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« Towards a European culture of Defence in officers' education: The initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired from Erasmus »

Sylvain Paile, researcher

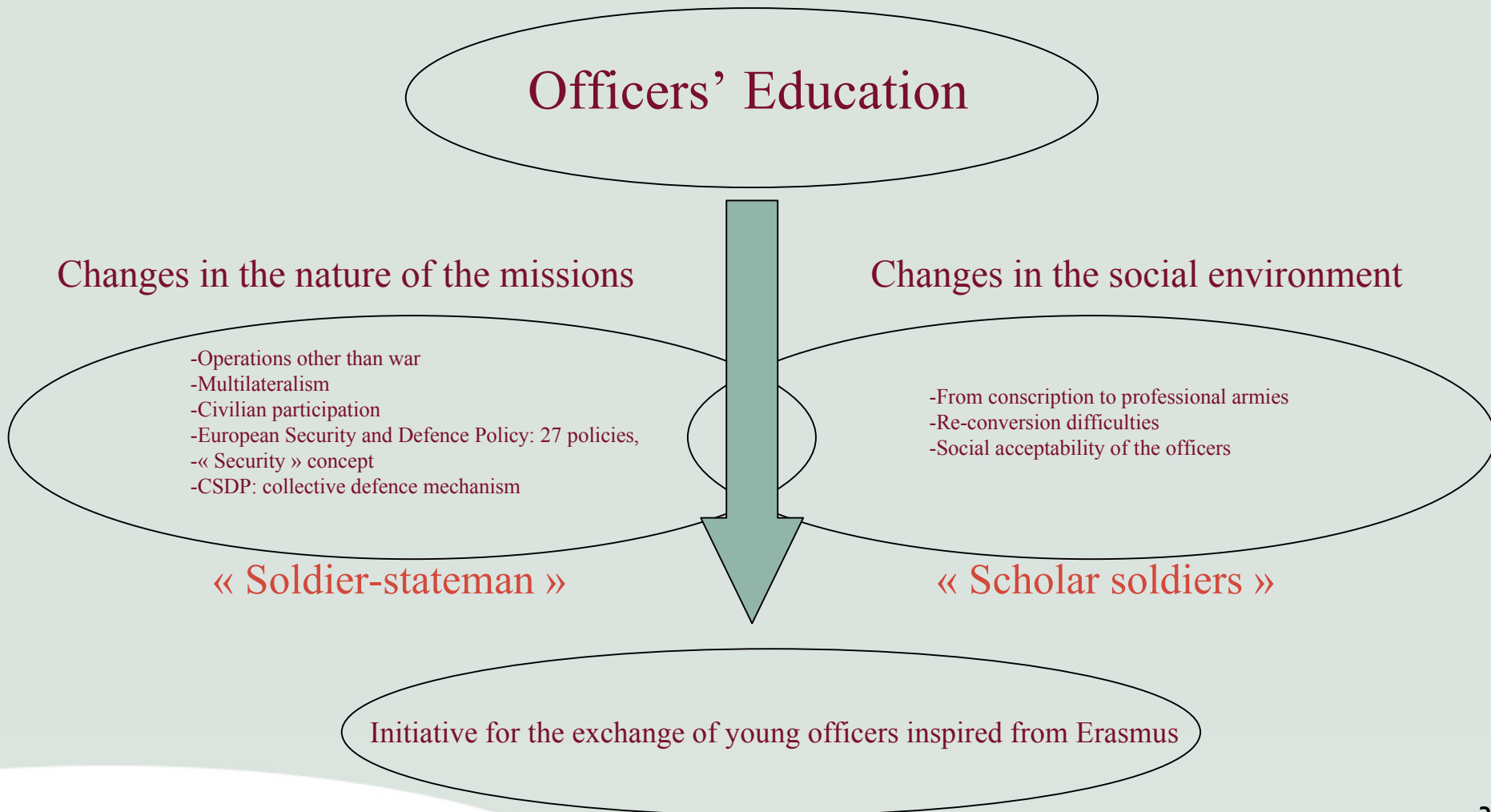
Under the direction of Pr. Quentin Michel



“I fully support this French Presidency's initiative to explore the possibilities for improving the exchange of officers during their basic training. I consider it an important contribution to increasing the interoperability of the European armed forces and to providing full knowledge of EU instruments and EU objectives to ensure the comprehensive approach towards crisis management that we want to promote.”

