



NATO CIS SERVICES AGENCY  
NATO PROGRAMMING CENTRE



# NEWCOMER'S GUIDE



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## FROM THE COMMANDER'S DESK



*Dear Reader,*

If you are reading this guide, this means that you show interest in the NPC and are either already assigned to work at NPC or looking to apply for a position at NPC.

In either case, whether you are military or civilian, it is my hope that this booklet will provide you with a firsthand glance of the NPC, Belgium as our host nation, and the cozy little town of Glons in which we are located. You will find information about the surrounding area, general administration and local schools.

As you can read from the Table of Contents, this booklet provides various information of interest when looking forward to moving to another organization, which – in the case of NPC - for the vast majority of you is located in a foreign country.

In addition to this booklet, we will assign a sponsor to every newcomer to the NPC. The sponsor is your personal contact and he/she will assist you to find the answer to any additional questions you may have.

I am looking forward to welcoming you as a new NPC Staff Member. Be assured that we care for our people.

*Regards  
Horst Stüttgen*

Horst Stüttgen  
Colonel DEU AF  
Commander NPC

# CHAPTER I

## THE NATO PROGRAMMING CENTRE (NPC)

### MISSION, REPORTING AND TASKING



The NPC is based at Glons, Belgium and is an independent, self-governing military unit under the auspices of the NATO CIS Services Agency. The role of NPC within the NATO structure and framework is defined by the Director NCSA, who also provides the NPC's responsibilities and mission.

The NPC consists of around 200 personnel organized into 3 directorates and is commanded by a German Air Force Colonel. Around 25% of the personnel are civilian, the rest being military representing 16 different nations (including France) of NATO.

#### MISSION

The NPC's mission is to provide efficient and effective system and advisory support to ensure maximum operational capability of the Air Command and Control (C2) assets entrusted to the NPC.

Whilst in the past the NPC mission was limited to software maintenance of in-service NATO Air C2 systems, it was expanded in 2006 to permit provision of all activities required for system support for these systems. This includes the following areas: system engineering, obsolescence management, Commercial-off-the-Shelf (COTS) software management and technical training.

The mission entrusted to the NPC places considerable emphasis on efficient and effective performance and, furthermore, demands the implementation of a recognized quality, safety and security management system.

#### REPORTING

The Commander NPC is responsible to Director NCSA, to whom he reports directly, for the overall effectiveness of the NPC.

#### TASKING

During peacetime, the ACCS Software Committee (ASC) is the tasking authority for the NPC and acts as the configuration control board for the Air C2 systems entrusted to the NPC. Additionally, the ASC is the decision-making authority for all changes to in-service Air C2 systems, using the NPC's Programme of Work as the basis for performance reporting and meeting the operational requirements of SACEUR.

During crisis, the Commander NPC will receive tasking directly from SACEUR in order to react in a timely, coordinated and discriminated manner to operational needs arising from current NATO operations.



The NPC is funded by all 28 NATO nations; moreover, the NPC also hosts some multi-nationally funded NATO software maintenance cells. These cells are managed by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) and are funded and tasked by the participating nations directly through a NAMSA Logistics Support Arrangement.

## COMPETENCIES

The NPC specializes in providing system support to in-service NATO Air C2 systems and technical support to procurement organisations. To expand this capability, NATO has decided to establish the NPC, supported by NAMSA and other partners, as the System Support Centre (SSC) for the new generation of Air Command and Control Systems (ACCS) to combine traditional system support functions with logistic support.

### GENERAL

At the NPC, military personnel and civilians work together in project teams providing efficient and effective system support for Air C2 systems including software maintenance and training.

#### OPERATIONAL EXPERTISE

Through constant rotation of military personnel, the NPC maintains a unique level of currency and deep operational experience in Air C2 matters as well as air planning and air tasking. This expertise is used to anticipate operational trends and specify and design the most efficient and effective solutions to operational challenges.

#### TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

The NPC possesses a high level of technical expertise which is maintained through an effective mixture of dedicated long-serving civilian engineering staff, coupled with military experts - the latter being replaced every 3-4 years. In daily cooperation with NPC's operational experts, NPC engineers implement efficient and effective solutions to operational and technical challenges.

#### QUALITY MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

Through the establishment of a Quality Assurance Office the NPC maintains a professional expertise in quality management to the level required to cope with the constant change of personnel and the high reliability requirements of the maintained products. NPC



engineers and quality assurance experts work together to provide high quality system support in an effective and efficient manner using, where appropriate, industry best practice. This is vital to fulfil the safety critical requirements of NPC products working in conjunction with civil air traffic control.

Since 2003, the NPC's Quality Management System has been certified to meet the ISO 9001:2008 standard for system support, advisory services, training and exercise production - proving positively that the NPC has reached industry standard in fulfilling SACEUR's mission.

#### SAFETY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

The NPC security and safety experts have built up a highly developed level of expertise in Information Security (INFOSEC) and software safety. The NPC is applying this expertise on all system support activities, thereby ensuring that NPC products and services fulfil international and NATO safety and security requirements. Furthermore, these NPC safety and security experts act as advisors to national or NATO entities helping to develop respective standards and guidelines.

