



# Background

Despite the existence of well-established international legal frameworks regulating the conduct of war, deliberate and targeted attacks on civilians have increasingly become an instrument of modern warfare and — depending on the context — up to 90% of conflict related deaths are civilians.

With this challenging background, specific and continuous efforts are requested from international and national actors in crisis management, which has been taken up by the UN Security Council Resolution 1894 on the Protection of Civilians in 2009.

Since its adoption, Austria has committed itself to particularly supporting the implementation of Protection of Civilians (PoC) in Armed Conflict agendas and mandates and together with the Ministry of Defence, the Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP) has been a key partner in these efforts.

A comprehensive training course on POC was developed with the support of and in partnership with several Austrian Ministries (Foreign Affairs, Interior) and a number of international partners, among the ESDC and UN DPO.

The resulting course has been certified by the European Security and Defence College and is part of its academic programme since 2012.

It furthermore has been validated with a UN Certification by the Integrated Training Service of the Department for Peace Operations since 2014.

Aside from both the EU and the UN approaches to Protection of Civilians, the course also includes the NATO perspective and the ICRC's Mandate and Role, international legal frameworks and a broad spectrum of the comprehensive protection aspects for civilians in conflicts and complex emergencies.

# What to expect?

## **CPOC Course 2026: Focus on Hybrid Threats, Urban Conflict Settings and EWIPA, Climate and Security**

In view of the recent developments regarding increasing challenges to protect civilians in conflicts, the course has been updated accordingly in the course of 2025 so as to include additional crosscutting topics, namely climate and security, hybrid threats and provides particular focus on current conflict contexts, for example urban settings.

It is open for civilian, police and military experts active in international crisis management as well as missions and operations. It follows the inherent principles of the mentioned and recent policy documents, thus including the integrated approach while highlighting the different roles as well as shared responsibilities of civilian, police and military actors addressing POC tasks, which are reflected in the scenario exercise as well.

The scenario exercise is set in a complex environment and portrays various contexts (e.g. urban and rural settings, situations in developing countries, various stages of conflicts etc.), while remaining entirely fictional. However, it is inspired by the dynamics of current conflicts to ensure the widest possible relevance.

The trainer team is led by the Austrian MoD and ACP experts and includes international subject matter experts with civilian, police and military background, reflecting the multidimensional approach in the POC Policy.

The overall course objective is to enable graduates to improve their understanding of the various mandates of operating actors in protection of civilians, identify options for coordinated and joint actions and measures for a more effective protection of civilians in conflict zones.

# How to apply?

## **EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE:**

The course targets mid to senior level experts of

- armed forces (from rank of Major/OF-3 and above),
- police (equivalent senior police officers and above),
- public/civilian administration (P3 level or equivalent and above), and
- non-governmental institutions, including civil society organizations (mid to senior level management positions)

who are working with or in the context of missions and operations, or in complex emergencies requiring the protection of civilians.

## **REGISTRATION DEADLINE**

**03 MAY 2026**

Registrations from the EU Member States and EU institutions and agencies are to be made via the ESDC secure internet system ENLIST, by designated nominators, under <https://esdc.europa.eu/enlist/login>. A list of relevant ENLIST nominators can be retrieved from the ESDC website at <https://esdc.europa.eu/nominators/>.

Non-EU applicants can apply on the online application form by Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP)

<https://www.aspr.ac.at/en/education-training/training-programmes/esdc/esdc-course-on-the-comprehensive-protection-of-civilians#/>

The course can accept up to 30 participants.