

**2023**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



**EUROPEAN**

**POOLING & SHARING**

**MOUNTAIN TRAINING INITIATIVE**

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# Preamble

## History

In 2012, the EU Pooling & Sharing Mountain Training Initiative (EU P&S MTI) began to take form when Austria officially took over its lead.

In 2013, a “Food-for-Thought Paper” was developed, and the MTI starting conference was held in Absam, Tyrol, in November 2013. In 2014, two more conferences were held in Austria: one in Saalfelden and one in Salzburg. Overall, 14 nations were participating in these conferences, developing the outline of this initiative as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in order to firmly establish MTI. In addition, the MTI homepage (<https://www.mti.bmlv.gv.at/>), as a cooperation platform, was established, and the drafting of common standards for mountain training took its start.

Finally, on 9 June 2015, the MoU was signed by eight nations (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia) during a ceremony held in Hochfilzen, Austria. Participating nations form the “Planning Committee”, chaired by Austria. They establish the work plan and determine the future development of MTI. Currently, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, and Spain participate in the Planning Committee as MTI “participants”. The NATO MW COE and the NATO COE CWO are “permanent guests. It was agreed that Expert Talks would be held in spring and Annual Conferences with Planning Committee Meetings in autumn.

### MTI Members



## Objectives of these meetings:

- Coordination of the Mountain Training Courses, Military Training Areas (MTA) and Exercises with focus on concentration of existing resources.
- Contribution to the capability development of mountain troops in the EU.
- Prevention (reduction) of duplication by considering existing capacities and initiatives; bilateral cooperation and use of synergies.

## Partners:

All EU-Member States are welcome to join MTI. Countries that have an agreement with the European Defence Agency (EDA) have also the possibility to join MTI.

*“EU-Member States and States that have an Administrative Arrangement with the European Defence Agency (EDA) wishing to join the MTI after this MoU came into effect will notify the Lead Nation. The admission of any new Participant will require a recommendation of the PC. The admission will be signed by the existing Participants and the new Participant and will come into effect on the date of the last signature of the Note of Joining (Annex B). The Lead Nation will notify the admission to the new Participant and to the other Participants in writing.”*

**Contents in general:**

- Understand the need of common training.
- Coordinate the training capacities throughout the participating EU member states.
- Develop and implement a Lessons Identified/Lessons Learned (LI/LL) process.
- Identify requirements for individual and units' capabilities, as well as procedures to increase the interoperability among the European mountain warfare units

All these steps are made to achieve the common goal stated in the MTI MoU, i.e. "to preserve and enhance the capabilities of the EU Mountain Troops, with the long-term perspective to improve the European Union's capability for military operations in mountainous terrain".

HOLZER BG  
Chairman EU P&S MTI

# Activities

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## 1 6<sup>th</sup> EU P&S MTI & NATO MW COE Annual Coordination Meeting

The 6<sup>th</sup> EU P&S MTI & NATO MW COE Annual Coordination Meeting took place from 13 to 14 April 2023 in Graz in Austria. The EU P&S MTI and NATO MW COE have maintained a good cooperation over the past years. The NATO MW COE and the EU P&S MTI share the same set of values, which are closely related to mountain warfare.



Based on the internationally expressed need to enhance mountain warfare capabilities, both organizations have set cooperation ties in the past, basically through NATO MW COE staff participating in periodical EU P&S MTI events, as well through the already established annual coordination meetings. Both institutions presented their programmes of work for the year 2024 and possible fields of cooperation. The possibility of sharing training resources should be intensified.

## 2 2023 Expert Talks

The 2023 Expert Talks took place from 2 to 4 May 2023 at the Croatian Military Academy “Dr. Franjo Tuđman” in Zagreb in Croatia. Representatives of ten participating nations (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden), the NATO MW COE as Permanent Guest and of the initiative’s Guests, Italy and Romania took part in the conference.



### 2.1 Syndicates

#### 2.1.1 Needs & Offers (N&O)

Within the framework of N&O, positive approvals were obtained in the various subjects (Competitions/Trainings/Exercises etc.). It was acknowledged that the MTI community has the need to support each other by sending instructors to international qualified mountain trainings, to more effectively increase the number of qualified soldiers.

Due to a new planning process within the Austrian Armed Forces, it was necessary to receive the requests for Austrian Mountain Training Areas from the MTI-Participants for the year 2024 during the Expert Talks.

#### 2.1.2 Capability Development (CapDev)

The Syndicate Capability Development was working on the “Allocation Chart” in regards to new courses, changes of courses or course cancellations offered to/by MTI-Members.

The main part of the syndicate work was on the new topic “Mountain Cell”. The nations were requested in advance to prepare as following:

- Analyses of ATrainP6 and ATP 3.2.1.3
- Assessment:
  - Necessity of a Mountain Cell
  - Possible Training requirements



Nations' representatives came up with their presentations and many fruitful discussions arose.

