

Invitation to the ESDC course

***Modern leadership in the context of
the law of armed conflict and open-source intelligence***

(Activity n. 25-26/78/1)

13-17 October 2025, Thessaloniki, Greece

The Hellenic Army War College (HAWC) and the Cyprus Security and Defence Academy (CSDA), under the aegis of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), are pleased to host the course '**Modern leadership in the context of the law of armed conflict and open-source intelligence**', from 13 to 17 October 2025, in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The course aims to help participants reach their full leadership potential in the context of armed conflict. Furthermore, the course aims to educate participants on the key elements of the law of armed conflict (LOAC) and the impact of open-source intelligence (OSINT) in decision-making. In addition, the course will provide participants with opportunities for networking and mindful discussion with peers and experts. The three basic modules on which the course focuses are leadership, LOAC and OSINT.

Subject matter experts and qualified tutors will guide participants through the course material, through lecturing, mentoring and discussion. All participants will also have the opportunity to work in groups and put their new knowledge into practice, in workshops and a crisis management scenario.

The course is open to mid/senior-ranking military/law enforcement officers and civilian staff, from various levels of governmental institutions (defence, foreign affairs, interior, etc.) of Member States, EU structures and third countries.

Personnel involved in planning or conducting military operations and personnel deployed or expected to be deployed in civilian/military CSDP missions/operations are also welcome to attend.



Brig. Gen. Dimitrios Xogiannis
Commandant of the HAWC



Fergal O'Regan
Acting Head of the ESDC



Col. Symeon ZAMBAS
Director of CSDA

Administrative information

Target audience: the course is open to both civilian and military personnel from EU Member States, EU institutions and agencies, Third Countries, Candidate countries and International Organisations.

Places and nominations: around 40 places will be available to international participants. Typically, one or two places are allocated to each EU Member State, but depending on the total number of requests, one additional place may be offered. The course welcomes participants from Third Countries, Candidate countries and International Organizations, based on the availability of seats. Our objective is to put together a group that is balanced in terms of gender and professional background.

Applications:

Applications from EU Member States are to be submitted via the ESDC secure internet system ENLIST, by designated nominators, at <https://esdc.europa.eu/enlist/login> no later than **12 September 2025**. A list of ENLIST nominators can be found on the ESDC website at <https://esdc.europa.eu/nominators/>. Registration will not be final until confirmed by the ESDC Secretariat, upon completion of the requested personal data in ENLIST by the confirmed participants.

Applications from third countries and international organisations should be sent to the ESDC training manager, Maria Grazia Romano, at maria-grazia.romano@eeas.europa.eu by the institution/organisation that receives this invitation. The application must include the following details: the full name of the candidate, personal e-mail address (functional mailboxes will not be accepted), sending institution, nationality, date of birth, passport number and its validity.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory on all days of the course. Participants will receive an ESDC certificate on the last day only if they have completed the entire course.

Inclusivity: The ESDC strives to create a gender-sensitive and inclusive environment in all its courses, activities and day-to-day work. Only in an inclusive environment can all people, and therefore also the ESDC and its partners, reach their true potential. We do not and will not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation in any of our activities or operations. The ESDC and the training institutions will not tolerate any conduct that violates these values.

Language: The course will be conducted in English, without translation.

E-learning: The course is preceded by a mandatory e-learning module which course participants will have to complete before the residential session starts (**13 October 2025**). Connection details will be provided in good time to all registered participants.

Residential part of the course: this part of the course will take place from 13 to 17 October 2025 (Monday 09:00 to Fri 13:00 hrs) in Hellenic Army War College, Thessaloniki, Greece (<https://spsx.army.gr/en/archiki-english/>)

Costs: no tuition fee is applied. Sending authorities must cover all costs for travel, accommodation and meals (including breakfast) for participants.

Dress code: for all course events is smart/business casual.

Liabilities and insurance: in the event of a medical emergency, participants' medical insurance, provided by the sending country/organisation must cover all costs. The organiser does not provide health or accident insurance for course participants.

Additional info: an official dinner will take place on Thursday 16 October. Participants will receive further detailed information about the course in good time.

Please do not book accommodation and travel before receiving the confirmation message from the ESDC Secretariat.

Summary of course topics

Module	Lecture
Module 1 Law of armed conflict	Law of armed conflict - legal challenges in current conflict areas
	Rules of engagement (ROE) and operationalising the law
	International criminal justice; command responsibility and criminal liability; legal challenges
Module 2 OSINT	Information management (IM)
	Role of social media in hybrid strategies
	Information as a means of lawfare
	OSINT in the era of disinformation and fake news
	Workshop on assessing the reliability of OSINT: a validity analysis in military targeting
Module 3 Modern leadership	The model leader in the digital era
	Soft skills of military commanders in information operations
	Modern leadership in practice
	Modern leadership workshop
Workshop	Tabletop exercise on decision-making
Post-action review - graduation	Draft conclusions and final presentations from working groups
	Lecturers' feedback and summary