Common Module on CSDP 2012 in Wiener Neustadt/Austria

From 3rd to 7th December, 2012 the international CSDP Module at the Theresan Military Academy within the Frame of the European Initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by ERASMUS took place. The participants came from nine different nations, namely from Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, USA and the Austrian class of Trauttenberg being the current 3rd Semester students of the TMA.

Group Photo (Picture by TMA)

According to the Entrance Speech of Col(GS) Wiedner, the core mission of the CSDP Module was not only to learn about CSDP but to live it within the community of young officers. Therefore, a broad range of events took place aimed to build friendships between the international participants to encourage a European feeling.

Events like a sports competition, a student's party, guided tours through the ancient castle of the TMA and through Vienna, a visit to the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna consisting of a guided tour and a briefing with intense discussion afterwards and several free activities gave a good platform for sociable interaction and conversation. All the stated above events were created, planned and conducted by

the Austrian officer cadets to: raise their organisational skill on the one hand and on the other hand create an atmosphere of comfortable hospitality which was considered crucial by all of them.

Victory ceremony of the sports competition at the students' party (Picture by OCdt Beck)

From the academic point of view an interesting mix of lecturers ranging from scientists and lawyers to diplomats and high ranking military personnel gave the students a widened approach to the CSDP topics and therefore broadened their horizons in many different perspectives. But participating in lectures was not the only way to acquire knowledge. Students were organized in multinational syndicates of about 10 people and had to prepare briefings on their own for their colleagues. The exceptional innovation of these syndicate briefings was not only the increase of interoperability skills but the way they were integrated into the lectures. For the first time, the briefings were held before the lessons for the purpose to discuss with the expert-lecturers afterwards. In doing so free space to be filled with lively discussions in which all the students participated actively was available.

To prove one's knowledge improvements two e-learning tests were conducted: one right at the beginning of the module and one at the very end. For the evaluation of the students' competences and capabilities a team of international observers supervised the students during their syndicate tasks and took notes.

Two different types of learning: syndicate work and lessons (picture by OCdt Beck [l] & TMA [r])

The final ceremony which took place in the famous Knights' Hall of the Academy consisted of encouraging speeches of the representative of the Austrian class of Trauttenberg, the representative of the international participants, Col(GS) Wiedner and Col Dr Gell and was concluded by the handover of the certificates to those students who passed the module.

As a conclusion it can be stated, that the mission of this CSDP Module has not only been accomplished but exceeded. The mixture of lessons, events and syndicate tasks all being embedded in an informal atmosphere contributed not only to the dense acquisition of knowledge but to creating friendships and gave an excellent opportunity for communication of future European officers.

For the future, an increase of events like the Common Module on CSDP is highly favoured by the participants of this course, because a closer relationship between the national Officers at the very basis of their education within the EU is considered vital in order to push forward European integration and CSDP as such!

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