#### SYSTEM SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

The NPC is specialized in all activities required to provide system support and maintenance during the in-service phases of Air C2 systems.

#### APPLICATION SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE

As one of its main activities, the NPC performs application software maintenance for a variety of systems with different architectures, programming languages and complexity. The NPC applies industry best practice toward maintenance, and guarantees high quality of output that fully meets NATO safety and security requirements.

#### COTS SOFTWARE MANAGEMENT

Application software maintained by NPC is often integrated with COTS software products such as operating systems or database management systems. The NPC performs maintenance from a system perspective, thus providing the user (who will also be running the COTS applications) with the appropriate installation and user instructions.

#### HARDWARE ENGINEERING

NPC is also required to perform hardware engineering in order to cover all aspects of system maintenance. These activities include development of special interfaces as well as life cycle planning for hardware platforms for the systems maintained by NPC. NPC engineers examine and test the behaviour of Air C2 software on various hardware platforms and recommend suitable combinations to the user community.

## OBSOLESCENCE MANAGEMENT

The ever-changing nature of COTS hardware and software requires the NPC to constantly evaluate the market for new releases and products. NPC evaluates these products for compatibility with the maintained systems and recommends or provides upgrades to the users.

## INTEROPERABILITY ENGINEERING

One of the most complex tasks in maintaining military Air C2 systems is guaranteeing the technical and operational interoperability with other systems in the NATO Network.

Hence, the NPC has established a sophisticated Interoperability Test Facility that allows testing of a variety of interfaces through a NATO-wide connectivity network. Furthermore, NPC is actively participating in all major interoperability testing thus guaranteeing a high level of operational interoperability.

## SERVICES

### USER SUPPORT



The NPC provides direct user support for all of its products through its Customer Service Desk. This support is currently limited to normal day-time operations with an out-of-hours e-mail repository, but can be increased in times of crisis to provide a 24/7 capability.

### TRAINING

Training of user personnel is one of the key elements of integrated system support. The NPC provides technical training, including system administrator training, for NATO and national user communities on the Air C2 systems maintained by the NPC.

Since 2008, the NPC has hosted a significant amount of training courses conducted by industry in support of the ACCS LOC-1 contract. After completion of the initial training, NPC personnel will replicate the training and provide courses to technical personnel as part of the in-service support arrangements.

### ADVICE AND CONSULTANCY

In addition to the normal system maintenance related support, the NPC is providing additional services to NATO and the nations in order to make best use of the expertise assembled at NPC.

The NPC provides technical expertise to a variety of NATO working groups including

Working Group 28 (WG 28) and the Allied Committee 322 (AC 322). In these and other committees NPC's maintenance experience and expertise contribute to the definition of NATO policies and regulations.

The NPC's experts support nations and NATO agencies and headquarters in the procurement of Air C2 systems or other systems that interface with Air C2 systems.

#### **INTEROPERABILITY ASSESSMENT**

NPC performs independent interoperability assessment of military (national Air C2 or weapon systems) or civilian (air traffic control) systems to determine the level of interoperability with the NATO Integrated Air Defense System (NATINADS) network.

## CHAPTER II A LOOK AT BELGIUM



### LOCATION

Heart of Western Europe and the gateway to the continent, Belgium has a common frontier with the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and France. Road, rail or boat easily reaches all other European countries from Belgium.



## POPULATION

Belgium is a small country. On the other hand it is one of the most densely populated countries of Europe, with 10.000.000 inhabitants in an area of 30.513 square kilometres (11.750 square miles) – about 800 persons per square mile. You will find in Belgium a lot of regions of little towns. Also a good and close network of highways, roads and railway is established over the whole area. Due to this you will find it very easy to go by car to the bigger nearby towns like Liege/BE (25 km), Maastricht/NL (20 km) or Aachen/GE (60 km).

## LANGUAGES

Flemish is the language of the Northern part of Belgium, whilst French is the language of the Southern part. Both languages are spoken in Brussels. In the region of Eupen, Malmedy and in the southeast part of the province of Luxembourg, German is also spoken. English is widely understood, especially in hotels, restaurants and shops.

## CLIMATE



The climate of Belgium is characterised by its variability. Good and bad weather may be experienced in all seasons and at any time of the year, large changes can occur within a few hours. The weather is largely controlled by a series of depressions, which move from the Atlantic across NW Europe in an easterly or north-easterly direction. Most of these pass well to the north, so that the area experiences a high frequency of mild, moist south-westerly winds. Extremes of cold in winter and of heat in summer occur in anticyclone conditions, when the air of westerly origin is replaced by air from the interior of the continent; settled dry periods occur in such conditions but may be accompanied by lots of fog in winter. The average yearly rainfall over much of Belgium is about 63.5 to 76 cm (25 – 30 inches), although considerably greater amounts fall in the Ardennes.

On an average, the summer months are wetter than the winter months; however, in the summer, much of the rain falls in showers or thunderstorms with intervening bright periods while continuous rain or drizzle is most frequent in autumn and winter.

