

For the short version of this [discipline](#) .

**The next big challenge for ACT will be, at the end of 2012, to assume the management role of all NATO education & training activities. Embracing a holistic approach will prove to be beneficial to Nations and individuals and matches with the present priorities of the Nations.**

### **Holistic Approach to Education and Training**

December 2012 will mark a major milestone when Allied Command Transformation (ACT) officially assumes full responsibility for the management of NATO training exercises. For the first time, all of NATO's Education and Training (E&T) needs will be directed by one entity – ACT's Joint Force Trainer (JFT). This will enable ACT to provide a holistic approach to the planning and execution of all individual and collective E&T activities (be it e-Learning, Immersive Learning, Resident Courses, Key Leader Training or Exercises), and will span the spectrum of strategic, operational, and tactical training. While this new arrangement will allow Allied Command Operations (ACO) to be fully focused on operations, ACO, as the end user, will continue to help shape NATO training by defining training requirements and evaluating the trained units and personnel.

In his 4 February speech in Munich, Germany, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said, *"We need to see how we can get even more value out of them [the education facilities], and perhaps also open up the extensive range of national facilities."*

### **Identifying the Strengths and Gaps in Educational Infrastructure**

ACT strives to coordinate the efforts of all NATO Educational Training Facilities (NETFs), Centres of Excellence (COEs) and Partnership Training and Education Centers (PTECs) that are involved in E&T. This coordination may also encompass national facilities where Nations choose to offer education opportunities to other NATO Nations or partners. Such a coordinated network of E&T institutions requires the use of common, accepted standards; JFT has therefore agreed to align NATO E&T with international industry standards. To ensure interoperability between E&T institutions and maximum use of shared resources, NATO has adopted the [SCORM](#) industry standard. This is also undergoing approval to become a NATO STANAG to ensure NATO and nations are compatible. By adopting academic and industry standards NATO can work with NATO and partner nations using the latest technology to support the Education,

Training and Exercise requirements.

To identify strengths and gaps in NATO's educational infrastructure will require all available resources. ACT/JFT's role will be to introduce standards and structures to ensure that NATO's E&T requirements are met. This system will only succeed with the full backing and support of the Nations.

The structuring of the NATO E&T system has already started to take shape with assignment of the Civil-Military Co-operation Centre of Excellence (CIMIC COE) in Enschede, Netherlands as the Department Head (DH) for NATO CIMIC E&T. The DH translates the operational requirements into E&T objectives within a subject. The DH recommends program changes to ACT/JFT and the requirement authority, and ensures that courses and curricula are within NATO requirements and agreed standards.

### WWW – e-NATO: A Rational World



A new e-Learning concept was issued in November 2011. Better use of e-Learning and immersive learning opportunities will provide more attractive education and training options that will complement existing resident courses. On-line training will be used where necessary as a prerequisite to ensure collective training and exercise audiences meet required minimum standards of knowledge appropriate to the course or training event. E-Learning can also assist in better preparing NATO Staff Officers so they will be ready on arrival in their new NATO positions.

As [Lieutenant General Karlheinz Viereck](#) has said, "e-NATO will be the on-ramp to the NATO E&T highway. The Individual Training and Education Programme (ITEP) will combine job descriptions and E&T opportunities to assist individuals with training requirements customised to their level of knowledge, job description and scope of responsibility." The ITEP will be available online beginning in September 2012, and will initially be populated with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) data, Partner Requirements and will include the embedded Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue (ETOC). By September of 2013 the electronic version, the e-ITEP will incorporate all Crisis Establishment (CE) and new Peacetime Establishment (PE) data.

### Exercises to Replace Reality

As current NATO operations wind down, there will be a need to replace real-world experience with increasingly realistic exercises that retain the extensive corporate knowledge gained from over a decade of combat operations in order to ensure that our forces and command structure remain combat ready for future operations. Since nations' defence spending is not likely to increase, we will have to spend smarter to support future exercises. The JFT team must ensure that collective training and exercises remain focused on the requirements of the target audience, in the most cost-effective manner. One way this can be achieved is by leveraging national training events by either turning them into multi-national exercises or combining them with NATO led events wherever possible. Exercises in the future will re-focus on the NATO Response Force and place new emphasis on incorporating the requirements of the NATO Force Structure to meet future challenges in an evolving international environment.

### Much to Do with Smart Defence and Connected Forces

The ongoing E&T efforts are truly a practical application of Smart Defence, which promotes the alignment of collective and national priorities. Through multinational cooperation, nations can have access to capabilities they could not afford independently, achieve economies of scale, and improve interoperability. The new E&T landscape will not only contribute to, but will even be an essential requisite for the Secretary General's Connected Forces Initiative. A holistic approach to ensure that all operational and strategic E&T requirements are met must be the goal. With the economic realities facing the Alliance in this time of austerity, coordination of all resources to fill gaps and prevent duplication of effort is the only way forward. Already taking on that role of coordinating E&T landscape, ACT will be proud to prove itself worthy of the Allied Nations confidence. [Back to Cover](#) [Next Article](#)