

Multinational Special Aviation Programme (MSAP)

LOI ¹ signed	MOU ² signed	Academic training	Flight training
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Participants



What is MSAP?

The Multinational Special Aviation Programme (MSAP) is a training facility for helicopter crews who conduct the insertion and extraction of Special Operations Forces. The facility, located in Zadar, Croatia, officially opened on 11 December, 2019.



Demonstration of helicopter crew training during the official opening on 11 December, 2019.

Multinational Effort

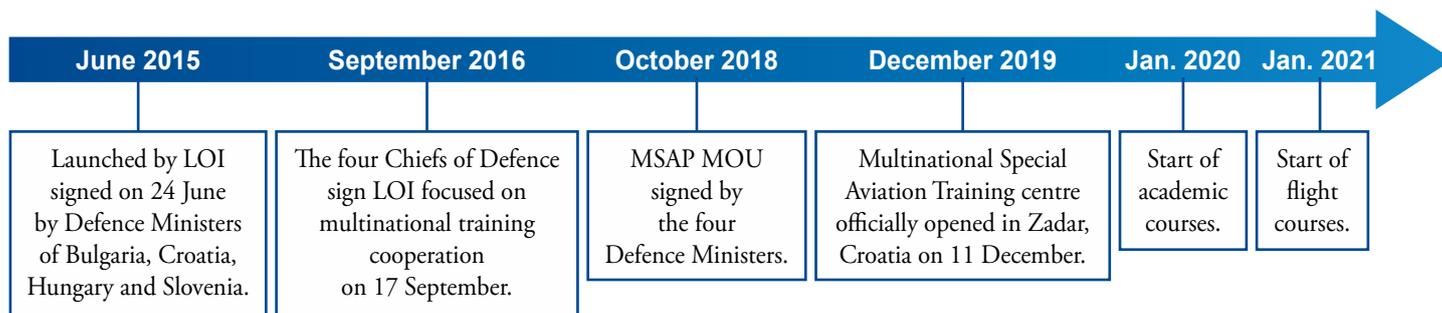
The MSAP initiative brings together four Eastern European Allies – Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia, with Croatia as the host nation. As all of the participating Allies were assigned NATO targets to establish Special Operations aviation units with vertical lift capabilities by 2025, they made the decision to work together to fulfill those targets.

The initiative was launched by four Allies with a Letter of Intent on multinational cooperation on provision of Special Operations Air Task Unit³ signed in June 2015 by their Defence Ministers. The training component was identified as the most promising opportunity for cooperation and a training specific agreement was signed by their Chiefs of Defence in September 2016. Finally, in October 2018, the four Allied Defence Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the MSAP.

1 Letter of Intent – initial non-binding document outlining participants’ will to explore the area in question further.

2 Memorandum of Understanding – legally binding document specifying details of cooperation.

3 Special Operations Forces Air Task Unit is dedicated to airlifting Special Forces so that they can conduct their operations.



Why is it important?

Special Forces are highly trained soldiers who conduct a broad range of operational scenarios. MSAP is an important and unique facility enabling Special Operations Forces aviation crews to train together in one place. As such it strengthens interoperability, helps increase readiness and enhances NATO's deterrence and defence.

As Special Forces are small, elite units, there are challenges in providing the necessary training, such as the expense. By pooling their resources, MSAP enables the participating Allies to provide cost effective, specialist training on one site. By applying NATO standards, MSAP will increase interoperability among NATO Allies and partners.

How does it work?

In 2020, the centre started with academic training and in 2021, flight training will begin. Over time the MSAP will further expand its training opportunities. The MSAP's location, close to mountains, the sea and surrounding islands, offers excellent helicopter training.

The centre is funded and staffed by the four participants equally. In addition, the host nation Croatia provides the necessary infrastructure. Each participant has a right to use the MSAP in proportion to its financial contributions and contributions in kind.

The MSAP is supported by the NATO Special Operations Headquarters in Mons, Belgium and two mentor nations – Poland and the United States.

Did you know?



1. MSAP is one of three High Visibility Projects (HVPs) covering the area of Special Operations Forces. The other two are sister projects C-SOCC (Composite Special Operations Component Command) and R-SOCC (Regional Special Operations Component Command).
2. The official opening of MSAP in December 2019 was hosted by the Croatian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and attended by Defence Ministers of the four participating Allies, as well as the Croatian Armed Forces' Chief of General Staff, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment, and the Commander of the NATO Special Operations Headquarters.
3. The four Allies will continue to explore the feasibility of similar multinational arrangements in other areas essential for the provision of Special Operations Aviation units, such as acquisition, logistical support, or infrastructure.

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