

# European Security and Defence Policy Seminar, Lisbon 2009

## A small step for capability, a significant leap for “Military Erasmus”

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*“Focusing on the initial phase of our officer training and education seems very small step but any measures taken promptly to improve our human resources responsible for implementing CFSP/ESDP will impact over time and help to make Europe more effective”*

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for CFSP  
(Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 4)

### Abstract

*The first European Security and Defence Policy Seminar was intended to have great impact on the formation and strengthening of the European identity of military Officers from European Union Member States, especially the ones who come from Military Academies. The initiative had its origin in the second half of 2008 under the French Presidency of the Union. The goal set was achieving a “Military Erasmus”. In the first half of 2009, Portugal offered to host the pilot course, which received great reception from the majority of EU Member States and was supported by the High Representative for the ESDP .*

*This seminar incorporated the principles advocated by the Bologna Declaration, awarding 1.5 ECTS that will be recognized by Military Academies of the Member States, and it was attended by two students per Member State, bringing together individuals from Military Establishments of Higher Education and Universities from the European Union.*

### Introduction

The weaknesses of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) have long been discussed among academics. One of the most notable hard issue is the capability one, alongside with the lack of interoperability in the European Union (EU). The central point of this discussion has been the lack of material means, but few have been written regarding the soft issues (human dimension, *i.e.* the capability and the interoperability issue among military personnel).

The first issue we would like to address is the general question: what makes a capability. According to the EU Military Staff and the European Defence Agency, a Capability is the integration of manpower, equipment, performance, sustainability, deployability, readiness, doctrine, interoperability and training (European Defence Agency, 2006). Therefore, the training area, alongside with the doctrine, are crucial elements of a capability, and they interact – and provide – interoperability.

On the capability development – related with the European Defence Industry – the European Defence Agency (EDA) is fully committed, and is performing a significant effort in persuading EU Member States (MS) to deepen their defence procurement and industry development. EDA has also been making some efforts regarding the doctrine area. Still, its main goal is in the Defence Industry.

On the other hand, the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), established in 2005, has the aim of providing strategic-level education in ESDP. The ESDC is also the key provider of ESDP-related training. So, it comes with no surprise that the ESDC immediately embraced the initiative of fostering EU MS Armed Forces initial training, including a specific module on ESDP in their education.

The programme designed to foster EU MS was started by the French presidency of the Union, and it was named “initiative for the exchange of young officers in their initial education, inspired by Erasmus”. In this article we will address the initiative, the Lisbon Seminar, the outcomes of the Seminar and draw some tentative conclusions.

## **1. The initiative for the exchange of young officers in their initial education, inspired by Erasmus**

### 1.1 Contributing to the enhancement of a European culture of Security and Defence

The French EU Presidency – held during the second semester 2008 – proposed an initiative to boost the exchanges of cadets between the military higher education institutions and created an especially dedicated working cell within the Ministry of Defence’s (MoD) structure. From September 2007 to June 2008, the so-called “military Erasmus” cell studied the interests of such an initiative for the Member States and their institutions. It developed a questionnaire to be sent to the MS in order to proceed to a stocktaking of the military education in Europe and to ask the military institutions about their expectations related to the project. The Council Secretariat conducted this stocktaking phase and based on this, drafted a series of recommendations with the objective of improving the European interconnection of the educational systems.

The General Affairs and External Relations Council with Defence Ministers endorsed these recommendations in the Declaration of November 10<sup>th</sup> 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2008). The initiative intends to enhance a European culture in the field of security and defence, based on the fostering of a conscience of sharing a same identity and goals among the concerned actors.

In this sense, we may propose, to distinguish two main directions that use the initiative for acting on the ESDP acculturation and stimulate two correspondent aspects of an emerging security and defence culture: a formal direction and a normative one.

The formal direction is meant, in our mind, to accustom students to the role they might fulfil in the European defence learning context. Although European armed forces may be involved in various forms of multinational operations such as United-Nations’ missions or NATO operations, flexibility shall be outlined as a major asset of the European officer’s nature. At the institutional level, that suggests notably the launching of a debate within the military institutions on the conditions of using languages such as English; adaptation of ECTS system to vocational training; or the use of cooperation instruments such as the Erasmus. The recommendations outline some of these points, as explained above, in stressing the mobility challenges. Through exchanges of knowledge and values, the initiative would trigger a first step towards “Europeanization” of the defence education and consequently hopefully stimulate the emergence of a European culture of defence.

