

European Defence Agency (EDA) Exercises and Training, Tactics and Initiatives



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Summary: The EDA is expanding its role in developing how EU forces tactically operate. A prominent example has been over aviation (the Helicopter Exercise Programme [HEP], the Helicopter Tactics Course [HTC] Programme, and the Helicopter Tactics Instructors Course [HTIC] Programme); this has generated 13 multinational helicopter exercises, involving 289 helicopters, 2,000 crewmembers and 12,000 military personnel. Other examples cover Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Counter-Improved Explosive Devices (IED).

At stake: This should be a NATO function.

What they say: “we have consolidated the role of the agency as the main hub for defence cooperation and for improving interoperability, also for training and exercises” - Jorge Domecq, outgoing EDA Chief Executive.

Exposure: Unclear. For example on aviation, RAF Linton-on-Ouse is known to have hosted the EDA’s Composite Air Operations (COMAO) planning course in 2017, after the referendum. The UK is still listed as participating in the Helicopter Initiative. It does not seem to have signed up to the new EU Multinational Helicopter Training Centre (MHTC) which will take over management of these functions.

Action: UK to avoid participation in training that risks replicating NATO.

Deep dive: <https://euro-sd.com/2020/04/news/16832/eda-annual-report/>