

# 2016/2/2: The Mission Control Centre of the Bundeswehr

## The Mission Control Centre of the Bundeswehr

**Wolfgang Spalj**

The Mission Control Centre of the Bundeswehr in Geltow near Potsdam is the operational centre of all international missions of the Bundeswehr. Since 2002 a liaison officer of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports has been sent out to this centre which was established in 2001. Since this point of time the function of the so-called "senior planning officer/Potsdam" has been continuously fulfilled by a general staff officer, "who, in the course of his activities, keeps close contact to those positions in the Centre which are of essential importance for the national Austrian mission control. Furthermore, there is the general task of information acquisition." From the bilateral agreement about the delegation of liaison officers between Federal Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports of the Republic of Austria one can quote the task formulation of the Austrian liaison officer, which reads: "The task of the liaison officer is the consolidation of the bilateral cooperation between the Austrian Armed Forces and the German Bundeswehr. His concern is to establish and maintain a steady exchange of information. Thus, he coordinates the requirements of information between the offices of the hosting party and the offices of the delegating party concerning all issues of bilateral cooperation. In addition the liaison officer is supposed to get insights into the fundamental structures and the principles of command and control as well as of military actions. He also has to give an insight into the correspondent principles of the delegating party. The object is fostering a close cooperation between Austrian Armed Forces and the Bundeswehr, so that both armed forces together benefit of the experiences, specialist knowledge and principles of command and control of both armed forces."

The tasks of the Austrian liaison officer at the Mission Control Centre of the Bundeswehr can be summarised as follows:

- coordination/consolidation of the bilateral cooperation concerning combined missions abroad,
- support of command and control of German missions abroad with contributions to situation assessments,
- bundling/alignment of specialist/training inquiries from missions abroad by AustriatoGermanyand vice versa,
- information of the FMD/subordinates concerning Austrian plannings of missions abroad and military structures in the EU and vice versa,
- coordination and consolidation of bilateral cooperation in the areas mentioned above, and
- information/consultation of the FMD/subordinates concerning all issues of missions abroad and military developments inAustria.

The current structure of the Mission Control Centre of the Bundeswehr is stringently adapted to the requirements of missions and was persistently implemented in the course of the re-alignment of the Bundeswehr. The delegation of a liaison officer by the FMDS which has been taking place for 10 years by now has stood the test and ensures the direct link and information exchange with the operational command of the Bundeswehr and the relevant offices of the FMD with reference to the bilateral organisation of combined missions. Additionally, information gathered by the liaison officer will facilitate an early national assessment of a possible bilateral cooperation if new missions are considered possible.

