

September 2014

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO)

1. What is the title, rank and position of the Legal Adviser?

Legal Adviser and Director, Office of Legal Affairs
Rank: civilian, A6

2. What are the principal functions of the OLA?

The primary role of the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) is to provide legal advice to the Secretary General of NATO, the International Staff and, as appropriate, the North Atlantic Council and other NATO bodies, on a very broad range of matters. In addition to advising on matters of public international law (such as LOAC/IHL, treaty law and practice, privileges and immunities, and so on), it also advises on the interpretation of the NATO legal texts, internal rules and regulations. OLA also provides legal support in respect of NATO's HR function, and represents the Secretary General in proceedings before the NATO Administrative Tribunal. OLA analyses draft NATO and International Staff policies and regulations to ensure that they are consistent with NATO's legal framework and applicable legal standards and practices. Finally, as the senior legal office within NATO, OLA works closely with other NATO legal advisers, both in military commands and civilian agencies, on questions engaging the responsibilities of the North Atlantic Council, and the Secretary General.

3. Please give a brief description of staff employed by the OLA, including overseas staff. What is the distribution of posts between men and women within the OLA and what category of staff do they respectively belong to?

The grid below sets out the current complement. All 7 staff are of different nationalities and come from a widely varied backgrounds: from former military operational law attorneys to foreign service officers.

Position	Grade	Gender
Legal Adviser and Director, OLA	A6	Male
Deputy Legal Adviser	A5	Male
Senior Assistant Legal Adviser	A4	Female
Senior Assistant Legal Adviser	A3/A4	Male
Assistant Legal Adviser	A2/A3	Female
Assistant Legal Adviser	A2/A3	Male
Legal Assistant	B4	Female

4. Are there any specific recruitment and promotion policies, provisions and/or quotas to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunities, e.g. for the underrepresented sex, for persons with disabilities or for persons belonging to ethnic or religious minorities or of immigrant origin?

NATO is an equal opportunities employer and does not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race or ethnic origin, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or age. In addition, NATO does not have quotas and practices a strict merit-based recruitment.

5. Is OLA staff trained on gender equality issues and are these issues mainstreamed into the OLA's work?

Gender and gender considerations are mainstreamed in by way of NATO's internal HR policy instruments. In addition, one OLA staff member served as a gender adviser for the NATO International Staff prior to joining the legal team.

6. Briefly describe the organisation and structure of the OLA.

The Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) is an independent office. It is headed by the NATO Legal Adviser, who is also the Director of the Office. The Legal Adviser has one Deputy.

7. What is the OLA's place within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

The Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) is an Independent Office within the structure of the International Staff of the NATO Headquarters.

8. What are the main contacts of the OLA within Government?

The Office of Legal Affairs directly supports and advises a broad range of internal clients, including the Secretary General, ASGs and Division Heads, and others.

OLA has strong relationships with many Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, both on specific files of mutual interest, and more generally. In addition, it has an ongoing relationship with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Comité Interministériel pour la Politique du Siège, a Department of the Belgian MFA which is in charge of Headquarters Agreements and Host Nation issues.

9. Please describe the relations of the OLA with lawyers in private practice, academics and legal institutions.

The NATO Office of Legal Affairs is an active member of a rich network of legal practitioners, such as the CAHDI, but also the Co-ordinated Organization's Legal Advisers meetings, and other legal fora. OLA lawyers also take part in high-level academic venues, both as invited speakers and participants. OLA also has active engagements with colleagues in other NATO organizations, as well as MFAs and MODs. Finally, OLA lawyers engage with private practitioners frequently, whether as opposing counsel on matters before the NATO Administrative Tribunal, or other contentious matters.

10. Please provide a brief bibliography on the OLA, if available.

Please see "OLA: NATO's Legal Eagles", in NATO Staff Centre Magazine (Dec 2013).