

Strengthening Alliances Through Learning, NPS Hosts European International Alumni Symposium

The Naval Postgraduate School symposium in Garmisch, Germany drew more than 100 NPS alumni representing 29 nations across Europe.

MONTEREY, CA, UNITED STATES, October 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With a focus on enhancing European and global security partnerships, the [Naval Postgraduate School](#) (NPS) hosted its first European International Alumni Symposium in Garmisch, Germany, Sept. 29 to Oct. 3, with more than 100 NPS alumni representing 29 nations across Europe in attendance.

The symposium, sponsored in part by the Department of State as part of the U.S. International Military Education Training (IMET) program, is in direct support of the Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro's strategic priorities to strengthen international alliances for collective defense. It also supports the "Enhance Partnerships" objective in the Naval Education Strategy by offering opportunities to learn alongside our allies and partners, which is a key component to succeeding in deterring conflict and the strategic power competition.

"In so many ways, [educational



Participants watch U.S. Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, share insights on strengthening international defense partnerships.



U.S. Navy Adm. Stuart B. Munsch, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe Commander, addressed NPS international alumni.

institutions] are the engines of what happens in the future,” said Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and commander of Allied Joint Force Command Naples, during his welcoming remarks. “They not only equip individuals with the skill sets to think about particular knowledge areas but, more broadly, to think critically and strategically. These institutions are what provide this foundation for our future, and the Naval Postgraduate School is among them.”

Building on the Indo-Pacific NPS Alumni Symposium held last year, the European [symposium agenda](#) spanned a full three days, packed with plenary sessions, panels, and keynote addresses, which included discussions ranging from energy security and space systems to contested logistics and climate change. NPS faculty presented and discussed cutting-edge research in emerging defense technologies, furthering academic collaboration, shared learning, and strategic engagement with international partners.

Beyond the formal sessions and professional exchange, the symposium also provided an opportunity to advance important relationships, maritime statecraft, and reconnect NPS with its global community of alumni.

“These relationships matter and continuing to cultivate them matters because our alumni network is a vital resource,” said U.S. Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli, Supreme Allied Commander and Commander, U.S. European Command. “It provides us with an unparalleled opportunity to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and foster innovation all around the globe.”

In addition to robust discussions on security and defense, participants valued the chance to



Maj. Angelos Arampatzis special acquisition officer of the Hellenic Navy general staff, asks a question at the NPS International Alumni Symposium.



Adm. Stuart B. Munsch, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe presents a Distinguished Alumni award to Vice Adm. Dimitrios E. Kataras, chief of the Hellenic Navy.

reconnect with former classmates, professors, and new colleagues from across Europe.

“NPS helped us reach a deeper understanding of where we’re going together. In terms of cooperative security and collective defense right now, NPS is very well represented in key positions in NATO, not only in the operational side of the house but also in the future planning,” said Maj. Gen. Claudiu Dobocan, commander, Romanian Special Operations Command and a 2004 NPS Defense Analysis graduate. “NPS is on the forefront for relation building but also on the front of conceptual theories which will push forward NATO and U.S. instruments.”



More than 100 NPS graduates representing 29 nations across Europe gathered for the first-ever European International Alumni Symposium.

Among the many discussions held during the event, one key session focused on climate and energy security in Europe, featuring panelist Kristen Fletcher of NPS' Energy Academic Group who highlighted important ongoing research in the field. Symposium attendees and NPS faculty visited the Schneefernerhaus Environmental Research Station, Germany's highest environmental research facility, where they learned about the facility's history and ongoing climate research, which furthered the discussion.

“This symposium has given us the chance to share global perspectives on climate security,” Fletcher said. “The research shared with us today on increasing greenhouse gas emissions, along with physical observations of a nearly depleted glacier, highlights the need for awareness and partnerships to understand the impacts of climate change on military missions.”

As the symposium concluded, participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reunite with old colleagues, meet new ones, and discuss shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

NPS attracts students from around the globe, advancing their skills while also supporting the development of enduring personal connections. International alumni symposiums focus on strengthening those relationships while addressing present-day challenges, reaffirming the collective dedication to global security.

“NPS gives us the opportunity to connect people from different countries, different cultures, building trust and the feeling that we are stronger together,” said 2024 Security Studies graduate Tea Nikolashvili, director, Defense Institution Building School, Ministry of Defense, Georgia.

“Symposiums like this are an additional opportunity for us to communicate with our peers and widen our perspectives as well as build professional networks, supporting both national and international security objectives and implementation processes.”

The event was organized by NPS’ [International Graduate Programs Office](#) (IGPO) with additional support from the NPS Foundation and Alumni Association. More than 7,000 students from nearly 130 countries have graduated from NPS since 1954.

“None of us are as strong as all of us,” said Danial Pick, director of IGPO. “Allied countries send their best to NPS, and they contribute so much to our learning beyond their coursework and research to enhance our culture and strengthen future alliances, which are so important today.”

Through the institution’s unique, defense-focused graduate education and research programs and a student body reaching all corners of the globe, NPS continues to drive knowledge and relevant innovation to enhance the strategic capabilities of the United States as well as its international partners.

“It was a privilege to collaborate with senior military representatives and NPS alumni from around the globe to discuss and execute the importance of strategic engagement among international partners,” said NPS President retired Vice. Adm. Ann Rondeau. “I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who worked diligently to ensure the symposium was a success, especially to the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies and Director retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Barre R. Seguin for graciously co-hosting our first NPS European International Alumni Symposium – it was a great team effort!”

NPS, located in Monterey, California, provides defense-focused graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership, and warfighting advantage of the Naval service. Established in 1909, NPS offers master’s and doctorate programs to Department of Defense military and civilians, along with international partners, to deliver transformative solutions and innovative leaders through advanced education and research. For more information, visit NPS at <https://nps.edu>.

Check out highlights and hear from symposium attendees in this recap video of NPS’ first-ever European International Alumni Symposium: <https://youtu.be/KSJq5QHAoC8>.

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