The normative direction deals with the amount of knowledge of the students related to the European defence issues, which the recommendations encourage to raise. In that sense, this point

is subject for debate only at the national military institutions’ level: amount of courses related to such issues, importance of these teachings in the curricula (compulsory or not, ECTS attached, time organisation, etc.).

Besides these two main directions followed by the initiative, a third one might be outlined, which can be named as a “crossover” possibility. It gathers both the formal and normative directions in providing an adequate European environment to a specific ESDP education. A practical implementation of this idea might be developed through projects of combined educations that are called for in the recommendations. The organisation of common academic modules by partner institutions, possibly under the aegis of the ESDC, would provide the students a common knowledge in a common environment. In that sense, academic resources might also be rationalized and optimised, with common values arising from these social interactions. This specific possibility would then combine both the two cultural aspects mentioned above and constitute an important symbol for the emergence of a European security and defence culture. The experimental Seminar on the ESDP specially addressed to the cadets and organised by Portugal is an on-site realisation of this particular aspect of the initiative.

## 1.2 The European support to the creation of a common training to ESDP

As early as February 2009, the possibility of organizing common modules on ESDP for the European cadets was defined as a priority by the implementation group of the initiative that was set. A specific sub-group was created and started investigating the support that would certainly be required by the educational institutions in order to spread knowledge related to ESDP issues. Four directions were particularly emphasized for the work of this sub-group.

The first one was to give to the potential lecturers the information about the developments of the ESDP, the material and resources they would need when planning and organising training modules for the cadets, under the form of a “Train-the-trainers” seminar. The second one was to investigate the possible needs for accessing the Internet-Distance Learning material of the European Security and Defence College, as a support for the organisation of such modules. The ESDC could enable the European military educational institutions access to its material upon respect to the copyright rules applicable to this instrument. The third direction consisted in investigating the possibility of organizing this kind of seminar simultaneously in several institutions as to have impact on a maximum number of future officers. The fourth direction, finally, required more thinking and group work. It consisted in developing a training material to be provided to the willing host institutions and supporting their projects of seminars. This training material was to be based on the model of the ESDP Orientation course delivered by the ESDC in the conduct of its activities, but had to be adapted to a cadets’ audience and to be regularly updated as to take into account the latest developments of the ESDP.

As such, the goal was not to limit the ESDP modules to the combined dimension of the cultural outcomes (*i.e.* spreading knowledge of the EU policies in a European environment) but encompassed also the possibility that this module be nationally given, possibly at the same time in several institutions. It was also clear that the ESDC would extensively support the organisation of these ESDP modules in all its aspects. Therefore, Portugal decided in April 2009 to organise a one-week seminar in September in its three Navy, Army and Air Force Academies<sup>1</sup> and to invite cadets from all the EU Member States to participate. The pilot “Train-the-trainers” Seminar was organised and held in Brussels in early June, hosted by the Royal Military Academy of Belgium under the aegis of the ESDC, as a first visible materialization of the objectives set for the working sub-group. The Portuguese organization team of the forthcoming seminar was thus invited to

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<sup>1</sup> Being a country of sailors, in Portugal, Navy is the senior service and has the senior Academy.

participate in this pilot training, which consisted in the completion of the Internet Distance Learning (IDL) modules, presentations of the latest developments in the field of ESDP, and group thinking related to the organisation of the seminar.

However, at this time, the training material to be issued by the sub-group and described in its objectives was being finalised and could not be made available to the Portuguese organisers<sup>2</sup>. They thus developed a project, which was a pilot one regarding the objectives assigned, with a proper academic coherence ratified by the European Security and Defence College.

## 2. The Lisbon seminar:

Since the first stages of the Initiative, Portugal immediately embraced it and supported it, alongside with all EU MS. During the Czech presidency of the EU, in the Brno Seminar, from April 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, Portugal formally declared that it was available to conduct the pilot project of developing a European security and Defence Seminar in September 2009. The Portuguese Minister of Defence (MoD) assigned the task to develop the project, with the collaboration of the ESDC to the three Military Academies: Navy, Army and Air Force.

The coordination and the outline of the Seminar kept in mind the Standard Curriculum approved by the ESDC in October 14<sup>th</sup> 2008. The Seminar was organized in two parts: an e-learning module, using the available IDL platform, with the Autonomous Knowledge Units (AKU) 1 (History and Context of ESDP Development) and AKU 2 (European Security Strategy), giving students the possibility of having some previous knowledge of ESDP matters; and a residential part in Lisbon, from September 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. The Seminar would award 1,5 ECTS Credits to its participants.

