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Marshall Center's Language Center Cancels Courses as part of COVID-19 Preventive Measures

By Christine June
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GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (March 13, 2020) –The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies' Partner Language Training Center Europe announced March 13 the cancellation of three courses as part of the Marshall Center's preventive measures against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that began March 9.

The Marshall Center is a 26-year-old, German-American defense studies institute based here.

The Partner Language Training Center Europe, a NATO Partner Training and Education Center, offers advanced and specialized classroom instruction in Arabic, English, French, Persian-Farsi, and Russian to more than 400 U.S. military, and NATO and partner attendees each year.

The Marshall Center announced the cancellation of two resident events March 9 after reviewing the U.S. Army Europe and German government guidance, as well as available information on COVID-19.

This decision was in consultation with the Marshall Center's German Element, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and U.S. Army Europe.

“Fortunately, there is currently no evidence of the coronavirus disease at the Marshall Center. Our intention is to keep it that way,” said the Marshall Center Director, retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, at the time of the first announcement March 9.

To date, there still has not been a case reported at the Marshall Center, said Dayton.

“The health and wellbeing of our employees and their families, and of course, the participants, is our highest priority,” Dayton said. “We are acting to also protect the members of the Garmisch-Partenkirchen community.”

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Dayton said that he is looking into whether or not the Marshall Center and PLTCE will need to cancel or postpone any other resident events and language courses. This includes whether or not the five canceled courses will be rescheduled.

“We will continue to monitor the situation, as well as our ability to support individuals should they contract the virus,” he said. “We expect things will become clearer in the coming weeks, and we will evaluate each upcoming event based on the information available.”

The canceled PLTCE courses are Language Enhancement Course, from Feb.17 to March 20, Language for Diplomacy, from March 5 to 26, and Advanced Language Testing Course, from March 2 to 20.

The Language Enhancement Course had 17 participants from the U.S. attending for advanced training in French, Russian, Arabic and Persian Farsi.

Language for Diplomacy is a professional and executive English course for diplomats. Attending this iteration were eight diplomats from Ukraine, Republic of Georgia and Republic of Kosovo.

The Advance Language Testing Course is an expert professional seminar in language test construction and validation according to NATO standards. Nine testers from that many NATO and partner nations were attending this course.

Combined, these five course would have brought almost 150 participants from 40 to 50 nations to the Marshall Center and PLTCE compound.

The two canceled Marshall Center resident courses were the Program on Countering Transnational Organized Crime, scheduled from March 17 to April 8, and the Cyber Global Workshop, scheduled from March 10 to 12.

The Marshall Center’s CTOC is a four-week resident program that focuses on the national security threats posed by a wide range of transnational criminal activities.

The Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development Workshop was intended to expand on existing international cybersecurity education and workforce development strategies and policies to enhance capacity-building and partner engagement.

For additional information regarding this announcement, please contact George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies Public Affairs at GCMCPublicAffairs@marshallcenter.org or 00-49-(0)8821-750-2469 (English) or 2795 (German).

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BACKGROUND:

The Marshall Center is a leading transatlantic defense educational institution. Operating since 1993 as a German-American partnership, the Marshall Center offers post-graduate courses, conferences, research programs, foreign area studies, and language courses to civilian and military professionals from around the world. To date, the Marshall Center has an alumni network of more than 14,000 security professionals from 157 countries.

The mission of the Marshall Center is to enable solutions to regional and transnational security challenges through capacity building, access, and a globally connected network.

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