



# General Annual Report on ESDC Activities

April 2011

## Summary and Recommendations

### ***Aim and scope of the report***

1. The General Annual Report on ESDC Activities covers the period from April 2010 to April 2011. It presents the main findings regarding training activities conducted, the functioning of the network and its governance structure and makes recommendations for further improving them.
2. Once adopted by the Steering Committee, this report will be forwarded to the relevant Council bodies.

### ***Main findings***

3. The ESDC consolidated its position as a well-balanced network comprising security policy, diplomatic and other civilian institutes, higher defence institutes and universities, as well as the EU Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS). Up to now, some 50 institutes/other training actors from almost all Member States have been actively engaged in conducting ESDC training activities. In addition, the ESDC is further deepening its co-operation with external training actors, drawing on their specific expertise.<sup>1</sup>
4. The current network configuration, its ability to convene in project-orientated formats, e.g. the recently- established format in support of the EU pool of SSR experts, as well as the number and the types of courses, allows the ESDC to fulfil its main mission and objectives, which are to develop and promote a common understanding of CSDP among civilian and military personnel and to enhance the European security culture within the CSDP. Thus, the ESDC makes a significant contribution to the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management.

### ***Training activities***

5. In line with its training concept, the ESDC diversified the courses it offers to ensure that appropriate training will be provided to personnel working in the field of CSDP, ranging from those at working/desk level up to high-ranking staff/decision- makers and experts working in specialised CSDP-related areas. This was achieved by bringing a variety of specialised courses developed by Member States' training institutes under the umbrella of the ESDC.
6. During the last 12 months, 30 different training activities have made it possible to train about 1200 staff (diplomats, police, other civilians and military) from all Member States, relevant EU Institutions (EEAS, Council, Commission, Parliament) and agencies. This has added significantly to the overall training record of the ESDC since its establishment in 2005. It has increased in size, now numbering about 3500 staff.<sup>2</sup>
7. More importantly, about 90 % of the registered course participants are working in the field of CFSP/CSDP either in the EU institutions or in their national

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2 for a complete list of the training actors engaged so far within the ESDC network.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex 3 for a complete list of all ESDC activities during the last 12 months including number of participants.

delegations and capitals. This proves that the ESDC activities address the right target audience.

8. The current annual training capacity that can be made available under the ESDC network can be considered to be about 1200 civilian and military staff.
9. The ESDC has continued to open up courses to participants from third states and international organisations and thus helps to meet a growing demand in the context of the EU's developing partnerships in the field of CSDP.
10. The CSDP High- Level Course 2010/2011 "Paul-Henri Spaak" is the first of its kind, with only four residential modules. It will end in June 2011, to be followed by a thorough evaluation by the EAB in early autumn with a particular focus on the new set-up of the course.
11. The CSDP Orientation Course is still one of the most important standard courses, and it remains much in demand by Member States, EU Institutions, Candidate Countries and increasingly from third states and international organisations. The five courses offered during the last year were not enough to meet the demand.
12. In the context of the "European initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus", three additional Common CSDP Modules have been conducted at military academies in Austria and Greece, involving young officers from other Member States. These one-week modules, which follow a course curriculum similar to the CSDP Orientation Course, proved to be a success, contributing to a significant increase in the number of exchange opportunities.<sup>1</sup>
13. The ESDC also conducted a number of seminars and conferences. Due to limited Secretariat resources, an annual networking conference bringing together civilian and military training actors in CSDP could not be organised.
14. Promoting professional relations and contacts between training participants is an important objective of the ESDC activities. One Alumni seminar took place in September 2010 for former course participants at the higher level courses/seminars. Networking is considered to be more and more important in the context of other training activities, including non-proliferation and those in support of the EU pool of SSR experts.
15. The availability of suitable conference facilities for the conduct of ESDC courses in Brussels is becoming an increasing challenge in the light of the growing number of meetings in the Council and Commission buildings and the allocation of conference rooms between the EEAS and the Council Secretariat.

***Internet-based Distance Learning System and the development of training material***

16. Almost all ESDC training activities were supported by the Internet-Based Distance Learning (IDL) System, including the CSDP Knowledge Base. IDL expanded in the first part of 2010 but has since then been developing at a slower pace due to the departure of the IDL Course and Content Manager in September 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 4 for a complete overview of modules conducted and the number of participants from Member States.

