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To all EU Ministers of Defence

Dear Colleague,

Following the European Initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus taken by the Ministers of Defence in November 2008, you received a first progress report by the High Representative on the implementation of this initiative in May 2009. I have pleasure in now sending you this second report (in Annex).

The report reflects further significant progress reached since the launching of this initiative which aims to strengthen interoperability of the armed forces and to promote a European security and defence culture through increased co-operation between the Member States in the field of officer training. All in all, work on the implementation of the initiative is well on its way, supported by the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) and its Implementation Group.

Just to highlight two of the most important measures that have come into effect in early 2010: a European Framework Arrangement and a system of equivalences for the military part of the initial training which can be used by those Member States who so wish to facilitate their exchange programmes of young officers.

Other very useful tools are already available in support of the Member States' academies which wish to further develop their exchange programmes. This includes the common modules on CSDP and other topics, support through the ESDC Internet-based Distance Learning (IDL) System, a regular ESDC train-the-trainers seminar and a dedicated website (<http://www.emilyo.eu>).

Next steps to be taken will include the comparison of training courses based on competences, the adoption of a more systematic communication strategy and the exploration of possible synergies with the existing annual meetings of Commandants of Military Academies of the different services.

The progress reached is the result of the support given by successive Presidencies and the active engagement of many Member States. It also appears that the role assigned to the ESDC and its permanent Secretariat provides a fruitful framework for further successful results. I am very grateful to all who have contributed actively.

Nevertheless, full implementation remains a longer-term project and therefore requires continued commitment by the Member States. Their role is essential both in identifying the relevant experts available to contribute to the various projects and activities of the Implementation Group and finally in actually increasing their exchange programmes.

I would therefore like to encourage you to task your relevant national authorities to continue to play an active part in the implementation of this very useful initiative which in the end will significantly enhance co-operation and interoperability among European armed forces and help to develop an effective Common Security and Defence Policy.

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Catherine Ashton

PROGRESS REPORT

on the implementation of the European initiative for the exchange of young officers “inspired by ERASMUS”

INTRODUCTION

Since the report of the High Representative to the Ministers of Defence in May 2009, the Implementation Group, which is a project-oriented configuration of the Executive Academic Board of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), continued its work in regular meetings in Brussels. In addition, the Swedish Presidency organised a special seminar in Stockholm in November 2009 devoted to the implementation of the initiative.

Work has progressed significantly on the original five practical projects that were identified as possible quick-wins following the launch of the initiative in autumn 2008. Progress has also been made on some additional projects which provide for concrete implementation of the initiative.

This report summarises the achievements to date and is based on a detailed progress report presented to the ESDC Steering Committee in April 2010.

THE FIVE INITIAL PROJECTS

Project 1 - Implementation of a common training module on ESDP

In accordance with the agreement to promote training and education in the field of CSDP in the context of the European initiative, the following concrete actions have been taken:

- (1) In June 2009, the Belgian Royal Military Academy, supported by the ESDC Secretariat, conducted a 2-day "train-the-trainer" seminar in Brussels. The seminar aimed at preparing relevant trainers, tutors and lecturers from national military academies to programme, plan and conduct the common module on CSDP in their national training institutes. This seminar was highly appreciated by the participants and will become a regular activity of the ESDC.
- (2) The Internet-based Distance Learning (IDL) training material, developed by the ESDC, has been made available to national institutes delivering the common CSDP module. The ESDC Secretariat also grants access to the CSDP knowledge base, comprising other existing training material, background information and reading files.

- (3) In September 2009, the Portuguese Ministry of Defence, through its 3 academies (Army, Air Force and Navy), conducted the first one-week common module on CSDP in Lisbon. Students who successfully completed the preparatory IDL-based phase and the residential phase were awarded 1.5 ECTS and a certificate describing the content of the module. All in all, 39 cadets from 18 Member States participated in this event.
- (4) Under its Presidency, in March 2010, Spain organised three one-week CSDP modules at the same time in the academies of the Army, Air Force and the Navy. In total, 88 participants from 14 different Member States registered for the courses, distributed equally among the three modules.

In the same context, Austria plans to offer two CSDP modules in October and November 2010 and the Hellenic Air Force Academy intends to organize a CSDP module in Athens in November 2010 (15-19 Nov. 2010) with contributions from the Hellenic Army and Naval Academies.

Project 2 and 3 - Provide password protected internet access to raw data of detailed stocktaking on the curricula of the national training institutes

The Bulgarian National Defence University has designed and is now hosting a website dedicated to the initiative (<http://www.emilyo.eu> – EMILYO is an acronym for Exchange of Military Young Officers). The basic objective of this website is to provide password protected internet access to raw data of detailed stocktaking on the curricula of the national training institutes which allows other Member States to start an initial manual comparison between the different national timetables and curricula.

A forum has also been set up to ensure the exchange of information and views on various relevant discussion topics. For the time being, the forum primarily serves the Implementation Group and its subgroups as a platform for the exchange of information and open discussions. There is also a section of the forum that is open to everybody interested in the initiative, specifically intended for military academy students from the European Union (and from outside) to share their experiences in their own institutes, during exchanges, on general topics, etc. Currently there are 154 members registered with the website and the forum, 91 of whom have full access to the uploaded information and the discussion boards.