Average temperature range from 2°C (35°F) in winter to 18°C (64°F) in summer but large fluctuations from these average values are quite common. The most likely extremes in any one-year range from a minimum of –9°C (15°F) in the winter to a maximum of 34°C (90°F) in the summer.

## GOVERNMENT

Belgium is a constitutional monarchy, which is hereditary, and the King exercises the constitutional powers. All power in Belgium is derived from the Nation. The King, the House of Representatives and the Senate have legislative power. All Belgians are equal in the eyes of the law, and the Belgian constitution guarantees freedom of worship, the press and education.

## PROVINCES

Belgium is divided into ten provinces:

- a. ANTWERP
- b. WAALS-BRABANT
- c. VLAAMS-BRABANT
- d. EAST FLANDERS
- e. WEST FLANDERS
- f. HAINUT (in which SHAPE is located)
- g. LIEGE (in which NPC is located)
- h. LIMBURG (in which Tongeren is located)
- i. LUXEMBOURG
- j. NAMUR

## BELGIUM IN BRIEF

Surface: 30 528 km<sup>2</sup>

Capital: Bruxelles/Brussel, where 9.4% of the Belgians are living

Longest river: the Maas (993 km)

Foreigners: 9%

Population: 10.2 Million

Density of Population:

334 pers/km<sup>2</sup>; most of them living in the province of Brabant, whereas the district of Luxembourg Belge is the least populated.

Entities:

- 59.3% Flemish
- 40% Walloon
- 0.7% German speaking Belgians

Religion:

- 8.5 Mill Catholics
- 38,000 Protestant
- 250,000 Muslims
- 35,000 Jewish

Official languages:

- Dutch in the Flemish regions;
- French in the Walloon regions;
- German in a small eastern region close to Germany.

You will often find names of cities, towns or places in 2 (Flemish, French) or even 3 (additional German) languages. Also official documents are mostly written in 2 languages or in the language of the region.

### **CURRENCY**

The Belgian unit of exchange is the Euro - €. The Euro is made up of 100 cents. The following Euro coins are available: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cent pieces; 1 and 2 Euro coins. Notes are issued in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500. The Euro is also the official currency of our neighbour states, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and France.

## CHAPTER III

### PREPARATION BEFORE MOVING TO BELGIUM

As soon as you receive orders to join to the NPC, you should obtain from your national authorities information about:

- a. Customs formalities between your country and Belgium.
- b. National arrangements regarding the transportation of you and your family and household goods to the NPC.  
(Household goods are normally exempt from import duty)
- c. Possible limitation on the amount of baggage or household goods that you will be allowed to take at your government's expense.
- d. Passport and National Identity Card requirements for you and your family.
- e. National dress regulations for military personnel serving with SHAPE/NPC.
- f. National arrangements for your pay and allowances at the NPC.

#### UNITED KINGDOM PERSONNEL

Special arrangements exist for United Kingdom military personnel posted for duty at NPC Glons. Your sponsor will provide a separate Annex for your guidance.

#### CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

New civilian personnel should contact SHAPE/Civilian Personnel for current information concerning the formalities of moving to Belgium. Your sponsor at the NPC will be writing to you as soon as he knows that you are assigned to the NPC. You should obtain from him advice on temporary and permanent accommodation, education for children, importation of a car, Belgian insurance regulations and costs, and other matters about which you might require information. If you wish to import a weapon, your sponsor will be able to advise you on the regulations.

#### ADDRESSES

The three NPC mailing addresses are:

- a. European Mail: NATO Programming Centre  
Thier Mathias 1b  
4690 Bassenge (Glons)  
Belgium
- b. United Kingdom Mail: NATO Programming Centre  
BFPO 18
- c. United States Mail: NATO Programming Centre  
NPC Glons  
Unit 21902  
APO AE 09713

## LOCATION

The NPC is a unit within the NATO Communication and Information Systems Services Agency (NCSA) receiving administrative support from SHAPE, Mons. It is located at Glons, Belgium some 20 kilometres from Liège, Belgium and 25 kilometres Southwest from Maastricht, the Netherlands. The nearest town is Tongeren about 10 kilometres to the Northwest. SHAPE is approximately 150 kilometres away to the Southwest.

Coming by car from almost all directions you will find the NPC best by looking for the highway A3/E313 connecting Liège and Hasselt. As Belgium has numbered the highway exits (uitrit) take No. 33 – BASSENGE. Turn left and follow the road to a wide right turning bend. There you will see at your left 2 roads going away. At the first you will see already first signs leading you to the NPC or the CRC, which is our direct neighbour. Passing a railway bridge take the next road to your right – it is very small, but it is correct. Arriving on top you will see right hand the military area where the NPC and the Belgian CRC is located.

By railway you will find the next railway station at TONGEREN or some in more distance, but on a main connection LIEGE/LUIK. Due to public traffic is not comfortable established to GLONS to go to the NPC arriving at one of those destinations you should preferred look for a taxi or contact your sponsor to ask for advice and support.

