

# Common Module on CSDP 2015 at the Theresan Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt

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Between 12th and 16th of January, 2015 a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Module took place at the Theresan Military Academy in Austria. The European initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus was again a fruitful cooperation of Military Academies from Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Austria as a host. Moreover the module was opportunity also for civilian students to gain experience and work in an international environment with Cadets in order to build up a better understanding for each other.

It is worth to mention that the Course Director, Col Dr. Harald Gell, invited instructors and lecturers from the international community. Representatives from Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Romania and United Kingdom as well as high-level persons from Austria were invited to teach theory as well as practice.



Picture

Participants of the Austrian CSDP-Module 2015.

(Photo by TMA)

On Monday, 12th of January – among excitement and fears – the Module started. There were reasons to be optimistic like gaining new experience and discover new areas of knowledge and in some cases even future interest in further exploration. But there were also reasons to be aware if everyone can communicate and find connection and if multinational groups can cooperate effectively not even mentioning if civilian-military combination can give positive results. However, the very first day brought ice break and show the week will be productive and against any fear and stereotypes became great memory for all of us. We were not disappointed. First day started with history of institutions of the EU and guided tour of the Academy. The place has special meaning because it is the oldest Military Academy of the world and reminds us that we belong to a great tradition which we have to pass on.



Picture 2: On the first day of the CSDP-Module a guided tour was conducted by Cadets.

(Photo by Cdt Haas)

The Evening was also very promising. A big sport competition was organized and unusual disciplines were prepared which created a lot of fun. A good idea was a key for success as well as team work which brought us together more closely. After that

everyone went to the students' party where we celebrated the winners of the sport competition. Everyone had a chance to chat and to know each other better.



Picture 3: For integration purposes a sports competition took place.

(Photo by Cdt Haas)

The following days brought us new challenges. All were divided into syndicates and had special tasks which requested cooperation among the different nations. The results of a syndicate depended on each member's work. Despite complexity of issues this exercise developed soft skills and allowed better to understand subjects like human rights or capability development. Between the briefings prepared by the team-leaders some theoretical lectures took place, among them overviews on situations in Afghanistan and Chad and their connection to the European Union. It was a great opportunity to talk with people who had combat experience in missions and operations abroad. In doing so is for sure easier if we know whom or what we are fighting together with brothers from different countries of the European Union.

On Wednesday all the participants visited UNHQ in Vienna. The place was amazing – one city within another bigger one where you could see representatives from all over the world. The presence of Cadets in elegant uniforms in different colors draw attention also from some tourists. Two guides explained how UN works. Later on we had a lecture about EU-UN relations which was too short for such a huge topic but clear enough to give us an idea of EU cooperation with other organizations. This trip was a great chance to increase our intercultural competences.

To sum up, the CSDP-Module was well organized and everything was planned with the highest manner. It might be that the Austrian experience in organizing Common Modules in such a way has an important impact in maximizing effectiveness of the learning process. No negative events happened and we could proceed without any disturbance. The CSDP-Module allowed participants to expand their knowledge about the EU and its security issues. Multinationality and cooperation between civilian and military counterparts was a great benefit. The understanding between civilian universities and military academies allowed also find people considered being so different but being able to cooperate. There is no doubt; the CSDP-Module was worth to participate.



Picture 4: The topic EU-UN-relations was done at the UNHQ Vienna.  
(Photo by Cdt Haas)