

Implementation Group

Doc.: IG/2011/013

Date : 12 September 2011

Origin: SECRETARIAT

Addendum to the evaluation reports on the CSDP modules organised during the academic year 2010-2011

The satisfaction of the sending institutions

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Executive summary - Lessons identified and recommendations for the organisation of future modules:

The following lessons have been identified and are available for consideration by future module organisers/institutions:

- The participating cadets train to become familiar with their future working environment, with concepts of interoperability and the realities of other national armed forces;
- Interaction with other European cadets and acquiring knowledge on CSDP are equally important and fundamental aspects of these modules;
- International participation is key for the success of these modules;
- The practice of foreign languages is a key component of this experience;
- These modules foster curiosity in European issues and provide the participants with the key for autonomous basic research on these aspects;
- The participants may share their experience or gained knowledge with their colleagues at their national institutes informally or formally;
- 1,5 ECTS seems to be a commonly agreed amount for these modules but solutions with 2 ECTS may be proposed in order to extend the scope of potential participants;
- Recognition of this experience in the national curricula remains the main challenge for these modules and the European officers' education in general;
- Satisfaction has reached a (very) high level;
- These modules are now commonly accepted as a valuable pedagogic experience at the European level.

Introduction:

As presented in the evaluation reports on the organisations of the common modules on CSDP in Austria¹ and Greece in the course of the academic year 2010-2011, the assessment should be completed with an analysis of the satisfaction of the institutions which allowed their cadets participating to these modules. This additional part of the evaluation is inspired by the Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation of advanced training², which had been used as a guide for the overall process. In the Kirkpatrick's model, the fourth level of the evaluation corresponds to the assessment of the results, *i.e.* the effects on the business or the environment of the trainee's added value after completing the training. Consequently, the evaluation process shall normally use business or organisational performance indicators.

Due to the particular nature of the modules that are assessed hereby and because the "trainees" go back to an other educational process - more global - after these modules, it is inadequate to use similar indicators to business performances, for example. Based on the idea behind the level four evaluation, we have therefore opted to address the impact, in a more general way, of the organisation of these modules on the normal conduct of the educational activities of the sending institutions.

These institutions, indeed, shall be considered as stakeholders in the organisation of these modules, since they entrusted the organisers in Austria and Greece with a part of the training of their cadets and, somehow, delegated their powers in allowing their counterparts to award ECTS and diploma supplements which could be recognised as a valid part of their own educational activities. In this regard, they might also be considered as "participants" to these modules. Their satisfaction, as mentioned earlier, was thus assessed through questionnaires distributed at the end of the academic year 2010-2011. It is worth mentioning already that a limitation of this specific assessment, hereby presented, consists in the relatively low number of responding institutions (8 out of more than 20). Overall, the results obtained on the basis of the limited number of replies had been mostly similar to the satisfaction investigations conducted in 2009-2010³, which was the first year these modules were organised. Furthermore, the breakdown corresponds in the same extent to the assessment made by the individual participants, meaning that they can be regarded as excellent and most encouraging, which show that these CSDP modules have effectively met the criteria of excellence pursued in the European military officers' basic education.

Feedbacks from the sending institutions:

As illustrated by the graph below, the institutions feel that the modules have successfully achieved their primary objective (average 5 out of 6), which consists in giving the tools for communicating on CSDP matters to the European cadets. In their comments, they stressed the fact that the participation to the modules had been an excellent introductory insight of and contact with the European Union and its defence and that it undoubtedly favours, through the contact with foreign cadets, the emerging of a European culture of security and defence. Some insisted also on the fact that, independently from previous knowledge possibly acquired in the national basic curricula the repetition of facts and figures associated to CSDP and the mutual