By plane the next airports are BRUSSELS, LIEGE or MAASTRICHT. For best way of transfer to the NPC contact your sponsor.

## CHAPTER IV UPON ARRIVAL

### At SHAPE



In general, newcomers to the military staff will report directly to the NPC. However, some nations require their military personnel to do some processing at SHAPE. Your national authorities will inform you if this is required.

New civilian personnel will find they have to first report to SHAPE Civilian Personnel Office.

### At NPC

Your sponsor will assist in arranging accommodation for you and your family. Be sure to contact your sponsor and let him know of your requirements. Your sponsor will assist you in getting settled as quickly and as easily as possible.

All personnel, both military and civilian, must be in possession of a SHAPE ID Card and a SHAPE Security Pass. In addition, each dependent over the age of nine years also requires a SHAPE ID Card. All of these items will be processed at the NPC. Civilian personnel and dependants are required to register with the Belgian Authorities. This registration is processed at the NPC. Entry to the Barracks at Tongeren is controlled. In order to enter the premises all private vehicles must have a windscreen sticker and all personnel and their dependants must have a special ID Card. These are available through the NPC.

Vehicle registration and issuing of ration cards is also carried out at the NPC.

## CHAPTER V

### LIVING IN BELGIUM

#### Housing

At the NPC – except for UK personnel – you will find no military family quarters. So you are asked to rent an accommodation for the time you will be at the NPC from a Belgian landlord. So start by discussing with your family what kind of accommodation – how many rooms, what dimensions, up to what price, what facilities do you need/want e.g. Your sponsor at the NPC and the NPC Welfare Officer will assist you to obtain suitable housing as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, you should plan about 30 days of hotel living before your relocation is complete, if your house hunting starts at the same time as you arrive at the NPC. This is an average time that NPC members have taken to find the house and location that suited them best. It will be helpful if you send us the “housing questionnaire” back and advise your NPC sponsor well before arrival concerning additional or special requirements about housing. Your sponsor will also help or arrange transportation for your house hunting, if required.

Most houses in Belgium are brick. In the region apartments, flats and new built houses as well as older homes are available. Rents range from 350 to 1000 Euro unfurnished, plus utilities. A lease is required in most cases with up to 3 months rent as a deposit. The deposit must be placed in a bank. To help you a standard SHAPE lease is available from the NPC Welfare Officer for review.

Normally oil or gas is used for heating, gas or electricity for cooking. The European standard voltage is 220V, 50Hz. Most of the houses come without light fixtures and clothing closets.

Although it is possible to obtain rental homes that have economical 380 voltage sources, for large appliances such as stoves, washing machines, dryers and some heating units, the most commonly available current is 220V/50 cycles. This means that 110V/60 cycle appliances may be used with a transformer up to a maximum capacity of 3 kilowatts. The different cycle will not damage most of your appliances; however, they will run more slowly (e.g. an electric clock will run late). In any case you should bring with you the equipment specification pamphlets, etc., which came with your appliance. This will help the local mechanic to determine if your appliance may be converted to 220V or 380V, eliminating the need for a transformer; with large appliances this is often possible. If not, be sure to obtain a transformer large enough for your particular appliances. For lamps, no conversion is required just buy 220V light bulbs locally.

#### SPECIAL COMMENTS

There is a requirement in Belgium to have insurance on all leased properties. The responsibility for obtaining this insurance rests with the landlord and the tenant. The insurance of the landlord will cover accidents which may occur in which the renter has no part. The tenant has to obtain insurance against damage to the dwelling (for example fire, water damage, explosions) for which the tenant can be held liable. It is also recommended that you obtain family insurance. Detailed information is available from

local insurance agents or the NPC Welfare Officer.

## TAXES

A number of taxes are mandatory in Belgium. Details of such taxes may be obtained from the NPC Welfare Office. In some regions, owners of television sets and radios, including automobile radios are also liable for an annual tax. As a NPC member you will be exempted to pay the tax by requirement. For detailed information contact the NPC Welfare Officer once you have decided upon your accommodation.

## CONTROL OF ANIMALS

The following short info is to give you a first feeling of what you should take into consideration or you have to respect by bringing pets with you.

### GENERAL

All dogs, cats and ferrets:

- must have a passport;
- have to be tattooed or electronically tagged;
- must be vaccinated against rabies.

At any time, owners must be able to present an International Vaccination Certificate.

When in public or communal areas, the pets are to wear collars with readable name tags showing the owner's name, address, and telephone number. Dogs must be kept on a leash or under strict voice control. It is the responsibility of the dog owner to clean up any faeces left by his/her pet.

### LEGAL LIABILITY

a. Any person keeping an animal is legally responsible for any damage that is caused either when accompanied or when it has strayed or escaped. All pet owners are strongly advised to take out third party insurance coverage for their animals.

b. Additionally, there are Belgian statutory provisions laying down penalties for failure to control domestic animals.

c. Belgian law provides for appropriate sanctions in cases of ill treatment of animals in general and abandonment of domesticated animals in particular.

