

SMPC 2012 in Zagreb builds on progress made at Chicago Summit - ACT

Written by ACT PAO

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55 nations gather together to discuss partnerships and the way ahead

One month after the Chicago Summit, NATO allies and partners met in Zagreb, Croatia for an exchange of views at the 2012 Strategic Military Partnership Conference (SMPC) from June 18-20.

Military representatives from fifty-five nations discussed "Current and Future Challenges." The SMPC is a keystone event to share both NATO nations' and partners' diverse experiences and exchange thoughts and ideas. The Chicago Summit reinforced NATO Partnership policy and the adoption of initiatives such as Connected Forces and Smart Defence has provided additional tools to deepen and make the most of increased opportunities for engaging partners.



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"The stars are favorably aligned. Allies and partners are indeed united today by the nature of the common strategic challenges we are all facing – from cyber-threats to terrorism; by our common concern with making the most of the resources we dedicate to defence and by the great strides we have made together in operation," declared General Stéphane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) to open the conference.

A key benefit of this venue was the diversity of views from numerous partnership nations that came from all over the world including South America, North Africa, the South Pacific and East Asia. These nations are members of NATO's multiple partnership for peace programs including: Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and others partners.

The SMPC 2012 edition was hosted by Croatia, one of the new members of NATO since 2009. During an informal opening ceremony, General Abrial presented Croatian President Ivo Josipovic with the first Croatian flag that flew in front of ACT HQ in Norfolk on the first days of Croatia's accession to NATO in 2009. This gift was a symbol of Croatia's contributions to the Alliance before and since its accession, and most particularly its steadfast support for transformation and partnerships.



After opening statements, the allies and partners got down to business with discussion of three strategic issues: Implications of the Chicago Summit for NATO nations; Partners Stability and security in the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf Region; Connected Forces Initiative: Education, Training, Exercises and Technology.

After the plenary session, allies and partners reconvened into smaller syndicate groups to foster closer dialogue and highly valued partner. The next 2013 SMPC edition will be hosted by

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Sweden.