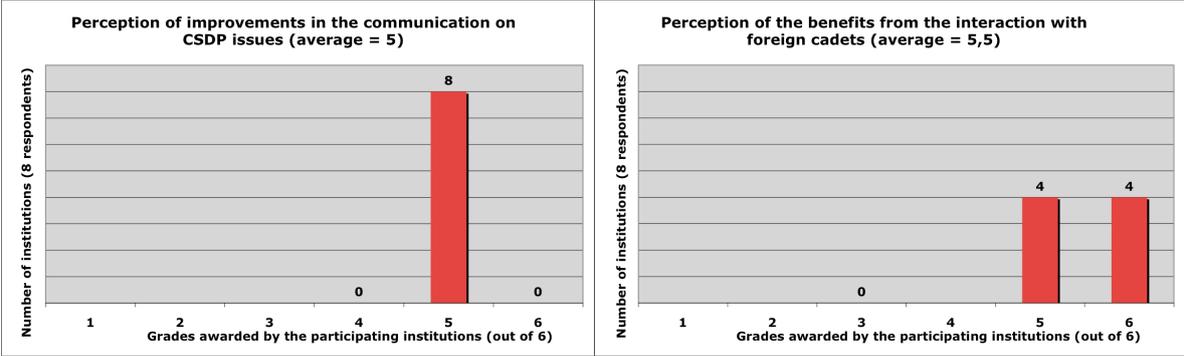
¹ "Common Security and Defence Policy Module – External Evaluation Report, Theresan Military Academy, Austria", Sylvain Paile, January 2011, available: <http://www.emilyo.eu/>.

² Donald L. Kirkpatrick & James D. Kirkpatrick, *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1998.

³ "Addendum to the evaluation reports on the ESDP/CSDP modules organised during the academic year 2009-2010", Sylvain Paile, September 2010, available: <http://www.emilyo.eu/>.

confrontation of their knowledge can only reinforce the level of attachment to this European dimension of their profession. It is proposed, to this end, to add the writing of an essay to the core of the assignments to the participants.

The benefit from the interaction with other European cadets is, according to the institutions and their students, the strongest point of these modules as demonstrated by the average grade awarded (5,5 out of 6) and the following graph. The intercultural dimension and environment are seen as the most valuable asset of these experiences because, as most of the respondents reported, they train them to become familiar with their future working environment, with concepts of interoperability and the realities of other national armed forces. Some also stressed the fact that it allowed them, from a more “corporate” point of view, to discuss about their respective national curricula. It has been observed by the Austrian organisers of the CSDP module, furthermore, that the international participation is a key for success of such modules and for the satisfaction, in a global way, of the participants themselves.

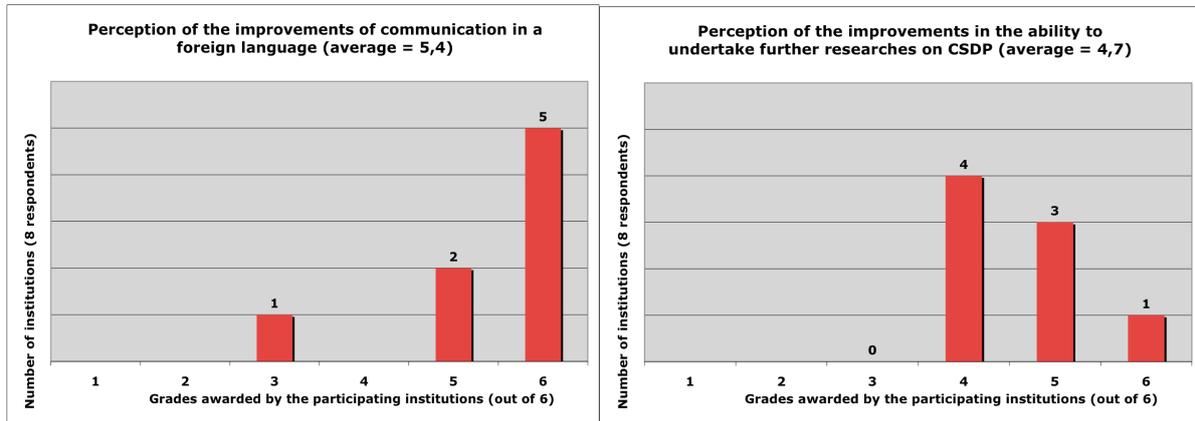


The institutions also expressed their high level of satisfaction regarding the opportunity presented by these modules to make their students improve their communication skills in a foreign language, as illustrated below (average 5,4). According to them, their students could exercise on the field the knowledge they were provided within their national institutions and acquire more self-confidence and vocabulary, not only through working situations but also through their informal interactions. In order to reinforce the importance of this practice, it has been suggested to ask the cadets to prepare a short lecture on CSDP issues. A comment has also been made in relation with the level in foreign languages of the speakers. Their own aptitudes, indeed, impact on the improvement of the communication of the students themselves and the comment emphasized the necessity for maintaining high level standards in the choice of the lecturers.