17. IDL is highly regarded by course participants, other EU institutions/agencies as well as international organisations and other relevant actors such as the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the NATO Defence College. The obvious desire to use and contribute to IDL material indicates a compelling requirement for staff with appropriate skills and capabilities to ensure the continuity and quality of this important education tool. Without a properly updated and operational IDL system, the quality of training, the savings in time and money during the residential courses and modules will no longer be possible.
18. The use of IDL to update the knowledge of new staff or those about to be deployed abroad with the basics of CSDP is an option. However, pure e-learning methods have their limitations (lack of personal contact, networking and feed-back), which must be kept in mind.
19. The ESDC is tasked with developing and producing training material for EU training in CSDP. The publication of the CSDP Handbook was the first concrete project in this regard. The handbook is highly appreciated by both the course participants and by many practitioners and academics working in the field of CFSP/CSDP. Almost 3000 copies have been distributed in English and German. A second edition is currently being worked on.

***Functioning and work of the Executive Academic Board***

20. The Executive Academic Board (EAB) significantly improved its working methods by applying a more systematic approach to evaluation, curriculum review and programming, in close contact and co-operation with the experts from the EU Institutions. This allows training institutes participating in the network to take into account lessons learnt from EU missions and operations as well as new policies and concepts in their CSDP training activities.
21. In particular through the creation of the EAB in support of Security Sector Reform training and the Secretariat's contribution to the analysis of the training requirements of the SSR pool of experts, the ESDC is further consolidating its leading role as coordinator in this field of training and is significantly contributing to setting standards for the training of the EU pool of SSR experts.
22. The implementation of the "European initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus" is progressing in terms of joint training opportunities and other exchange activities. However, there remain limitations due to the current staff shortage in the ESDC Secretariat. Moreover, several Member States have requested some form of EU financial support for the implementation of the initiative. A separate detailed report will be presented by the Implementation Group and subsequently forwarded by the HR to Defence Ministers in May.
23. The network principle of the ESDC is proving to be of mutual benefit for both the EU and the national institutes. It makes available national training capacities for the benefit of all in support of CSDP, and it links national institutes to EU institutions, helps to raise the standards of their CSDP training and to link the training of the personnel with their staff, mission and operational deployments.

**ESDC Secretariat**

24. On the one hand, the ESDC network is developing very well in line with the guidance given by the Steering Committee in previous years. On the other, the staffing situation of the Secretariat has been and remains an issue of major concern. It is starting to jeopardise the significant progress achieved in the development and functioning of the network. Running a growing ESDC network as described above and at the same time guaranteeing the quality of the work by a Secretariat of just two senior staff supported by a single secretary is very problematic.
25. In this context, the recruitment of the IDL Course and Content Manager remains a top priority.

**Recommendations**

26. The above-mentioned findings have led to the following recommendations for improving the ESDC and its activities:
  - a. Many of the ESDC deficiencies are closely linked to the current staffing situation of its Secretariat. In this regard, the situation assessment made and the parameters defined by the Steering Committee in autumn 2008 for the further development of the ESDC remain valid. In terms of staffing, this includes the Head of ESDC, three Training Managers, one IDL Course and Content Manager and one Secretary. One of the Training Managers should have relevant expertise to put the ESDC Secretariat in a better position to provide management support for training in the civilian field of crisis management.  
Therefore, the highest priority must now be given to implementing the Steering Committee recommendations that have been agreed by the Council in December 2008, which is also an important condition for an effective implementation of the following recommendations.
  - b. Existing training capacities of the Member States should be further exploited to meet EU training requirements. Member States and their civilian and military training actors should therefore continue to engage actively in line with the ESDC training concept and new training requirements.
  - c. In this context, the ESDC should continue to enhance its co-operation with external training actors.
  - d. The Executive Academic Board supported by the Secretariat should continue and further optimise its systematic evaluation, planning and programming cycle in close co-operation with the EU crisis management structures and other relevant EU institutions and agencies.
  - e. Given the growing interest of the EU partners in co-operating in the field of CSDP, the ESDC - taking into account existing resources - should enhance its outreach activities to promote a good understanding of this policy. This should include, but not remain limited to, opening up more ESDC orientation courses to participants from third parties.

- f. The ESDC Secretariat should pursue as a priority the further development of the IDL System. A particular focus should be on new learning content which presents CSDP aspects in the wider context of CFSP. Furthermore, the possibility to make the IDL System also available to a wider audience through pure e-learning courses should be further explored.
- g. Provision should be made for more regular ESDC Alumni Seminars to facilitate networking, in particular among the participants at high level courses/seminars and in the future possibly for the Alumni of other specialised courses.
- h. The annual Networking Conference to inviting all actors in the field of CSDP training should be organised on a regular basis.
- i. Given the growing challenge regarding the availability of conference facilities, the ESDC Secretariat should conduct a study in close co-operation with the relevant EU institutions and present options for guaranteed access to suitable and sufficient conference facilities in Brussels.

27. The Steering Committee is invited to agree on the above recommendations.

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Annexes:

1. Detailed report on ESDC activities
2. List of training actors involved in ESDC activities since 2005
3. Chronology of all ESDC activities during the last 12 months including the number of participants
4. Overview of all Common CSDP Modules conducted