As you are the owner of any kind of exotic animals it is recommended to contact an appropriate office, asking for detailed information of import or carrying in such animals to Belgium.

On arrival, detailed information is available in SHAPE Directive Number 100-21.

## CHAPTER VI

### SCHOOLS

Your sponsor will provide you with current school information specifically for your own nationality. In general, the available schools are:

#### **AFNORTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.AFNORTH-IS.COM](http://www.afnorth-is.com)**

The AFNorth International School is located at JFC HQ Brunssum, the Netherlands (50 km from Tongeren). For children of US, UK, Canadian, German, Danish, Norwegian, Turkish, Greek, Italian and French military personnel (on a space available basis). Also available to children of NATO civilians. The German and US forces currently provide a school bus service from Tongeren area to Brunssum.

#### **MAASTRICHT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.ISMAASTRICHT.NL](http://www.ismaastricht.nl)**

The International School Maastricht is located in Maastricht, the Netherlands (20 km from Tongeren). The school provides International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCES) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. It also accepts children of Dutch nationality if one of the parents works for the NPC. The IB diploma gives direct access to most universities in the world. The school has a Parent Support Group with a website at [www.ism-psg.org](http://www.ism-psg.org).

#### **LOCAL BELGIAN SCHOOLS**

Local Belgian schools are available for all children. Dutch language is used in the Flemish area, i.e. Tongeren. French is used in the Walloon area, i.e. Liège.

Allowances also exist to assist civilian personnel desiring to place their children in a boarding school outside of Belgium.

## CHAPTER VII FACILITIES IN THE AREA

### MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICES

#### MILITARY MEMBERS AND DEPENDANTS

There are no medical facilities at the NPC. Some nations have limited medical/dental support in the local area; others have none at all. Your sponsor or national authorities will advise you of what facilities will be available for your use.

#### INTERNATIONAL NATO CIVILIANS AND DEPENDANTS

The NATO 'Private Insurance Coverage' covers medical and dental treatment. Treatment is obtained from local civilian doctors and dentists.

#### SHAPE MEDICAL CENTRE

The SHAPE Medical Centre is available to members of NPC (both military and NATO Civilians and their dependants). The SHAPE Medical Centre (Building 401) is composed of the Hospital (a new and modern 60 bed facility which provides in-patient care), and the polyclinic, which provides outpatient care. The polyclinic has an international medical staff of medical officers representing Belgium, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Turkey and the United States. Numerous medical and dental services and specialists are provided within the hospital. Your sponsor will be able to furnish you current information on telephone numbers, visiting, and procedures for scheduling appointments.

### SHOPPING

#### NPC RATIONED ITEM STORE

NPC operates a Rationed Item Store (limited offers). Your sponsor will advise you on offers, hours of operation and procedures.

#### SHAPE SHOPPING CENTRE

The SHAPE I.D. and ration card provides access to the SHAPE shopping centre at Casteau (Mons), including some tax-free facilities. This shopping centre includes: a barber shop, a beauty shop, a bank, a travel agency, a laundry and dry-cleaning services, a bookstore, an automobile service station, self-service laundry and dry-cleaning, a food store, a shoe repair shop, a department store, a tailors shop, a watch repair and optical shop, a flower shop, a rationed items store (tobacco and liquor), a sports shop, a snack bar, a home centre, a Belgian, US and UK Post Office and an all ranks cafeteria.

## **NATEX SHOPPING FACILITIES**

NATEX welcomes NATO I.D. cards supported by a Ration Card which can be used at the shopping facilities. NATEX is located in Geilenkirchen, Germany at the NATO E3A Component. The shopping facility includes: a grocery store, a liquor store, a retail store, casual mode store, 4 seasons store, car rental service, gas station, video store, garage, a small american store and a Country Club restaurant.

## **CHURCHES**

The Ambiorix Barracks in Tongeren has a Roman Catholic chapel (Belgian) and also a Protestant chaplain. Numerous local churches are available, mainly of the Roman Catholic denomination.

## **CLUBS**

Being a relatively small unit, we do not have full club facilities locally. The NPC Club consists of a bar facility in the NPC cafeteria building. There are no membership dues and members may use the SHAPE Club facilities as well. Other clubs available to NPC members are:

### **BE-GUESTHOUSE MEMBERSHIP**

Only Belgian Officers and NCOs with BM status are allowed to become a member. Foreign officers who have accommodation in the barracks are also allowed to, and even have to become members of the guesthouse. The guesthouse manager will give a briefing to those people when they apply.

The restaurant and bar opening hours are from Mon to Fri: 12:00-13:00. During lunchtime, alcohol-containing beverages are only allowed when they are taken from the bar to the table in order to go with the meal. Telephone for Bookings: 76 - 2259 ask for Club Manager.

### **SHAPE-CLUBS**

There are three clubs at SHAPE available to members of the NPC Club; the Officers' Club, the Top Graders' Club and the International Club; membership is restricted to the following:

#### **OFFICERS' CLUB**

All commissioned officers and their families. Grades, 'L', 'B5' and 'B6' NATO civilians. (The latter two categories may also use the Top Graders' Club). National equivalents of the above detailed civilians.