In a general way, the institutions considered that the modules had provided the cadets with the basic skills for undertaking further researches on CSDP-related subjects if they so wish, as shown by the graph below (average 4,7). Some of them also stated that these courses have not only raised curiosity and interests, but that these interests had soon after been translated into actual master thesis, for example⁴. However, if it has been felt that the fundamentals for an independent research - such as information on key sources - were provided, it has also been recalled that the opportunities to make these researches depend to a large extent on the shapes

⁴ Some of the institutions reported in the questionnaires about the increase of studies undertaken by their students on CSDP-related subjects. From the academic year 2009-2010 to the year 2010-2011, the number of studies in average for these responding institutions almost doubled. The limited numbers of respondents has also been caused by the formulation of the question in the questionnaires distributed to the institutions since it appeared it was confusing. Besides, no comparison could be made of the evolutions between 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 since the respondents were different in the two “level four” surveys (2009-2010 and 2010-2011).

and organisations of the military curricula. However, contrary to 2009-2010 investigations, none of the (few) respondents reported on the feeling that the contents of the modules were too high level for the cadets, which tends to demonstrate that the CSDP modules are progressively considered as a “traditional” academic offer.



For the first year, the question was posed to the sending institutions whether their cadets had the possibility to share their experience and knowledge acquired through these modules with their colleagues at the national basic education institutes. If most of the respondents declared that the trainees have done so informally through social interaction or during unspecified learning times, some other institutions have alternatively or additionally organised, or declared their intention to do so in the future, this feedback from experience, notably through the communication, publication and presentation of the participants’ reports to the other cadets.

Regarding the recognition by the institutional stakeholders of these experiences, two questions were included in the questionnaire. The results are presented in the next two graphs. On the adequacy of the number of credits given (1,5 ECTS in both modules), the institutions expressed their global satisfaction, in the grades they awarded (average 5). They considered in their comments that this amount was adequate on the basis of workload, for the majority of them, and on the basis of the outcomes, for one of them, thus revealing different cultures on the definition of the ECTS. Furthermore, one of the organisers of the 2010-2011 CSDP modules proposed a 2-ECTS solution, which would ease the participation of other Member States and institutions to the common modules⁵, in extending the number of residential hours or including a seminar paper to the core of the assignments. One respondent, finally, declared that the module is not recognised as a part of the national curricula.

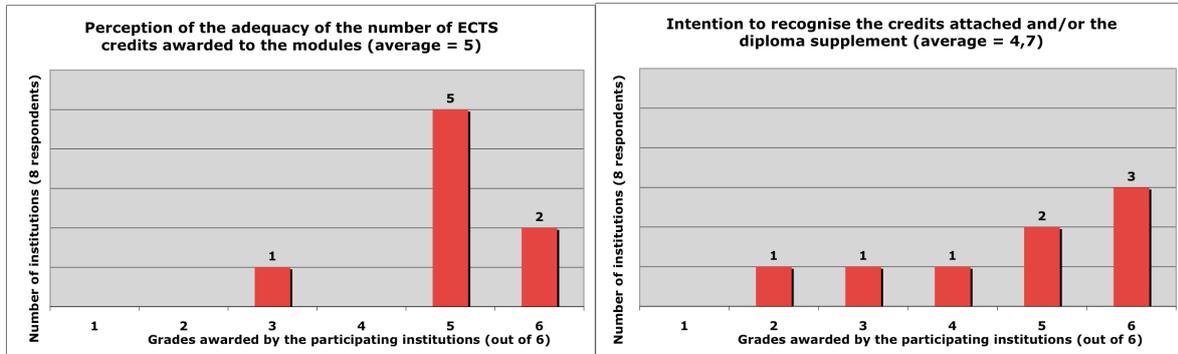
Regarding the intentions to effectively recognise the credits given or to mention the completion of these specific courses in the diploma supplements, as illustrated by the second graph below, the average grade obtained amounted 4,7 although only 4,3 in 2009-2010, thus proving that the CSDP module begins to take root in the European military education systems. The breakdown of answers and comments attached, however, are more diffuse and correspond to the situation observed already in 2009-2010. These “stages” may be summarised as follows, starting from the fullest recognition:

- Full recognition with integration of these modules in the regular academic offer of the institution;

⁵ Some EU Member States and basic military education institutes do not recognise the half points as it concerns ECTS credits. See Sylvain Paile (2010), *op. cit.*

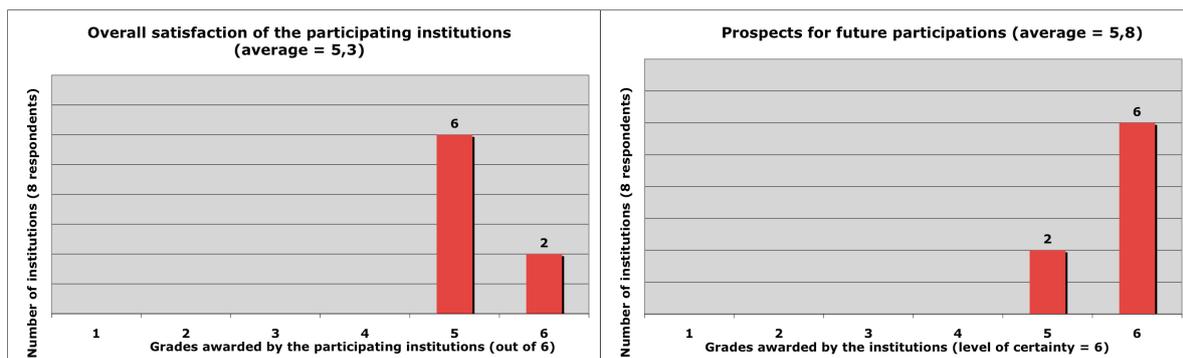
- Full recognition of the credits and mention in the diploma supplement delivered by the home institution;
- The procedures for the recognition are pending, because of internal organisation or because of the implementation of the appropriate legal procedures;
- Recognition in the diploma supplement (or in cadet's record) but pending for the amount of credits;
- The recognition is not possible at the moment or is expected to become possible.

The recognition, broadly understood, thus remains an objective to pursue and accompany at the European level, possibly in reaching common standards, in order to achieve the objectives of mobility set by the Initiative for the exchange of young officers.



The overall level of satisfaction of the sending institutions may be considered as excellent, with an average grade of 5,3, as illustrated below. The comments that were added confirm this trend and salute the initiative and successful organisation by the Austrian and Greek military academies. The role of the ESDC Secretariat as an effective and efficient support to this organisation notably for the IDL phase has been stressed, as well as the importance of the constant communication between sending and hosting institutions. As sources for improvements, some of the respondents highlight the importance of the pre-existing level of knowledge and skills in foreign languages for the choice of participants. A suggestions has also been made for shortening some of the lectures and improving the access to the internet on the location of the modules... Which proves that the participants' feedbacks have been reflected in the opinion of their institutes.

When asked whether they would participate again in similar modules in sending cadets in the future, the answer of the stakeholders is clearly and enthusiastically "yes", pending budgetary and hierarchical authorisations of course. The average grade obtained was 5,8 out of 6 although it amounted "only" 5,4 for the first year of organisation of these modules, thus confirming their enrooting in the use and culture of the European officers' basic education.



Conclusion:

This last stage of the evaluation of the CSDP modules conducted during the academic year 2010-2011 has confirmed the conclusions drawn from the assessment of the participants' satisfaction, which reached a high level, objectively. However, it is also an added value in the evaluation processes because it gives the opportunity to the institutions, which trusted one of their counterpart with the training of their future military elites, to present and – indirectly - debate about their views on pedagogy and education in general. The results of this survey are most encouraging for the future organisations of similar experiences, not only for CSDP modules but also for other common modules that are called for. It appears, indeed, that the CSDP modules have succeeded in becoming a “tradition” of the European military education, or at least are now commonly accepted and expected. Nevertheless, such investigations reveal also that issues like the recognition of the value of such common pedagogic experiences in the national curricula remain, years after years, challenges to be dealt with.