Javier Solana, High Representative – Secretary General of the CFSP,
Document S309/08, Brussels, November 10th, 2008.

Introductory statements: European developments



Question:

How does the initiative for the exchange of young officers, best known as the « military Erasmus », participates to the endorsement by the military officers of the European integration?

- Officers educational systems and European integration (I)
- Fostering the ESDP through exchanges (II)
- The enhancement of a European culture of security and defence (III)
- The way ahead, remaining issues (IV)

I. Officers educational systems and European integration

I.1 The growth of the ESDP in the educational challenges

- New missions asked for a comprehensive understanding of the « Peace » and « reconstruction » definitions
- ESDP encompasses « defence » and « security » roles of the armed forces
- Lisbon Treaty: developments to be expected (collective defence, solidarity...) and stress on the capacities (EDA institutional status, permanent reinforced co-operation)
- Human resources are the first resources and they need to be adequately trained!!!

I.2 How leaders' education shall look like?

Pr. Kirkels, Klinkert and Moelers (2003): « Sparta » VS. « Athens » officer

- Sparta officer: elite soldier
- Athens officer: intellectual elite, ready for dealing with the complexity of the social, economic and political tasks of his/her mission
- A call for more academic-oriented education for the military officers

Pr. Caforio (2000): « Divergent » VS. « Convergent » systems with the university education

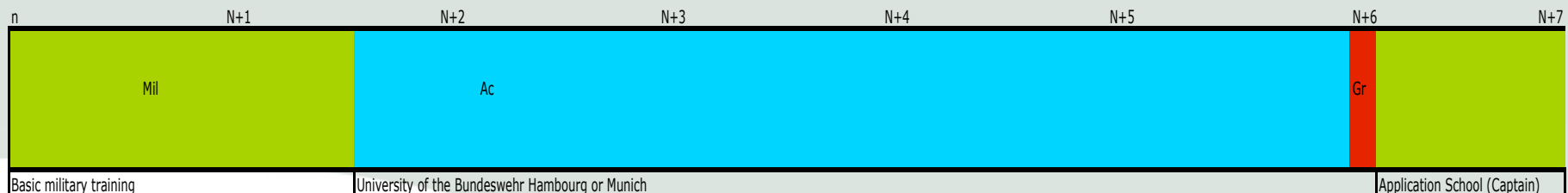
- Comparing institutions educations
- Six criteria for classification: *selection; teaching staff; share academic/military in the curriculum; organisation of the academic/military aspects in the curriculum; diploma's value; type of socialisation within the institution*
- A ranking
- A call for more academic-oriented education

These two distinctions are not contradicting:

- Nature of the officer / socialisation process
- Convergence-Athens and Divergent-Sparta very much interlinked
- Both favour the academic aspect of the education

Is the convergent-divergent distinction sufficient for the analysis of the education policies of the institutions?