All in all, the EMILYO website is a useful tool for the functioning and the development of the initiative. Its use should be further encouraged.

Project 4 - Framework agreement covering administrative and legal aspects of the exchanges

One of the concrete measures defined by the initiative was to identify ways of dealing with administrative, legal and other obstacles to exchanges. In March 2009, a subgroup started to work on a possible framework agreement for administrative and legal challenges related to officer exchange programmes for academic education and for vocational training.

After an in-depth analysis of possible forms of legal text, taking into account the particularities of each Member State's legislation, an agreement was reached by the ESDC Steering Committee in February 2010 on a European Framework Agreement which is

intended to be the legal and the organisational framework to which those Member States who so wish can refer to facilitate their exchange programmes for young officers.

The Framework Agreement is complemented by an Inter-institutional Agreement, a Learning Agreement and a Teaching Agreement. The latter documents are to materialise concrete collaboration between two military academies.

Project 5 - Develop other common training modules

Following the module on CSDP endorsed by the PSC in October 2008, a specific subgroup continued to work on the development of other common training modules. The topics for these modules were selected from a list proposed by the Member States during the development of the stocktaking report in the summer of 2008. Austria took the lead on the project for a module on Peace Support Operations (PSO) and completed the task. Four sub-modules were developed :

- Basics for Crisis Management Operations (CMO) (2 weeks)
- Map exercise with topic CMO (1 week)
- Tactical exercise without troops (1 week)
- Course for CMO techniques (2 weeks)

Austria has put a link with more details on its website: www.miles.ac.at.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Development of a system of equivalences for the military part of the initial training

In parallel to and complementing the work done on the Framework Arrangement, the Austrian representative in the Implementation Group led a subgroup that managed to develop a very practical way to give credits for the vocational part of training in the military academies and to transfer these credits to the educational system of another Member State. In particular, the system will allow reciprocal recognition of practical training activities, with significant benefits in terms of the use of cadets'/young officers' time. A more detailed description of this system can be found on the Emily website and on the Austrian www.miles.ac.at website.

The ESDC Steering Committee agreed in February 2010 to adopt this system together with the Framework Agreement to which it is annexed.

Comparison of courses based on competences

To complement the abovementioned system and to offer conceptual elements in support of the mutual recognition of training activities, the Implementation Group decided to give priority to the development of courses based on competences. Sweden chairs a subgroup working on this topic. Further developments are expected soon.

Creation of a database

This database should in future provide two distinct functionalities:

- Firstly, to offer the possibility of finding one or more (best) matches for the training outcomes or competences that are provided in a military academy.

The detailed stocktaking has clearly indicated that the development of such an application is not yet feasible, since most Member States either are still in the process of implementing a qualifications framework in the academic field, or use national qualification frameworks that do not allow direct comparison between the national systems.

- Secondly, to provide a clearing-house function enabling training institutes and students to offer or identify opportunities for exchanges.

Although it is estimated as being technically feasible, insufficient resources have been made available to take the work forward.

Encouragement for national implementation of the programme

In order to encourage all parties concerned to implement the measures developed within the initiative, the IG intends to create a subgroup that will draw up and implement a comprehensive communication strategy. Work should be pursued in this regard.

As a first step in this direction, contacts have already been established with the existing multilateral initiatives, i.e. the meetings of Commandants or Deans of military Academies (EMACS, Conference of Superintendents, EUAFA) to illustrate the activity of the IG and the context in which the whole European initiative is moving.

In more concrete terms, strong support for national implementation has been provided by the two Seminars organised by the EU Presidencies, respectively in Brno, Czech Republic in April '09, and in Stockholm, Sweden in November '09. These seminars have been an opportunity not only to further develop the work of the Implementation Group but also to allow other actors/decision makers to better focus their attention on the major issues and the progress of the initiative.

Military Life Long Learning Programme

During the Seminar in Brno (April 2009) a new Working Group was established, in order to explore and effectively use the existing exchange programmes, particularly the Erasmus programme, focused on accredited degree programmes. The Vice Rector for Public Relations of the Czech Defence University in Brno took the lead of this subgroup. A workshop will be organized in Brno; it is expected to be held in June 2010.

Develop other common training modules

The Implementation Group decided to continue to develop up to 5 new modules per year. The subjects for these modules can be proposed by Member States. Each module will carry the label of the European initiative and be placed under an "ESDC copyright", so that it can be used by all Member States.

DETAILED STOCKTAKING

The Faculty of Law, Department of Political Sciences of the University of Liège conducted a detailed stocktaking in support of the initiative. Preliminary findings have been made available to the Implementation Group since September 2009. The final report is currently in the final drafting stage.

The preliminary results of the detailed stocktaking were indispensable for the effective implementation of the initiative. The full report provides an objective basis for the further development of the work plan for the Implementation Group. In the future it should be included in the database and regularly updated in order to offer a permanent conceptual reference for all exchange programmes and projects.
