The World Codification Forum was held at the invitation of the Danish Defence Acquisition and Logistics Organization (DALO) in Copenhagen, Denmark from 6-7 November. Open, easy-going and liveable, Copenhagen is a city designed for people, from its UNESCO-listed heritage to Michelin-rated gourmet restaurants. More than 160 experts from 43 countries attended, from NCBs, other government offices, standards organisations, and industry. That means coffee breaks were a great chance for networking, and numerous workshops allowed time to dive deep into expert discussions. The Forum was opened by LTG P.P. Olsen, commander of DALO, who underlined the importance of codification work to the whole spectrum of logistics activities in defence. The Deputy ASG NATO for Defence Investment, Mr E.J. Herold, expanded on how NATO incorporates to the Forum theme “Codification and Industry - a Key Partnership and Force Enabler,” in particular concerning the Smart Defence and Connected Forces initiatives. He noted that NATO Agencies, the NATO HQ Procurement Office, ACT and the ACO Office for Collaboration with Academia and Industry have dedicated websites advertising business opportunities. The NATO Business Portal aggregates in a single point of entry all information regarding potential opportunities for industry. That portal may eventually connect industry to business opportunities across the Alliance, including national and multinational opportunities.

Brigadier Mark Dunn, head of the UK supply chain management, outlined that commanders’ need to conduct operations without logistics constraints, and soldiers need continuous support: Military operations are wholly reliant on clean data and codification, and we must continually improve governance, behaviour, contracting, data management and supportability. That can only be achieved via collaboration with industrial partners and consumers regarding data quality and its management.

The Forum format promoted networking and discussion through workshops that allowed attendees and exhibitors to ask questions and participate in debates. The topics included the benefits of codification to the supply chain, the role of industry in codification, and how to automate data exchange between government and industry by harnessing ISO standards 22745 and 8000. Another workshop delved into the use of UID in defence. One workshop centred on the project NCB Belgium and NSPA are leading on cooperation with GS1 and the potential it provides for data exchange between the NCS and the data pools that are part of the Global Data Sharing Network (GDSN) that are part of the GS1 system.

The workshop on the Codification Contract Clause (CCC) emphasized that all defence contracts should include a CCC to ensure availability of identification data and to ensure that codification work proceeds seamlessly. The preferred approach is to require CCCs via legislation or MoD regulations.

Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) and Performance Based Logistics (PBL) contracts were the subject of another workshop. The US has been successful in convincing the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) office of the necessity of assigning NSNs to all spare parts. They consider it as an insurance policy, so that the government will have the ability to manage systems after CLS and JSF contracts run out and in cases where contractors cannot provide support, such when forces need support far from contractor facilities (like on ships out at sea) or are in the direct line of fire from an enemy.

Additional workshops covered the topics of integration of NCS applications with ERP and logistics systems, codification of services, and AC/135 partnerships. The Forum programme was rounded out with a presentation on the basics of the NCS, for those who were new to NATO codification, and a series of demos of the NMCRL.
The 104th meeting of AC/135 Main Group was held from 5-6 November in Copenhagen. During the meeting, the directors on codification from 40 countries were presented with current information about codification projects and initiatives and discussed the issues on the agenda.

A happy and notable event at the Main Group meeting was the sponsorship signing ceremony with Colombia. Vice minister of defence for planning and strategy Diana Quintero Cuello signed for Colombia and Chairman Col. Marek Dalkowski for AC/135. AC/135 is in the vanguard of NATO in partnering with new countries. Sixty-six nations worldwide participate in the NCS at the present: 28 NATO and 38 non-NATO. Pakistan has been approved for sponsorship and their agreement is awaiting signature.

Here are some other highlights from the Main Group meeting: The Supplier Sourced Codification (SSC) and NATO Open Technical Dictionary (nOTD) projects will be combined, and a pilot project using nOTD is envisaged with Rheinmetall Technical Publications (RTP) of Germany if AC/135 adopts nOTD. Other companies may also participate in the next phase of SSC. SSC incorporates data exchange with industry i.a.w. ISO standards 22745 and 8000. An NMCRL enhancement allowing data extraction in ISO 22745 format is being studied to facilitate the transfer of product data directly to Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) systems. Further NMCRL projects for 2014 will provide: NMCRL Web and DVD-ROM wildcard search, a Query Builder for NMCRL Web advanced mode, NMCRL Web and ACoP-2/3 upgrades, including a new look and feel in line with NATO Web graphical standards, and enhanced NCS Web services.

Main Group has decided that every codification system to be connected to international data exchange in the NCS shall be tested for ACoP-1 compliance, instead of only those of non-NATO nations, as was the case in the past. The codification system testing procedure requires review as new systems are being introduced, and workload on the nations and NSPA increases. Panel A was tasked with developing a concept paper for a single centralised procedure for testing the systems of all participating nations. Morocco was congratulated for successfully completing system testing for Tier 2 compliance and will begin NCS data exchange on 1 January 2014. System testing is currently on-going with Belgium, Korea and Israel.

The Electronic Commerce Code Management Association (ECCMA) has offered to provide a linkage between NCS data and United Nations Standard Products and Services Code UNSPSC codes, which is of interest in particular to South America nations.

The Directors were pleased to learn from NSPA that a contract for an NMCRL marketing study has been awarded, to Tigermarque of the United Kingdom, and NSPA will begin working on the study with the company immediately.

The Russian Federation hosted the 32nd meeting of the TRICOD WG, which took place in Moscow, from 8-10 October 2013. In conjunction with that meeting, a seminar was held with the participation of Russian defence industry: The issue of codification of Russian defence products supplied to NCS countries was discussed, and more active involvement of manufacturers in the codification process was considered. One of recommendations that came out of the seminar concerned introduction of the uniform transliteration table for the NCS to address issues related to conversion of characters between Cyrillic and Latin.

The NATO Codification System (NCS) Course for Managers and Logisticians, will be held from 25-29 August 2014, and the NCS Course for Codifiers from 1-9 Sep 2014 at the University of Defence in Brno, Czech Republic. Together, these courses are known informally as the “NCS college.” To enrol or for more information, go to www.ncscollege.cz.