

For Immediate Release

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NATO Standardisation Agency (NSA) and GS1 Sign Technical Co-operation Agreement

The Director of the NATO Standardisation Agency (NSA), Brigadier General Julian Maj, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of GS1, Miguel A. Lopera, signed today a Technical Co-operation Agreement (TCA) between their organisations at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

Over the last few years, a number of GS1 Standards have been included within NATO Standards Agreements (STANAG) and Ministries of Defence have initiated a number of enhancements to GS1 Standards on NATO's behalf. The agreement broadens the co-operation between the NSA and GS1 in the fields of supply chain standards and technologies. It formally enables direct contributions by the NSA to the establishment of relevant GS1 standards. On an equal basis, the agreement formally enables GS1 to contribute to the standardisation activities of the NATO standardisation community.

The NSA is an independent agency responsible for administering NATO STANAGs and activities conducted under the authority of the NATO Committee for Standardisation (NCS). GS1 is a leading global organisation dedicated to the design and implementation of global business standards.

The terms of the TCA include direct participation in relevant working groups of both standardisation organisations, written contributions on proposed draft specifications and standards, and the exchange of experts, documents and information. Furthermore, GS1 is granted access to NSA working groups dedicated to the concentration of civilian and military standardisation work.

The importance of the agreement: greater interoperability between NATO forces and services

Following the review of the NATO Standardisation Process, the NSA has been tasked to address much broader standardisation issues, such as identifying overall Alliance standardisation goals, co-ordination between operational and material standardisation activities, and implementation of a

new standardisation policy, which aims to ensure a maximum practicable use of civil standards within all NATO standardisation activities.

Accordingly, the responsibilities of NATO's standardisation organisation have been expanded in order to co-ordinate all standardisation activities within NATO and following the approval by the North Atlantic Council in Spring 2004, also outside of NATO, with civil standards organisations on a national, regional and international level.

In this respect, in the field of supply chain standards, the further alignment with GS1 will have an important influence on the smooth attribution and distribution of all functional goods and services a military unit requires in civil actions, from basic materials such as pens and paper, to food and beverage supplies, uniforms and blankets, technical material and tool kits, and all assets such as trucks, kegs and containers.

The co-operation between the NSA and GS1 is expected to substantially improve and facilitate supply chain processes and procedures, especially in crisis situations, including situations of civil emergency relief or natural disasters, where a smooth operational exchange of equipment and supplies between the military and civilian sides, engaged in close co-operation, is more crucial than ever.

Quotes from the signing ceremony

Miguel A. Lopera, President and Chief Executive Officer of GS1 said: "This agreement is of paramount importance because of its worldwide scope. Furthermore, the global NATO-GS1 partnership opens the door for all GS1 member organisations to engage their local Governments and Ministries of Defence to facilitate international cooperation. Based on global standards, the improved interoperability at international level between various military services and their civilian counterparts and contractors will make it easier to accomplish common missions and tasks at strategic, operational and tactical levels. We are very pleased to be able to contribute to this important mission."

Brigadier General Julian Maj, Director of the NATO Standardisation Agency added that: "By not reinventing the wheel with regard to standardisation, we will obtain a significant costs saving for all NATO processes and procedures. Moreover, combining our know-how on military standards with GS1's experience in civilian standards will lead to a better maintenance and development of global standardisation throughout various sectors and will ensure that the standards are constantly being updated and remain relevant."

Who's who: NATO Standardisation Agency (NSA) and GS1 in close-up

NSA is an independent NATO Agency having the scope of initiating, co-ordinating, supporting and administering Standardisation Agreements (STANAGs) and activities conducted under the authority of the NATO Committee for Standardisation (NCS). The NSA is also the NATO Military Committee's (MC) lead agent for the development, coordination and assessment of operational standardization. Furthermore, NSA promotes the development and implementation of concepts, doctrines, procedures and designs to achieve and maintain the required levels of compatibility, interchangeability or commonality in the operational, procedural, material, technical and administrative fields to attain interoperability forces within the whole NATO framework. This includes the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue and missions not covered by the application of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

GS1 is a leading global organisation dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards and solutions to improve the efficiency and visibility of the supply and demand chains globally and across sectors. GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit standards and services organization. It has 101 Member Organisations driven by a membership of more than a million companies who in turn do business in more than 140 countries. GS1 offers a diverse portfolio of products, solutions and services, including the GS1 System of standards, which is the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world. GS1's portfolio ranges from GS1 BarCodes to GS1 eCom (electronic commerce tools) to next generation technologies and solutions such as GS1 GDSN (Data Synchronisation), GS1 EPCglobal (using RFID technologies) and Traceability. GS1 also provides solutions such as traceability and has more than 20 represented sectors ranging from food, beverage and consumer goods to healthcare, transport and logistics.

For more information, please contact:

GS1

Anastasia Michalowski–Jewitt
Project Manager
+32 (0)2 788 78 00
anastasia.michalowski@gs1.org

NSA

Claudia Urbanovsky
Civil Standards Coordinator
nsa_civstand@hq.nato.int