

CSDP Module in Austria
Report by civilian students from the Jagiellonian University
in Cracow – Poland

From 2nd to 6th December 2013, the Theresan Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, Austria, hosted a Common Module on Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Within the framework of European Initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus, military academies from Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Poland and France sent their officer cadets to gain knowledge on CSDP as well as to create bonds with colleagues from other EU Member States. The module was a great opportunity for civilian students representing Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow - Poland, who for the first time ever had a chance to actively participate in the module along with officer cadets from military academies.

It is worthy to mention, that not only representatives of European military academies and universities were present but also officer-cadets from United States' prestigious West Point Academy were taking part in that module.

Initially, there was some anxiety about how that civilian-military cooperation will develop. It was undoubtedly new situation for officer cadets to work with non-military students as well as for civilians it was also entirely new experience. However, it was only a matter of time for ice to break. Thanks to variety of activities organized by our hosts combined with extensive exchange of views and knowledge during lectures and workshops new acquaintances were made. The syndicate work was especially designed with immense potential for developing understanding and communication skills among participants. Being collectively responsible for fulfilling common task was a factor of great importance in creating cross-national and cross-institutional positive relations.

Besides interpersonal aspect, there was also a significant amount of information that participants were provided with. Lectures were conducted by professionals from variety of backgrounds and gave students a unique chance to better understand not only European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy but also modern military environment in which interoperability is a crucial factor. Recognition and acknowledgment of importance of cooperation between civilian and military counterparts is probably one of the main benefits one could get from

that course. Besides that, participation in the module helped to improve overall level of knowledge regarding European security issues, provided opportunity to learn from experts combining high academic level with personal experience and a possibility to take part in creating new approach to civil-military cooperation in terms of education and cooperation between universities and military academies.

Organizational aspects of the Common Module should also be stressed since all activities were conducted and delivered in the highest possible manner. Everything was carefully planned in order to maximize effectiveness of learning process. It was probably effect of Austrian experience gained from organizing CSDP Module for fourth consecutive year.

Summing up, for us – civilian students – it was incredible opportunity to get in touch with people who are from different countries, represent different cultures and institutions but think in a surprisingly similar way to ours. We hope that it was just a first step on a road to develop our cooperation and exchange for mutual benefit. There is no doubt, that we can recommend participation in CSDP Common Module at the Theresan Military academy to officer cadets and civilian students as well.

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