

## **NATO COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP CHANGE OF COMMAND**

**MONS, Belgium** – Major General Frank Schlösser relinquished command of the NATO CIS Group (NCISG) to Major General Jürgen Brötz on Friday, 19 April, 2024 during a ceremony presided over by Admiral Sir Keith Blount, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR).

The Change of Command ceremony at NATO CIS Group is a formal military tradition that marks the transition of leadership from one commanding officer to another. This ceremony is significant as it symbolizes continuity of command, reflects the unit's heritage and traditions, and reaffirms the authority and responsibility of the incoming commander.

The ceremony began with the formation of troops consisting of NCISG personnel, representatives from NATO member nations, dignitaries and invited guests.



NCISG personnel during the Change of Command ceremony, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium



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Distinguished guests, including Lieutenant General Hubert Cottereau, SHAPE VCOS; Major General Raimundo Roca; SHAPE DCOS Support; Major General Gunnstein Bruasdal, SHAPE DCOS PD; Major General Hans Folmer, NCIA COS and former NCISG DCOM/COS, Major General John Phillips USEUCOM J-6, and other senior military officials, government representatives, and foreign diplomats were formally welcomed upon their arrival at the ceremony venue.

One of the central moments of the Change of Command ceremony was the passing of the unit colors, which symbolizes the transfer of command authority from the outgoing Commander, Major General Frank Schlösser to the incoming Commander, Major General Jürgen Brötz. The colors, representing the unit's history, achievements, and traditions, were carefully transferred in a ceremonial manner.





Major General Frank Schlösser, outgoing NCISG Commander passed the unit colors to Admiral Sir Keith Blount, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.



Admiral Sir Keith Blount, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) passed the unit colors to Major General Jürgen Brötz, incoming NCISG Commander, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

Admiral Sir Keith Blount, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), on behalf of SACEUR, officially started the Change of Command ceremony. In his speech, he underlined the fact that Major General Schlösser initiated and conducted Exercise COBALT CLOUD 23 as the first NCISG overlapping deployment and readiness exercise to achieve force posture for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic-Area (DDA). DSACEUR mentioned also that during Major General Schlösser's time as Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS) Cyberspace, the Alliance tackled the biggest cyber-incident known so far. Admiral Sir Keith Blount said:

'I appreciate his outstanding performance in the function of Commander NCISG while balancing and accommodating his triple hatted functions in SHAPE as DCOS Cyberspace and as Chair of the Federated Mission Networking.





Admiral Sir Keith Blount, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), Change of Command ceremony at NCISG, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

Both the outgoing and incoming Commanders delivered remarks during the ceremony. The outgoing Commander, Major General Frank Schlösser reflected on his tenure, expressed gratitude to the unit members, and offered words of advice to the incoming Commander. Major General Schlösser said:

'I am extremely happy having had the chance to be the Commander of this remarkable unit for over three years. Our task is simple and you find it in a short form on our crests and flags: 'Connecting Forces'. This sounds indeed simple and easy to achieve, but we all know that this task is one of the most difficult ones, especially in a multinational environment where interoperability is not a natural condition. But you functioned very well.'

Major General Schlösser emphasized the high level of NCISG personnel commitment, saying that since March 2021 the NCISG has taken part in 29 exercises, providing deployable communication information systems to NATO Command Structure HQs and units. In parallel, around 500 NCISG Troops have been deployed in various NATO

missions, with Iraq and Afghanistan being the most challenging. He remarked on operation ALLIED SOLACE, which showed the extreme high readiness of the NCISG. Major General Schlösser summarized NCISG in numbers including 1500 personnel out of 24 countries located in units in 14 countries. Concluding, Major General Schlösser said: 'I am sure the NCISG will stay successful in future. With your spirit, your engagement and your passion you all are well prepared. Team, thank you very much for all what you have achieved.



Major General Frank Schlösser, outgoing NCISG Commander, Change of Command ceremony at NCISG, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

Then, Major General Schlösser addressed words to his successor:

'Jürgen, I wish you all the best and soldiers luck in this wonderful appointment'.

The incoming Commander, Major General Jürgen Brötz shared his vision, leadership philosophy, and commitment to the NCISG's mission and goals. Major General Brötz said:



'Many thanks to Frank for handing over this remarkable unit as a great body of the NATO Command Structure with high level of Organizational and Operational readiness enabling Command and Control for NATO's deployed Headquarters.'

Major General Brötz declared:

'We will further enhance, train and execute our readiness, our responsiveness, our deployability and agility in order to continuously support and ensure SACEUR's Command and Control in Missions and Exercises in line with the Family of Plans and especially the Regional Plans.'

Major General Brötz underlined that he is honored and willing to work together with all NCISG, SHAPE J6 Cyberspace and Cyberspace Operations Center as well as the Federated Mission Networking (FMN) staff members in trust and respect to perform, deliver and shape the future together as a strong and reliable team.



Major General Jürgen Brötz, incoming NCISG Commander, Change of Command ceremony at NCISG, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

The official orders announcing the Change of Command were read aloud, affirming the authority and responsibility of the incoming commander and formally acknowledging the completion of the outgoing commander's tenure.

Following the presentation of flowers to both spouses, the Belgian National Anthem and NATO hymn were played by SHAPE International Band as a sign of respect and recognition for both the outgoing and incoming Commanders.



Brigadier General Carla Harding, Change of Command ceremony at NCISG, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.





Malgorzata Brötz, Change of Command ceremony at NCISG, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

The ceremony concluded with moment of reflection emphasizing unity, camaraderie and commitment to the NCISG's mission.



Change of Command ceremony at the NCISG, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

Invited guests proceeded to a reception to further commemorate the occasion and foster camaraderie among attendees.

Gifts and tokens of appreciation were presented to the outgoing Commander as a gesture of recognition for his service and leadership.





From left: Brigadier General Luigi Carpineto, NCISG DCOM/COS; Major General Frank Schlösser, outgoing NCISG Commander, Change of Command reception, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.



Change of Command reception, 19 April 2024, Mons, Belgium.

Overall, the Change of Command ceremony at NCISG was a solemn celebratory event that honors the transition of leadership and reinforces the NCISG's cohesion, professionalism, and dedication to its mission within the NATO Alliance.

Story by NATO Communications & Information systems Group Public Affairs Office.