A draft version of the document "Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment" was presented by the syndicate leader COL RODEWALD and was published on the MTI-Homepage.

As the syndicate work according to this topic has not been finished during the Expert Talks, there was the need to continue during the Annual Conference 2023 and finalize it during the Expert Talks 2024.

### **2.1.3 Lessons Identified/Lessons Learned (LI/LL)**

A discussion was held on further development of LI/LL-process within P&S MTI. Nations shall be requested to provide "recommendations for exercise planning and training" as an outcome from national exercises and national training instead of providing "Lessons Identified" that are widely assessed confidential and are therefore not shared with other nations or within the initiative. Further, a format for such "recommendations" has to be developed.

The format presented by CPT CUDALBU from the NATO MW COE to collect observations as his preparation for the CC23 could serve as an example.

It was noted that the decision to participate with Lessons Learned personnel from MTI in multinational exercises is still valid.

Furthermore, the observations from the recently conducted exercise COMMON CHALLENGE 2023 were presented by means of a draft of the first impression report and a presentation held by the NATO MW COE representative and discussed within the syndicate.

All presentations of the 2023 Expert Talks are available on the P&S MTI website (<https://www.mti.bmlv.gv.at/conferences>) in the area of the respective conference.

### 3 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Committee Meeting & 2023 Annual Conference

The EU P&S MTI 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Committee Meeting (PCM) & 2023 Annual Conference took place from 17 to 20 October 2023 at the Commando Training Centre in Marche Les Dames in Belgium. Representatives of nine participating nations (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech



Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Spain), the NATO MW COE as Permanent Guest and the initiative's Guests, Italy and Romania, took part in the conference. The PC was held as part of the conference and the Syndicates Needs & Offers and Capability Development worked in their respective specialist areas of interest.

#### 3.1 Planning Committee Meeting

The 9<sup>th</sup> PCM took place on 18 October 2023. Nine out of twelve participating nations were represented at the meeting

The following topics were on the agenda:

- Roll-Call and establish the quorum
- Summary results 8<sup>th</sup> PCM
- Annual Report 2022
- Results Syndicates
- P&S MTI Exercise Series
- Programme of Work 2024 and following
- Development of the Initiative
- Miscellaneous

#### 3.2 Annual Conference

##### 3.2.1 Needs & Offers

Needs & Offers was first worked through in plenary sessions and then in bilateral talks. Based on the results of the 2023 Expert Talks, the final coordination for 2024 was carried out.



### 3.2.2 Capability Development

The main topic of the Syndicate Capability Development was the evaluation of the draft document “Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment”

The following was determined:

- Wording has to be adapted, abbreviations,...
- Improvement of readability
- Implementation of NATO standards documents (e.g. KOCO A, matrix, temperature scale, wind-chill-table...)
- Organization of the Mountain Cell adapted to nations’ needs

The following Way Ahead was determined:

- The final draft „ Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment” to be distributed NLT end of February 2024
- Annotations of nations NLT end of March 2024. Silent procedure will be in place.
- Final post-processing - if necessary - and annotations from nations in the course of the Expert Talks, before handover to the NATO MW COE.
- Handover to NATO MW COE during 2024 Expert Talks.
- Production of a P&S MTI / Non NATO Paper „Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment” by P&S MTI and the NATO MW COE.
- Implementation of the respective parts in the ATrainP-6 (MOUNTAIN WARFARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING) and ATP-3.2.1.3 (CONDUCT OF LAND TACTICAL OPERATIONS IN MOUNTAINOUS ENVIRONMENT) during their revision.

All presentations of the 2023 Annual Conference are available on the P&S MTI website (<https://www.mti.bmlv.gv.at/conferences>) in the area of the respective conference.

## 4 Exercises

No exercises were conducted under the auspices of the EU P&S MTI nor was any national exercise offered by MTI-partners to be participated by its participants.

## 5 Programme of Work for 2024

- 2024 Expert Talks
  - Host: NATO MW COE in SVN
  - Date: 15-19 April 2024
  - Location: Poljce and Bled/Slovenia
- 10<sup>th</sup> PCM & 2024 Annual Conference
  - Host: France
  - Date: 14-17 October 2024
  - Location: Grenoble/France

- Rhodope 2024
  - Date: 18-29 March 2024
  - Location: SMOLYAN BGR
  - MPC: 31 October-01 November 2023 Sofia
  - FCC: 23-25 January 2024
  
- Alpine Defense 2024
  - Date: 16-27 September 2024
  - Location: MTA Hochfilzen AUT
  - MPC: APR 2024
  - FCC: JUL 2024