The ECTS awarding came easy to the Portuguese Military Higher Education Institutions, since all Military Academies are perfectly integrated in the Portuguese Higher Education System, and in the Bologna Process. Currently the initial part of the education of young officers is an integrated Master Degree.

The participants inscription in the Seminar was centralized in the ESDC, using the ENLIST System<sup>3</sup>. The Portuguese Minister of Defence (MoD) and the three Academies asked for external evaluation, which was provided by a researcher of the European Studies Unit of the University of Liege, in close collaboration with the ESDC.

### 2.1 The goals of the Seminar

The Seminar clearly assigned three goals: enhancing the knowledge of ESDP, creating networking capabilities, and providing a glance into the Portuguese culture and history.

#### 2.1.1 Enhancing the knowledge of ESDP

As for the first objective, the outline of the residential part was drawn, according to a clear logical sequence. The seminar was organized on the basis of 90 minutes panels, inviting lecturers from EU MS, both academic and military. These panels were organized in two parts: a communication from the lecturers, followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session, allowing the interaction with the students.

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<sup>2</sup> The training material was finalised and made available during the summer 2009. *A posteriori*, this material approached the main themes that were chosen by the Portuguese organisation.

<sup>3</sup> The ENLIST system is used by the ESDC, with national PoC, allowing MS to inscribe students in ESDC Courses.

In the first panel on ESDP History and Institution the students could understand the development of the EU, and current organization, with a special focus on ESDP. In order to understand better this “blob” that is the EU, the second panel addressed the Geopolitical Characterization of the EU. This would help to explain the EU Foreign Policy. In the third panel the students were presented the European Security Strategy (ESS), analysing the 2003 and the 2008 document. The following panel addressed the ESDP Institutional Framework and the decision making process. In the next day, the panels addressed the ESDP Civil and Military Capabilities. Still because we know that those capabilities are not enough, we also addressed the Capabilities Development Process. The following panel addressed EU Neighbourhood Policy, aimed at understanding EU interests in its near borders.

Knowing the goals, the decision making process and the capabilities, the seminar addressed real life operations, analysing ESDP missions and operations. In this panel we addressed a military operation (RD Congo), a civilian mission (EULEX Kosovo) and a naval military operation (EU NAVFOR ATALANTA), so and accordingly, in these missions and operations the EU interacts with global partners. In the following panel we analysed EU relations with the United Nations, NATO and the African Union.

In the last day the students addressed the Future of ESDP. In the first panel we detailed the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, and in the following panel we discussed future developments of ESDP, with a speaker from the Council, addressing the Council vision; a speaker from the Commission, addressing how the Commission can contribute to this future vision; and a representative from the Spanish future EU presidency addressing what are the priorities of Spain’s presidency on ESDP. The final panel addressed the relationship between the host nation and ESDP, focusing on the contribution of Portugal to the development of ESDP.

Regarding the lecturers, the organizing Academies invited Portuguese and EU speakers, both academic and military, giving the students a wide perspective on real life issues as well as academic.

### 2.1.2 Creating networking capabilities

A second objective of the seminar was creating networking capabilities among the students. For that purpose, the Portuguese Academies designed several actions. The first action was an ice-breaker welcome dinner on September 6<sup>th</sup>. In the distribution per rooms, all delegations were divided randomly, forcing the students to interact with the roommates. The organization also reserved some free time, allowing the students to interact and know each other, both indoors and outdoors.

Regarding the tools, the EMILYO webpage (<http://www.emilyo.eu/>) was presented to the students, and a forum was also created. A list of all participants was distributed and a Facebook group was created. This group has been very active, and students are starting to interact at a European level.

### 2.1.3 A glance into the Portuguese culture and history

The third objective was to provide the students with a glance of Portugal military history and culture. For that purpose, the seminar was held in all three Military Academies, providing the students with a view of the Portuguese military traditions, and the daily life of Portuguese cadets.

As for the Portuguese culture and history, daily tours were organized with a logical sequence covering Lisbon’s most important tourist areas, and always after the daily lectures.

## 2.2 The logistics of the Seminar

This seminar required a very detailed logistics support. Sending MS only had to support the flight to Lisbon and back. The Military Academies initiated a joint logistic operation in order to pick up all students from Lisbon Airport. Portugal volunteered to support all the students’ accommodations and catering at the Army Military Academy, in Lisbon. Because students were coming from different origins, the Military Academy was ready to receive the students on the weekend before the start of the seminar (Saturday and Sunday) and also had accommodation and transport available in the following weekend (Saturday and Sunday).

