Ceremony
	Lunch				
Dinner	Overview of Approaches and Policies of CPOC	Humanitarian Aspects of CPOC	Protection Role of the Police Protection Role of the Military	Final Group Exercise	13:00 Departure
	18:00 Ice Breaker & Welcome Dinner	Dinner			