



Name of the event	Common Module Common Security and Defence Policy
Institution, which organised the event	Theresian Military Academy
Country of the organiser	Austria
Year of the event	2021
Date of the event (from-to)	22 - 26 November 2021
Name(s) of the author(s)	FURLAN Ludwig, MÜLLER-STIEGER Christopher
Authors' institution	Theresian Military Academy
Authors' country	Austria

Common Module on Common Security and Defence Policy



The 110 participants of the Austrian CM CSDP 2021.
(Photo: Theresian Military Academy)

From 22 to 26 November 2021, the Theresian Military Academy conducted the Common Module CSDP in Wr. Neustadt. Military personnel and students from twelve nations took part in this module. The module focused on international cooperation and the exchange of young officers in the context of current international relations. An in-person execution of a module of this magnitude could only be implemented under strict Corona precautions.

Making friends and networking

To ensure a successful start to this international module, the participants began the week with a sporting competition. In a friendly test of physical fitness, including the disciplines of relay racing and strength endurance, the participants had the opportunity to get to know each other and bond in a relaxed atmosphere. With this competition, a promising and very interesting week began. In addition to this competition, a cadet led tour on the first day allowed the international guests to explore the oldest – and in our opinion – the most beautiful military academy of the world.



Syndicates' sports competition.
(Photo: OCdt Furlan & Müller-Stieger)



The challenges produced by SARS-CoV-2

Of course, such an event could not take place without restrictions in times of a global pandemic. Due to a country-wide lockdown in Austria, the scheduled visit to the United Nations headquarters in Vienna, the city tour of Wr. Neustadt, and the icebreaker party at the Theresian Military Academy were cancelled. However, these cancellations did not dampen the participants' positive attitudes and enthusiasm. Following the restrictions necessary to keep all participants and lecturers safe, the participating students exhibited extreme professionalism while completing the tasks assigned to them.

Module Topics

Throughout the week, the syndicates were confronted with the topics of officer and officer candidate exchanges, European partnerships, gender in the military, and human rights. The first syndicate work period focused on the EMILYO programme and other military exchanges. The second session was centred on European relations such as the Eastern Partnership, the Mediterranean Dialogue, and relations with Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the challenges these partnerships and relations face today. One of the more difficult topics encountered in the module was the concept of gender mainstreaming, which was then followed by a period of in-depth study of human rights. Each syndicate was assigned a specific question related to each of the larger topics and was given the task to present their findings to the other syndicates. It was particularly important for the syndicates to coordinate the different approaches of the individual members of the groups in order to create a coherent presentation in the allotted timeframe.



The Defence Policy Director during his speech.
(Photo: Theresian Military Academy)



Multinational elaborations in teams.
(Photo: Theresian Military Academy)

Hybrid conflicts require an international solution

In the face of rising modernisation and globalisation, EU Member States must come to terms with the fact that they cannot isolate themselves from the conflicts in- and outside of Europe. Currently the Ukraine conflict, the Belarusian situation, the conflicts in the Middle East, and the emerging trouble spot in Africa present young officers with seemingly insurmountable future challenges. The groups in this module



were given the task to analyse and discuss the current conflicts and future challenges mentioned previously in an extensive manner. Expert lectures helped expand the audience's knowledge and allowed for further discussions. Fortunately, every participant completed this module positively, and the week was concluded by awarding each participant with a certification of completion of the CSDP module.

The European Spirit

The CSDP module demonstrated that the European spirit is very much alive today.

European cohesion was a driving force throughout the week, and this was visible across all ranks. Although to it may at times seem that the EU is hesitant to act when compared to other international organisations, it has the potential to be an effective organisation if its Member States focus on the core values of the union, such as cooperation and common defence, and learn to confront challenges as a whole



Final ceremony in TMA's Hall of Knights.
(Photo: Theresian Military Academy)

rather than as individual nations. This week gave the future military officers participating in the module the hope that successful international cooperation lies within the near future.

Officer Cadet FURLAN Ludwig & Officer Cadet MÜLLER-STIEGER Christopher
on initiative of the course director, Colonel Assoc. Prof. GELL Harald, PhD