As for the international lecturers, Portugal supported one flight from origin to Lisbon and back, plus one night in a hotel in Lisbon.

Externally, the Academies requested material to the Council, the EDA, and the EU Institute of Security Studies, as well as the national Jacques Delors Institute. This made possible to have available a welcome package to each student with several books and information on ESDP, providing the necessary means to undertake a preliminary research in this area.

## 2.3 Impact on the Media

This initiative had the full support of the Portuguese MoD. Naturally, the support called the attention of national media.

A Media Pack was created, and made available to the press, with a press release, information on the seminar and organizing institutions. The impact was such that several dozen news were posted in national newspapers and radios, as well as web-based contents were made available.

## **3. The outcomes of the integrated education of future ESDP actors**

The evaluation was based and conducted on the Kirkpatrick’s model of the evaluation of training programmes at professional levels (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 1998), also used by the ESDC in its activities, aiming at analysing the completion of the objective set for this pilot project (*i.e.* training cadets to the European Security and Defence Policy). It consists in the collection of information provided by the participants themselves, but possibly also by on-site interviews and observation, as was done for this pilot project. However, contrary to professionals -who are normally the target audience of the trainings to which Kirkpatrick’s model is applied- military cadets are not yet posted and do not have experience of the on-site job, professionally speaking. Therefore, adaptations of the model had to be made in order to create the instruments of the evaluation for the Seminar. The four levels of the model were nevertheless preserved: reaction, learning, behaviour and results.

### 3.1 Reactions of the participants with regard to the organisation of the Seminar

The first level of the Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model consists in assessing the level of satisfaction of the participants with regard to the training taken as a whole: relevance, organisation, arrangements, etc.

Regarding the satisfaction with the IDL module, the participants stated that they were, for a majority of them, experiencing this learning instrument for the first time in their education. This first contact was very appreciated and 82% of the learners said they were “very” or “generally” satisfied with the module. It seems, indeed, that it was considered as an excellent tool for introducing topics and realities that were generally unknown from the cadets, while the two themes retained for the IDL part were the history of the ESDP and the European Security Strategy, and the documentation provided through this learning path was considered as relevant and very helpful. On the one hand, the flexibility of this learning path, the ESDP vocabulary, the amount of resources made available, the English language tool and the level of details were particularly stressed by the students as an advantage. On the other hand, they suggested to summarize or illustrate the main information contained in the AKUs by graphs or, especially for the AKU1 on the construction process of the ESDP, by chronological illustrations. The technical vocabulary and the English language were, on the contrary, also stressed as difficulties for the cadets.

Regarding the Seminar in general, probably more focused on the residential module, the participants expressed their high level of satisfaction with the conduct of this pilot project and notably with the organisation: material (such as the educational package), logistical support, etc. To this regard, the social dimension the organisers intended to give to this learning process was considered to be highly effective and supportive to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences, and it somehow became a victim of its success, because the residential module was considered too short.

Concerning the method used for transmitting ESDP knowledge, however, more comments were made. The topics retained, and also the lectures themselves, were considered as too high-level by a significant number of participants, or too theoretical, notably with regard to themes like institutions, ESDP decision-making process, or capabilities development. It shall be said, at this stage, that the participants came from different horizons, study-cycles, and had thus different interests in the mechanisms and realities of the ESDP. On the method used, the participants suggested, for possible future similar seminars, to include a third aspect in their learning process, based on a more intensive participants interaction, such as debates, group works and practical cases.

### 3.2 The success in transmitting knowledge of the ESDP

As to measure the increase of knowledge related to the ESDP, the organising team and the ESDC set a questionnaire that was distributed at the very beginning of the IDL part of the Seminar, again at the beginning of the residential module and at the end of it. In doing so, the goal was to observe the possible increases between these two phases. It shall be said, however, that the questions chosen were not intended to correspond exactly to the content of the programme of the Seminar. The questions were naturally connected to the themes the participants went through during the Seminar but they were meant to assess only the level of general knowledge of the cadets with regard to ESDP as a whole.

