



GEORGE C. MARSHALL

EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

A GERMAN - AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

Dr. Edelmira L. Nickels

**Director, Partner Language Training Center Europe
(PLTCE)**

*“Words connect worlds; language proficiency unlocks
global cooperation.”*



Biography

Edelmira Nickels, Ph.D., assumed the position of director of the Partner Language Training Center Europe (PLTCE) at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in 2023. Leading a team of highly skilled professionals, Nickels oversees the delivery of intermediate and advanced strategic language courses for U.S. government linguists.

In her role, Nickels provides expertise to NATO Allies and global partners in support of NATO language interoperability efforts. She also serves as the requirements authority representative for language standards within NATO's Education, Training, Exercises, and Evaluation Discipline, and as associate secretary for NATO's Bureau for International Language Co-ordination, NATO's advisory body on language training and testing.

Before assuming her current role, Nickels was head of the Strategic Languages Department at PLTCE, where she oversaw intermediate and advanced language courses in critical languages such as French, Levantine, Modern Standard Arabic, Persian Farsi, Russian, and Ukrainian. She also managed workshops on applied consecutive interpreting techniques, aimed at preparing defense-sector government personnel for complex multilingual environments. Additionally, she played a key role in advising the PLTCE director on adult foreign language acquisition and proficiency assessment.

Prior to joining PLTCE, Nickels served as chief of the English Language Testing Flight at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center in San Antonio, Texas. There, she was responsible for the development, distribution, and security of language proficiency tests essential for security cooperation, military accessions, and U.S.-sponsored exercise programs. Leading a dedicated team, she oversaw the annual creation of more than 1,000 test items, the administration of 52,000 tests, and the management of 261 nonresident testing sites worldwide. During her tenure, she represented the U.S. in NATO-approved language testing seminars and participated in mobile training teams in the Middle East.

Before her civil service career, Nickels worked in academia, where she taught English as a second language, Spanish, and linguistics. She has published research on second-language acquisition and discourse analysis, and collaborated on language testing and assessment with local, state, and nonprofit organizations in the U.S.