#### **NCO'S CLUB (TOP GRADERS')**

OR-5 and above. 'B' Grade NATO Civilians. National equivalent civilians.

## **INTERNATIONAL CLUB**

All other rank members of SHAPE and civilian equivalents.

## **RECREATION**

The NPC does not have any sports or recreation facilities in its area – except a small fitness room – but does encourage active participation, utilising local and distant facilities. NPC members are involved in everything from horseback riding to darts. The NPC has its own soccer team. Bring your bowling ball; lanes are available in Liège, Tongeren and Maastricht/NL. There are several good golf courses in the vicinity (30-45 minutes drive). Nearly all sports programmes of the NPC are in part subsidised by the NPC Sports and Recreation Committee funds. Tours to various places/countries for sporting events and/or recreation may be arranged either locally, through SHAPE or JFC HQ Brunssum or other military and civilian agencies throughout Europe. Check with your sponsor about availability of recreational activities in which you have a particular interest.

## **BANKING**

There is no bank or ATM at the NPC, but there are many banks located in the area. Your bank preference might depend on your local residence or on a friend's recommendation (or warning). The first transfer of money from your own country to your local bank may take longer than anticipated. You should therefore have some available funds in the form of cash, credit cards or International Cheques/Euro Cards. Ask your sponsor for assistance if you desire to open an account before your arrival.

## **BARBERS**

There is a barber at some days at the NPC, otherwise haircuts can be obtained on the local economy.

## **LANGUAGE COURSES**

NPC provides English and French language courses for NPC members and dependants. For detailed information contact the Personnel Officer or the Personal Assistant of the Commander. The Flemish Government provides free Dutch language courses (day and evening) from September till June. The nearest school is located in Tongeren. For detailed information contact the NPC Welfare Office.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LIFE AT THE NPC

#### DRESS



Uniform, in accordance with national regulations, is the dress for all military personnel during duty hours.

#### DUTY HOURS

Working hours for NPC personnel are based on a five-day working week. As the NPC has implemented flexible working hours the core time on Monday through Thursday is 09:00h to 16:00h, flexible time arrangements are starting at 06:00 h and to be finished not later than 19:00h. On Friday core time is finished earliest 13:00 h and not later than 17:00h. Overall it will be your arrangement to stay in an average of 38:00 h working time (lunch break of 0:30h not included). A limited number of personnel will work in shifts.

#### LEAVE

If you are not following your national leave rules – like at the moment Spain and Turkey – it is SHAPE policy to grant its military members 30 days leave (calendar days) each year. On assignment to SHAPE, each individual is credited those thirty days of annual leave. Every anniversary is credited with an additional 30 days, scheduled for rotation within the coming 12 month period. In which case she/he is granted credit based on two and a half (2.5) days for each month remaining at SHAPE. Each block of thirty days leave must be taken during the eighteen months following the date on which it was credited, and any portion not so used will be forfeited.

“NATO Civilian Personnel Regulations” cover leave regulations for NATO civilians.

#### EXCUSALS FROM DUTY

Military personnel following SHAPE rules of leave may be granted excusal from duty (pass) in addition to the annual leave not to exceed 3 days in each period of 6 months commencing 1 January and 1 July. Full details of this pass, policy and conditions governing leave and excusal from duty, may be found in the NPC Directive or can be obtained from the Personnel Officer.

The Commander may also grant authorised Absences and Duty Absences for various reasons. Rules governing these may also be found in the same NPC Directive.

#### HOLIDAYS

There is a separate list of SHAPE/NPC holidays. These are published and distributed at the end of each year for the succeeding year. In addition to NPC holidays, military personnel may observe the national holidays of their respective countries. This is to be coordinated by your NMR (National Military Representative at SHAPE) or your SNO (Senior National Officer at NPC). National holiday dates are also published annually.

## **MILITARY COURTESIES AND CUSTOMS**

Military personnel are required to maintain the high standard of military courtesy that exists in their own countries. While at SHAPE, all military personnel will wear appropriate duty uniforms and render appropriate courtesies. When outdoors, salutes will be given by ORs to all officers and by junior officers to their seniors; indoors, compliments (salutes and/or greetings) will be paid in the appropriate national manner. In addition, within the NPC area there is a general no hat / no salute policy.

## **SHAPE COMMUNITY LIFE**

SHAPE Community Life is a newspaper published by SHAPE every two weeks. It contains general information concerning events, happenings and items of interest about the SHAPE community.

## **TOGETHER MAGAZINE**

The TOGETHER Magazine is a community magazine published by the NPC three times a year. It contains general information, reports of NPC events, an event calendar and news out of the national communities at the NPC.

## CHAPTER IX VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC

### YOUR VEHICLE IN BELGIUM

#### BRINGING YOUR CAR INTO BELGIUM

The Belgian authorities and SHAPE have agreed on certain procedures for the importation of the privately owned vehicles of members of SHAPE. Your car may be temporarily imported free of taxes and duties. You may not, however, sell or dispose of that car in Belgium without informing the Belgian Customs Authorities, or the Vehicle Registration Office.