The evaluation showed a remarkable increase in the knowledge of the participants. At the beginning of the Seminar, before starting the IDL module, the average grade obtained was 4,2 out of 12. It went up to 7,1 at the end of the IDL (or beginning of the residential module) and to 7,7 at the end of the Seminar. Despite the fact that more themes were browsed in the residential than in the IDL part of the Seminar, the increase is lower in terms of statistics (2,9 and 0,6 points respectively). This might be explained by the fact that the last questionnaires were circulated late

in the last day before free time, that there was no evaluation tests pressure, or maybe also by the fact that grades are not exponential by nature. The fact is, however, that the increase is also illustrated by the statistics regarding the middle grade of 6 out of 12: 50% of the students obtained a grade below the middle one at the first session, 25% at the second session and only 15% at the last one.

Between the second and third sessions<sup>4</sup>, a comparison was made question-by-question in order to observe the themes for which knowledge increased the most and those for which knowledge possibly decreased. The main increases observed concerned questions related to institutions, capabilities, history and operations. Decision-making processes and the European Security Strategy were the topics for which the results at the third session were under the level of the second session.

### 3.3 Gains in terms of personal behaviour as perceived by the participants

In the Kirkpatrick’s model of evaluation, the third level of investigation concerns the application of the learning and the change of behaviour of the participants “on the job”. While the Seminar is a training for cadets in the broader context of an educational process, it is not adequate to focus on the “on-site” application of the learning. Then, it was decided to investigate the individual perception of the gains by the participants, which is normally supportive but not the main object of a Kirkpatrick’s based evaluation. In order to do so, the evaluator and the organising team tried to assess the qualifications that may be required from future actors of the ESDP. In a questionnaire inspired from the Kirkpatrick’s level 3 the following skills and competences, inspired by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>5</sup>, were thus evaluated by the participants with a grade (out of 6), according to their perception of gains:

- Abilities to report about ESDP issues (4,4 out of 6);
- Abilities to manage ESDP notions (4,8 out of 6);
- Abilities to identify national visions on ESDP (5,3 out of 6);
- Abilities to communicate in a foreign language (5,3 out of 6);
- Networking abilities (5,7 out of 6);
- Abilities to share information on national educational system (networking applied to “professional” fields of the participants) (5,0 out of 6);
- Capacities to undertake further researches on ESDP (4,8 out of 6);
- Capacities to undertake further researches on European policies in general (4,6 out of 6);
- Capacities for finding the adequate research resources (4,7 out of 6).

It was decided, while the organisation of the Seminar intended to stress the social aspect of the learning, to include also social abilities in the skills investigated. Eventually, it seems that the participants perceived their gains in term of qualifications more important if they are connected to social interaction in general: sharing about national experiences, sharing about personal experiences, communicating, creating networks. The overall observation is nevertheless that the participants feel that their gains in terms of skills and competences, meant to sustain the learning of ESDP on the long term, are important.

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<sup>4</sup> The first session of knowledge evaluation was conducted electronically, contrary to the others, and the results obtained were only global. It was not possible, then, to investigate the improvements question-by-question.

<sup>5</sup> Skills are understood in the EQF as cognitive (involving use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments); competences are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

### 3.4 The results perceived by the sending institutions

The fourth level of the Kirkpatrick’s model is related to the evaluation of results for the organisation that asks its human resource to take part to the training. Once again, the educational nature of the sending institutions in the context of the Seminar does not allow identifying clear results in this sense. But as an inspiration based on the model, however, it was looked forward by the evaluator and the organisers to assess the impact of the training on the sending institutions. The Academies, Universities of Defence and Military Schools, indeed, may be considered as stakeholders of this educational module because they entrusted the three Portuguese Academies with the training of their own cadets.

It is thus envisaged to ask these institutions to answer also a questionnaire, a few months after the Seminar as to allow measuring impacts, investigating their satisfaction and the possible results of their participation for the education they provide internally. Mainly, this questionnaire will assess satisfaction and perception of the gains for the students in terms of skills and competences, but it will also try to collect statistical results in terms of interests for ESDP issues. It shall be said that the observation of possible impacts will be limited by the little number of participants from each participating institution.

Finally, it is expected to obtain relevant information regarding the recognition of the Seminar outcomes by the accreditation of the ESDP modules provided internationally. Questions will therefore be asked regarding the internal processes of accreditation or the recognition through a mention in the diploma supplement at the end of the cadet’s curriculum. The Europeanization of military higher education would make, indeed, a great step forward if the international trainings were universally recognised. Lessons drawn from this pilot project have thus a considerable importance for future integrative initiatives.

