



Thirty-three Defence Attachés accredited to Germany from thirty-one countries and representatives of the German Federal Ministry of Defence paid an official visit to the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) on 14th May 2008.

The aim of the visit was to familiarize Defence Attachés accredited to Germany with tasks and functioning of the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE) in Szczecin, explained Colonel Andrzej Sobczyński, an initiator of the visit and at the same time a dean of the Association of Defence Attachés accredited to Germany.

Commander MNC NE Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral welcomed the guests and accompanied them in their way of getting to know the Corps. During the briefing delivered by Colonel Klaus Finck, head of the G-3 Division, the Corps' history, structure and functioning was presented. The mission in Afghanistan accomplished in 2007 was also thoroughly discussed as an example of the Corps' involvement in operations abroad. Colonel Sobczyński admitted that the aim of the visit to familiarize attachés with the Corps was achieved. Moreover, the knowledge shall be used to promote the further development of this Corps.

It is important to state that the Attachés also visited the City Hall where they met Deputy Mayor of Szczecin Tomasz Jarmoliński and members of the City Council. Furthermore, the ladies' programme was prepared for the Attachés' spouses. It included going on a boat cruise on the Odra River and admiring the panorama of Szczecin from one of the highest buildings of the city. Both the Attachés and their spouses took part in a guided tour around the city titled "Szczecin

yesterday and today".

Who are Defence Attachés?

Defence Attachés are representatives of Ministries of Defence of a given country. They represent interests of the Ministry in a country they are accredited to. The activities of Defence Attachés include participation in all military events organised by the host country during which they are to present and promote their own Armed Forces, advertise armaments industry as well as to develop mutual relations. Apart from receptions, banquets and any other events related to this diplomatic service, which the function of a Defence Attaché definitely is, there are other responsibilities as well, like taking part in exercises and organising visits and contacts between representatives of the Ministry of Defence and representatives of the Armed Forces and representatives of the country they are accredited to.

It is important to notice that the range of responsibilities of attachés differ from one country to another. There can be Defence Attachés, Military Attachés, Naval Attachés or Air Attachés. In some countries those functions are separated, in others one person fulfils all of them.

All attachés united

All attachés in a given country are united within the association, as in case of Defence Attachés from Berlin – the Association of Defence Attachés accredited to Germany. Colonel Sobczyński, a dean of the institution in Berlin, explained there are altogether 81 bureaus supporting attachés whereas the number of individual attaches is about 130.

Being a dean is a prestigious function, which is also related to numerous duties and responsibilities. First of all, a dean has to take into account interests of all attachés, which is a big challenge. Among other things a dean organises various meetings and trips and takes care of new attachés to help them find their place in the new community. A dean is chosen once a year on a democratic basis. An important role is played by the dean's spouse who shall be actively involved in organising time for the ladies.

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