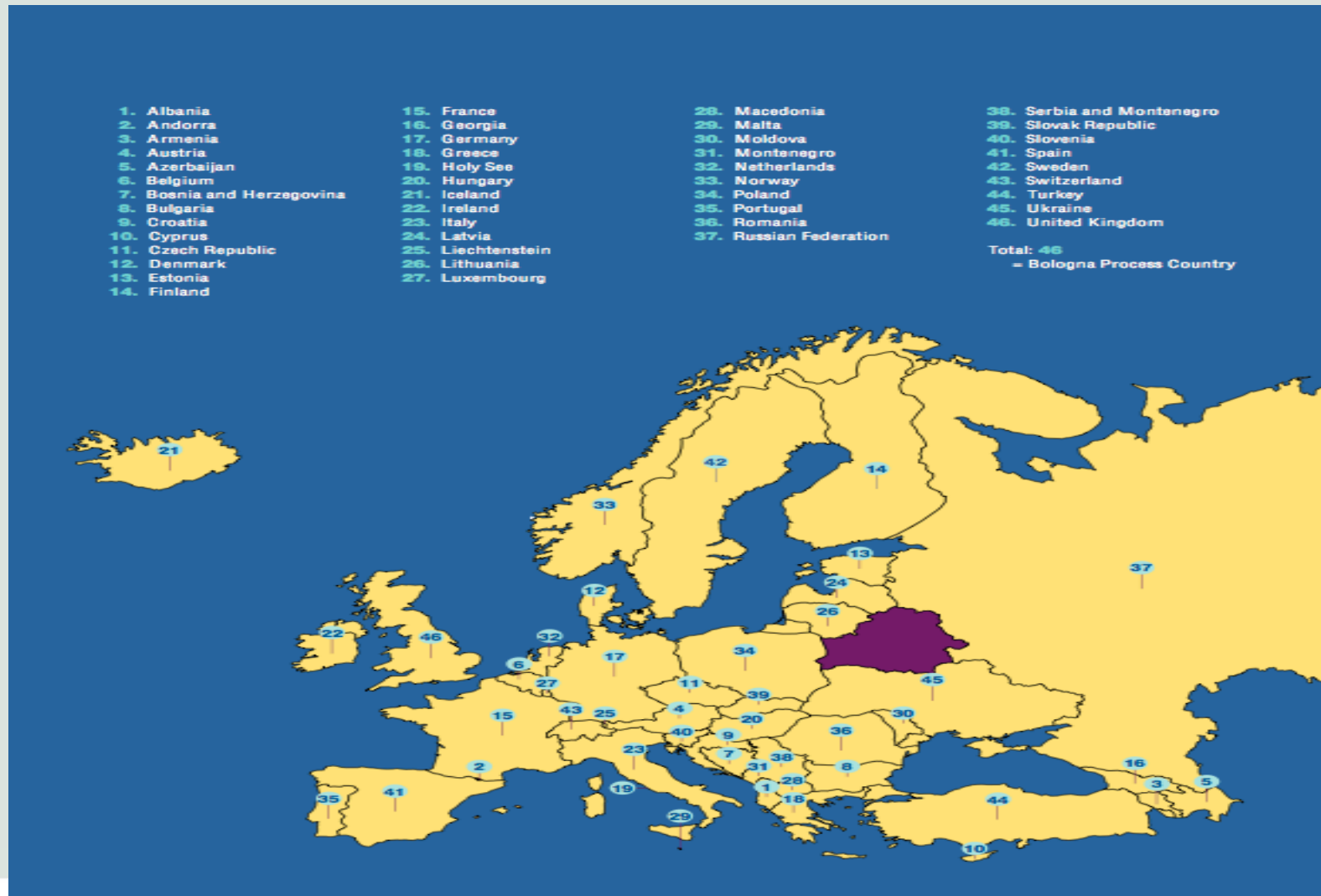
- Very accurate distinction for « monolithic » education systems
- The two aspects academic/military remain necessary for an officer education
- « divergence-convergence » may be hidden by delegation of academic/military responsibilities



I.3 The Bologna Process, a will of excellence for the officer education

General philosophy of the Bologna Process:

- June, 19th 1999 Common declaration of the European Education Ministries (context: European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe)
- 46 signatory States today but no legal sanction attached
- A monitoring: rotating presidency (assisted by a Bologna Secretariat) collecting data and suggesting actions to be taken in a « Stocktaking » report presented during the presidencys final conference
- A global objective: realising the European Higher Education Area



Concretely: Upraise obstacles to mobility in the higher education
(revealed by Erasmus):

- Diploma recognition = European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) : 1 ECTS = 25-30h of student work
- Curricula harmonisation = The duration of the education cycle is not relevant : 180 ECTS Bachelor, 90-120 ECTS Master, free for Doctorate studies
- Quality assurance of the education = Quality Assurance Agencies European Register recently created with the help of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Bologna for the European education of the military officers

- 17 (out of 22) Member States implemented this acquis in officers education (General Secretariat of the Council 12843/08)
- The officer education institutions implemented the Process on a voluntary basis so far
- Freedom of the EPMEIs in the organisation of their curricula
- Prepares the ground for students and teaching staff exchanges or modules' exchanges (ECTS basis), increase in Erasmus participation.