If you sell this car to someone who is not a member of SHAPE, he will be liable to pay to Belgian Customs, the import duties and taxes on the car. This regulation could adversely affect the price you get for your car, and should be borne in mind when you make your plans.

**Note:** *If you intend to buy a second-hand car or a new car in Belgium from a dealer you will be exempt from payment of the Sales Tax upon production of a certificate issued by your responsible Personnel Office.*

*If you buy such a car from a private person, you will have to pay the Sales Tax. In either case, you can subsequently dispose of the car as you wish, except that the purchaser will be liable for the 25% Sales Tax.*

#### IMPORTANT PROCEDURES TO ENTER BELGIUM

By driving. If your car already has a set of registration plates of any nationality, you may drive the car across the frontier by showing the registration certificate/log book or comparable document, certificate of insurance (green card) valid for Belgium, and valid national driver's license. The car may then enter Belgium with its original registration plates on a temporary basis, until you can complete the registration procedures at SHAPE outlined below.

Shipping your Car to Belgium. It is considerably simpler to import a car into Belgium, which already has a set of number plates, regardless of the country of issue. It is advisable, therefore, to arrange for any new car to be registered prior to shipment. When your car arrives in Belgium, you can drive it to the NPC with its registration plates.

As soon as your car is at the NPC, you should report to the Security Office. There you have to prove your ownership (Bill of Sale, Registration Certificate or similar document) and information on your car's technical data i.e. weight, value, type of engine, engine number, horsepower, number of cylinders, type of body and its colour, type and colour of upholstery and number of seats. The NPC will arrange the issue of the necessary customs documents.

## INSURANCE

You will not be able to drive your car in Belgium without an International Certificate of Insurance (green card) valid for the BENELUX countries, and showing your Belgian address. You will be required to produce your green card at the Port of Entry. For this purpose, we recommend that you use the NPC official address.

## NEW CAR

If you decide to ship a new car to Belgium, and the car will have no license plates, contact the SHAPE Registrar – through the NPC – before arrival and they will provide full details on this matter. On arrival at the NPC, go to the Security Police office with proof of ownership and the same details on your car as mentioned above. They will then provide you with the necessary forms for endorsement to the Customs officials. The endorsed forms will support your application to register your vehicle and to obtain plates for it. Registration formalities can take up to ten working days, and you may not drive the vehicle until they have been completed.

## REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A special registration system has been approved for privately owned vehicles of NON-Belgian people staying in Belgium for more than 6 months. The system has its own registration plates, bearing a six-digit number. All NON-BELGIAN SHAPE PERSONNEL must initiate registration of their cars under this system within seven days after arrival of the vehicle in Belgium with the SHAPE Provost Marshal, who is the registering authority for the Belgian Government. Registration with the Belgian civil authorities is prohibited. Each individual is personally responsible for Belgian Laws and Regulations concerning vehicle registration, operation and disposal. The registration fee is 67.00 €.

When deciding how many vehicles you intend to bring to SHAPE, you should carefully consider the following factors.

Only the first car is exempt from the annual Belgian Road Tax. The amount of tax for more cars you own and drive in Belgium depends on the size of the car engine.

E.g.	1300 cc	=	approx.	118	Euro
	2000cc	=		261	Euro
	5150 cc	=		1625	Euro

Only the first car receives a duty-free ration of petrol

The SHAPE registration system allows a monthly ration of duty-free petrol (gasoline). Your ration card for the duty free petrol will be issued at the NPC. The amount of duty-free petrol allowed is dependent on the engine size of your vehicle (or primary vehicle if more than one vehicle is registered). Up to 949cc is allowed 125 litres, up to 1749cc is allowed 200 litres, 1750cc and over is allowed 400 litres per month. Petrol coupons may be purchased during the open hours of the NPC RIS store. If your car has a valid registration and is in the process of SHAPE registration, a temporary authorization for purchase of duty free petrol can be obtained pending the issue of your petrol ration card.

## **SAFETY INSPECTION**

All vehicles imported into Belgium older than 4 years must pass a safety inspection (CT = Controle Technique) before they can be registered with SHAPE. A certificate of a satisfactory inspection is required. The cost of inspection is currently 35 €. On your arrival at the NPC, the vehicle registration office will give you all the necessary information pertaining to this inspection.

## **ROADWORTHINESS OF CAR**

Under Belgian Law, it is an offence to operate a car with worn tires, inadequate lights, or faulty brakes. As previously stated, to drive any car in Belgium you must have an International Certificate of Insurance (green card) valid for the BENELUX countries. You should request the green card from your Insurance Company or ask them to recommend a reputable company to assist you. The green card must show your Belgian address. For this purpose, we recommend that you use the NPC official address.

## **DRIVING LICENCES**

In order to drive a SHAPE registered vehicle you will require a SHAPE driving license (only non-European persons). Any of your dependants over the age of 18 who will drive your vehicle will also require such a license. This license will be issued upon display of a valid national license from a nation that uses the International Road Sign System. Persons not in possession of a valid national license must present a certificate of satisfactory completion of driving instruction classes and behind the wheel training from an authorised civilian facility.