### 3.5 Long-term perspectives for integrated ESDP training

Complementarily to the investigation through questionnaires, collecting feedbacks from and the participants, the on-site evaluation of the conduct of the Seminar allowed discussions with the cadets and the organising team. It supported the evaluation in the formulation of some suggestions for future possible organisations concerning similar trainings.

Technical difficulties, indeed, might have been met in the organisation, such as those occurring in the use of the ENLIST system. It was considered sometimes hard to use the ENLIST system, because most of EU MS Academies did not know what it was. Several times the Academies contacted the Portuguese Military Academy or the ESDC, and they would forward the request to their own national Points of Contact (PoC) on the ENLIST system. A better information dissemination of the ENLIST should be contemplated until the institutions become use to it.

It was observed notably that only little reference was made by the different speakers to the contents of the IDL and educational support that was given to the participants at the beginning of the residential module. In order to reduce the feeling expressed by some participants that the course was too high level for them, references to support participants had access to could be improved, notably regarding the topics introduced by the AKUs of the IDL. This would allow more coherence between the different aspects of the educational supports (IDL-educational package-lectures) and oblige participants to go through materials, such as the welcome package,

they might consider as being external complements and not parts of the training. The different speakers, in practice, shall perhaps be advised to go through the material (IDL and welcome package) as the participants went through. Regarding the international speakers, it was sometimes difficult for the organisers to select a lecturer, because it is easy to know national experts, but it is more difficult to know international ones. It can thus be recommended to create a database, within the ESDC, on possible lecturers on ESDP issues, available to all potential organizers.

Another point is the broader question of the profile of the selected participant. Because different institutions took part in this Seminar it can also be asked, taking into account that officers' education is different from one Member State to another and some military educational systems are focused on the first cycle, some on the second, and others on both, what should be the specific target audience<sup>6</sup>.

It may be also proposed, for future organisations, to develop interaction between the participants, as they suggested it, in allowing them working in discussion groups during the residential module or, due to the fact that all the themes proposed are essential to the understanding of ESDP and that time is limited, to propose a third stage after the residential module. After the IDL and the residential module, indeed, it could be proposed to the participants to work in small groups, possibly on a practical exercise such as the planning of a mission, and to integrate this part also in the Seminar in asking them, for example, to provide a paper a few months after their participation to the residential module. In doing so, it would not only allow them remaining in contact, and somehow continue the course, but it would also foster on a longer-term perspective their interests in ESDP issues and make them use the skills and competences they acquired through their participation.

Finally, it shall be emphasized that similar events shall be organised regularly in the future, as to enlarge the impact on the European cadets. The 39 participants in the Lisbon Seminar also confirmed this need to share knowledge on ESDP at a larger scale. Besides, organising it again in the future on a regular basis would contribute to solve the issue of recognition. If it does not remain a one-shot experience, the recognition through accreditation or mention in the diploma supplement as encouraged by the Bologna Process will undoubtedly have to be addressed by the participating institutions. Providing education on a European topic in a European environment would therefore become a cornerstone of the integration that is looked forward today by the European higher education system but also the ESDP itself.

## **Conclusion**

This Initiative can make a significant contribution to the creation of a European Identity among EU MS Officers and it's crucial that this Initiative can be deepened by all Member States. Regarding the students, we conclude that they had an excellent result, fostering the ties between EU MS Officers, and therefore, starting to create a new type of synergies among MS Armed Forces.

Spain has already stated their interest in maintaining the initiative, and we strongly recommend the continuation of the shared costs model, allowing and encouraging MS to send students to the Seminar. The cultural component of the seminar worked really well, and it helped create the

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<sup>6</sup> It was observed that Member States might have met difficulties in the choice of their selected participants. To this regard, they shall be encouraged to send young officers who are still in the course of their initial education, which would preserve the “Erasmus spirit” the Initiative encourages.

networking abilities, and at the same time, helped to solidify, a little bit more the European Identity, based on diversity.

The structure of the course tried to balance the conceptual knowledge of ESDP with case studies. We recommend that in future courses there should be a time for reserved discussion groups, allowing the students to analyse and discuss cases by themselves. If possible, the seminar should have 2 weeks, instead of one, allowing both conceptual part and a more extensive debate between students. The external evaluation is something to maintain, providing the necessary independence.

For further development, we propose that every 6 months four to five MS Academies should organize this type of Seminar, allowing MS to send more students abroad, and receiving more students in their academies. At the end of the day, every MS and their Armed Forces will win.

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