II. Fostering the ESDP through exchanges

II.1 Subsidiary thinking on exchanges

- The EUAFA (Air Force): cultural and sport competitions experienced
- Conference of Superintendents (Navy): Bologna Process implementation
- They both thought about ways to bring their curricula closer for allowing exchanges but no result so far
- Not in ESDP configuration

II.2 Maturation of the initiative

- French EU Presidency configuration
- A questionnaire on the national organisation of military education
- Stocktaking by the European Security and Defence College (document 12843/08) reflecting the variety of European military education
- Recommendations endorsed by the Council of Defence Ministers, Declaration (5155/1/08) of November 10th, 2008.

II.3 Content of the recommendations

Develop interoperability with respect to national specificities regarding military education

3 directions for improving mobility:

- o At the European level
- o Member States and institutions level
- o Implementation arrangements

II.3.1 At the European level

- Both for academic and vocational trainings:
 - Comparing skills and competencies required from the cadets
 - Creating a database (programmes, offers-demands in exchanges)
 - Identifying obstacles to the enhancement of mobility
- Specific academic-related:
 - Develop international security and ESDP training modules
 - Ease access to IDL
- Specific vocational-related:
 - Develop ECTS-like system
 - Develop attraction mechanisms for military exchanges

II.3.2 At the national and military institutions' level

- Are asked to promote the implementation of the Bologna Process
- Are asked to promote recognition of foreign education (Bologna Process also)
- Encourage mobility of staffs and cadets
- Promote the education of foreign languages

II.3.3 Implementation arrangements at the European level

To be seen later on.

III The enhancement of European culture of security and defence

Fostering the conscience of sharing a same identity and objective

III.1 expected impact of the initiative on concerned actors:

- Individual: new know-that and know-hows for professional development and broadmindedness. Exchange students and « hosting » students social interaction. Exchange staffs' benefits.
- Institutions: visibility of the excellence of their education
- Member States: capacities in ESDP experts and potential multinational missions ready officers
- EU: interoperable officers for ESDP and other multinational missions

III.2 How the initiative can contribute to this cultural objective?

- Formal direction: Europeanizing defence education for a European culture of defence
 - Flexibility stressed
 - Promotion of mobility, development of language education, ECTS in vocational training
 - Push for Erasmus participation?
- Normative direction: Educating to the Europeanization of defence for a Culture of the European defence
 - Knowledge stressed
 - Knowledge related to international security and ESDP
 - Importance of these teachings in the curriculum?
- Crossover option: combining both these aspects
 - Combined educations in ESDP and international issues
 - Likely a role for the ESDC

IV. The way ahead, remaining issues

IV.1 Obstacles to the enhancement of mobility

- Calendar organisations are a tradition mark of the national educational systems
- Budgetary arrangements
- The « package for encouragement »:
 - o Bologna Process (and training recognition): ECTS for vocational training, ECTS definition, quality assurance in vocational training.
 - o Signature of Erasmus charters (quality mark)
 - o Training in foreign languages: capacities-building, vocational training socialisation
- Application scope: what about advanced education Masters?

IV.2 Action through the monitoring of the initiative's implementation

- Coordination of the ESDC for the SG/HR report in early 2009
- Deepened stocktaking with a new questionnaire:
 - Comparison of the military education systems: organisation of the education, content of the education
 - Monitoring of the early implementation of the recommendations: package for encouragement, ESDP education.
- Creation of the database: information about the systems, meeting offers and demands in exchanges

Conclusions:

- The initiative is fully coherent with the European higher education context
- Cares were taken in preserving national rooms for manoeuvre. However, fears remain that « harmonisation » would turn to be a « standardization »
- A process: short, medium and long terms expectations
- Civilian experiences guarantee the success to come

The initiative for the exchanges of young officers must and will very certainly impede this to happen...

Thank you for your attention...