## **VEHICLE EQUIPMENT**

Special attention should be given to emergency and safety equipment for your car. Belgian Law requires several items for your vehicle:

A warning triangle made of reflecting material must be in the vehicle at all times.

A Belgian approved first aid kit must be in the vehicle at all times. The kit must contain a list of contents and usage instructions in both French and Flemish. To comply with this requirement means you will probably have to obtain your kit in a local Belgian pharmacy or at SHAPE.

A fire extinguisher must be in the car and placed so as to be accessible to the driver. The fire extinguisher must be of a Belgian Government approved type, so indicated by a seal 'B' stamped on the extinguisher. An identical fire extinguisher from another country, but not containing the 'B' seal, will not meet the requirements of the law.

All cars registered in Belgium are required to have a rear fog light. This light must be Belgian approved type marked 'B1'. It must be fitted in the middle or between the middle and the left side of the vehicle. You may install two fog lights. If this is done, they must be of the Belgian approved type marked 'B2'. These lights may only be used in case of fog, snow or heavy rain.

## IMPORT OF CARAVANS

SHAPE members may import caravans intended for their personal use free of duties and taxes. However, caravans delivered to the personnel in question in Belgium are subject to TVA (there are no provisions in the Status of Forces Agreement or Protocol to allow them to be granted exemption from TVA for purchases made on the Belgian market). A yearly road tax for caravans must be paid.

## RADIO TAX

When a privately owned vehicle is equipped with a radio receiver the owner must pay an annual radio tax (only in the Walloon and German areas). As a NPC member you will be exempted to pay the tax by a requirement. For details please ask the NPC Housing Officer when you arrive. The proof of payment must always be in the car concerned.

## DRIVING SHAPE REGISTERED VEHICLES

Discussions are to be held between SHAPE and the Belgian authorities on the question of who may drive a tax-free SHAPE registered vehicle in Belgium.

As a temporary measure, pending the outcome of those discussions, it has been agreed that the following persons may drive such a vehicle:

- The registered owner
- The dependant of the registered owner holding SHAPE passes
- Any other member of SHAPE or the dependants of such a member holding SHAPE passes, in the condition that the registered owner has asked and holds a corresponding permission given by the Belgian customs.

Provided that in each case the driver:

- Possesses a valid European driver licence or
- Possesses a current SHAPE driving licence, only valid in Belgium, for the type of vehicle being driven, and
- Is covered by insurance to drive the vehicle.

No special authorisation from Belgian Customs is required.

Additionally, a garage employee may drive such a vehicle on public roads, when in the course of road testing the vehicle in connection with repairing or servicing it.

## NOTICE ON THE REGISTRATION OF MOPEDS AND WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO RIDE

All this information is available at the NPC Security Section, please inform yourself before purchasing.

***NOTE: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO ALL REQUESTS CONCERNING CAR REGISTRATION, DRIVER LISENCE, LEGAL REGULATIONS IS AVAILABLE AT THE NPC POLICE OFFICE AND AT THE SHAPE VEHICLE REGISTRATION OFFICE.***

## CHAPTER X

### LEGAL ASPECTS

#### JURISDICTION

While you and your family are residents in Belgium, you are subject to Belgian law.

The Belgian authorities are considerate and helpful to the NPC personnel, and they make every allowance for the newcomer to their country. You should, however, familiarise yourself with the most important regulations concerning road traffic and make every effort to observe them, in the interests of yourself and others on the road.

If you are unfortunate enough to become involved in an infraction of Belgian law, you should co-operate fully with the civil authorities always remembering that your position at the NPC gives you no immunity or diplomatic status. On such occasions, the Provost Marshal Office and Belgian police services are always available to give you advice and assistance. Make sure you and your family are aware of the emergency procedures given here and never hesitate to use them properly.

#### FOREIGNER'S IDENTITY CARDS

Belgian law requires that all foreign nationals having the intention to reside in Belgium must be in possession of a Carte d'Identité d'Etranger (a card bearing the holder's identification details, address and photograph). Application for a Carte d'Identité d'Etranger must be made, within 7 days of arrival in Belgium, at the NPC.

Military personnel – not their families – are exempted from this requirement.

Civilian staff personnel must apply for identity cards through the Security Office at the NPC. Individuals should not apply to any civil authority or commune.

For dependants of SHAPE personnel (military and civilian), it is the responsibility of the heads of families to ensure that application for a Carte d'Identité d'Etranger is made for them in the manner described above.

Other personnel not assigned to SHAPE or NATO support units and their actual dependants (i.e. servants, casual labour, 'au pair') are not registered through SHAPE, but should apply personally to their local commune in accordance with Belgian regulations.

#### ACCIDENT REPORTING

NPC members involved in a motor vehicle accident not attended by the SHAPE International Police are to submit a Vehicle Accident Report (SF 352) within 48 hours to the Security Office NPC.





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