


Lessons from the establishment of NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU)

Report published 27 February 2026


In this factsheet you can read about some of the key findings in the JALLC's report on Lessons from the establishment of NSATU. Download a full copy of the report from the classified version of the NATO Lessons Learned Portal, or contact the JALLC to obtain a copy.*

Introduction




NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) is a specialized NATO command established in 2024 to coordinate the long-term, predictable, and coherent delivery of security aid and training to Ukraine. Headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany, it streamlines international support for Ukrainian forces without making NATO a direct party to the conflict.


Overview



This JALLC study, requested by SHAPE, examines the lessons learned from the establishment of NSATU, with a particular focus on what this experience reveals about NATO's ability to establish International Military Headquarters (IMHQ) under time-critical and politically sensitive conditions. Rather than assessing operational outcomes, the study focuses on how NSATU was planned, resourced, governed, and implemented—and what should change for NATO to treat IMHQ establishment as a distinct, repeatable capability.



The establishment of NSATU marked a significant institutional milestone for the Alliance. Conceived and implemented under exceptional political urgency and strategic pressure, NSATU was stood up while ensuring uninterrupted support to Ukraine during an ongoing, high-intensity conflict.



The study draws on a comprehensive qualitative analysis of the planning and implementation of NSATU, informed by structured engagements with key stakeholders from across strategic, operational, and tactical levels involved all aspects of the preparation, planning, and implementation of NSATU.



Certain pictures used in this factsheet are courtesy of the [SHAPE website](#).



About NSATU HQ

NSATU HQ is a NATO command that coordinates the provision of military equipment and training to Ukraine by NATO member and partner countries. NSATU HQ places security assistance to Ukraine on an enduring footing, ensuring enhanced, predictable and coherent support for the long term. It brings together much of the security support being provided by the international community to Ukraine under one overarching framework, improving coordination, accountability and burden-sharing among Allies. NSATU HQ, which operates only on Allied territory, helps Ukraine uphold its right to self-defence, as enshrined in the UN Charter; it does not, under international law, make NATO a party to the conflict. NSATU HQ is based in Wiesbaden, Germany with logistical hubs in the eastern part of the Alliance. It is reporting to NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and involves around 300 personnel from NATO member and partner countries, including Ukraine.*



The JALLC Project Team outside NSATU HQ.



On 23 November 2025, NATO Deputy Secretary General Radmila Shekerinska visited the logistical hub in Poland of NSATU, meeting military leaders from NSATU and the Polish Armed Forces.

Key Findings

The central conclusion is that NATO does not yet treat establishment of IMHQs as a distinct and repeatable capability. While acknowledging that each IMHQ is established under their own unique set of circumstances that require different approaches, the experience of establishing NSATU revealed predictable challenges that could have been mitigated or avoided with more standardization and institutionalization of some key aspects.

The report contains a list of eight key findings from challenges and best practices associated to aspects such as the planning processes, command and control arrangements, resourcing mechanisms, and information sharing. Each finding is accompanied with considerations that the project team assessed to be generic to the establishment of any IMHQs, and therefore should be considered when establishing IMHQs in the future.

You can download a copy of the report from the JALLC Analysis Community of Interest in the classified version of the NLLP subject to access and appropriate security clearances.

*Text taken from NSATU's website: <https://shape.nato.int/NSATU>. References to NSATU on the web page are replaced in this factsheet with NSATU