

European Working Group Non-Lethal Weapons (EWG-NLW)

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- EWG-NLW interacts with related organisations
- EWG-NLW organises information exchange, meets at least twice a year.
- EWG-NLW facilitates programmes and joint projects of partners.
- EWG-NLW can help with advice and support to government activities.
- EWG-NLW organises Europe's biggest scientific symposium on NLW: The European Symposium on Non-Lethal Weapons.



NATIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT AND MEMBERS OF SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

Several European organisations are currently developing and implementing non-lethal capabilities. This enables many emerging and non-traditional threats (which may appear in low intensity, asymmetric conflicts, peace support, and anti-terrorism operations) to be countered with an innovative solution.

Non-lethal weapons are of interest to both the military and law enforcement agencies as, in many cases, the character of the scenarios might be similar. Non-lethal weapons can be seen as having dual-use application and they provide armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and policy makers with additional options to respond in a tailored and graduated manner.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1998.

Present members: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence.

The working Group is open to all European organizations working in the area of Non-Lethal Weapons.

AIMS OF THE EWG-NLW

There are two complementary strategies of the EWG-NLW to improve awareness of NLW:

1. Holistic approach, i.e. by considering all essential aspects (legal, ethical, sociological, technological, medical etc) and,
2. High Tech solutions

ACTIVITIES OF THE EWG-NLW

- Exchange of information and harmonisation of activities.
- To promote Research & Development of Non-Lethal Weapon technologies to meet future operational requirements.
- To encourage the European defence industry to become more innovative and more competitive in designing, developing and validating new Non-Lethal Weapon technologies.
- To include related activities on law enforcement and homeland security.
- Independent operational expertise of NLW technology, development and deployment.

Non-Lethal Weapons (NATO Definition)

Non-Lethal Weapons are weapons which are explicitly designed and developed to incapacitate or repel personnel, with a low probability of fatality or permanent injury, or to disable equipment, with minimal undesired damage or impact on the environment.

Mission Statement

The EWG-NLW supports the development, validation and use of technologies, devices and tactics which are intended to preserve life whilst enabling lawful and appropriate use of force in response to threats, be they individual or crowd based.

Furthermore the EWG-NLW advocates full co-operation between European partners to share information, scientific advancement and recommended operational practice.

THE ROLE OF NON LETHAL WEAPONS

In addressing threats non lethal options minimise the risk of fatalities and serious injuries whilst preventing harm being caused to the critical infrastructure and the environment. Non lethal means can be used by civilian law enforcement and military organisations to resolve conflict using a lower level of force than conventional lethal options which remain available to support if necessary.

UTILIZING NON LETHAL WEAPONS

Non lethal weapons should be used if it is felt, in the circumstances, that any life may be saved although it is recognised that no technology or device can be guaranteed to be completely non lethal and injuries or deaths may occur even when all possible precautions are taken.

Non lethal weapon technology chosen to be used by civilian law enforcement or military personnel must be balanced against the risk to bystanders and users whilst being appropriate, acceptable and lawful in the circumstances.

THE FUTURE FOR NON LETHAL WEAPONS

The development of new non lethal technologies will continue to allow civilian law enforcement and the military to have the benefit of exploiting alternative means of dealing with life threatening situations without having to resort to the use of lethal force.