

Portugal in Europe: harmonization and potential of higher military education

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Regarding both the economic and political spheres, European construction has developed in an asymmetric way, and within the political sphere on its own, in its security and defense component, the differences and pace of evolution have been even greater. In 1992, the European Union (EU), via the Maastricht Treaty, provided in its legal framework a security and defense component, as set out in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), for the areas of external action and security; and in Justice and Home Affairs, in the field of justice and internal security. These two areas, although with mutual influences, have been having different developments and rhythms.

With regard to foreign and security policy, it gradually developed over the following years, from the intention to create a European force of about 100,000 soldiers at the Helsinki European Council in 1999, to the setting up of the Institute of Studies 2002 and the European Security and Defense College (ESDC) (and the European Police College (CEPOL)) in 2005; to the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, which would lead to the creation in 2009 of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, together with the European External Action Service and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) under the CFSP. On the other hand, in the field of Education, Training and Youth, the Union had already made progress with the Erasmus Program (1987), with the Bologna Process (1999) and with the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (2010). All together, a great success in improving the quality and interoperability of education, and, above all, in strengthening the skills, mobility, mutual knowledge and employability of young Europeans.

In practical terms, "Foreign and Security Policy" and "Education, Training and Youth"² constitute the two sides of the EU Military Higher Education (MHE) "currency", understood as valuable by the Union and which contributed so that States should use part of their Armed Forces (AF) (in terms of higher education institutions) as a further instrument to strengthen the Security and Defense of the Union and European identity.

In line with the political intentions then expressed in different documents, this was the purpose of the meetings of commandants of the Military Academies, led at the beginning of the XXI century by the French peers (which was the case of the meetings in Saint Cyr, during the commemoration of the 200 years, in 2002) and Germans. In the meantime, the implementation of the Bologna process³ in the MHE establishments of different EU Member

¹ Major-General. Commander of the Military Academy and effective member of the Military Magazine. This text formed the basis of the conference given at the IX Meetings of the Military Magazine under the theme "Portugal in Europe: Integration, Contributions, Strategy". The author thanks the comments of the following comrades: Major GNR Reinaldo Hermenegildo, Lieutenant-Colonel João Leal and Lieutenant-Colonel Paulo Machado.

² The name foreseen in the Treaty of Lisbon is: "Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Sport".

³ On 19 June 1999, one year after the Declaration of the Sorbonne, Ministers from 29 European countries responsible for higher education signed the Bologna Declaration and agreed on the importance of common objectives for the coherent and cohesive development of a European Higher

States took place, as was the case in Portugal, along with a set of actions (from visits to courses, and seminars) aimed at a closer approximation and exchange⁴ of the initial training of senior officers.

The political work was initially developed under the "European Initiative for Youth Exchange, inspired by Erasmus" (also known as Military Erasmus), which was launched by the French EU Presidency in the second half of 2008⁵ with the goal of "incrementing interoperability", "harmonize the initial training of European officers" and "reinforce the European security and defence culture". Meanwhile, at the same time, the Implementation Group (IG) of this European Initiative was created, supported by the EESC, which quickly pointed out the most problematic areas, the lines of development and the implementation effort. IG meetings, meetings with military academy commandants (EMACS⁶) and with representatives of the MHE (IMAF⁷) were immediately held. Among the lines of development that have been maintained since then, the following stand out:

- the system of equivalences;
- the development of competencies;
- the development of IDL / e-learning (International Distance Learning);
- the creation of an IT platform (Information Technology);
- the support for the development of legal mechanisms;
- the national implementation of the programs;
- lifelong learning;
- and the common modules.

The IG depends on the "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy" (Federica Mogherini, since August 2014) through the EESC itself and it includes

Education Area . The process of bringing European higher education systems closer together led to the creation in 2010 of the European Higher Education Area (50 states) in order to: harmonize national systems; generalizing a division into 3 cycles (degree, masters and doctorate); and reciprocal recognition of qualifications; quality assurance in higher education.

⁴ The harmonization of education at EU level is prohibited by the TFEU (Article 165 (4)), so the term used throughout this text and by the Military Erasmus has more the meaning of greater approximation and exchange.

⁵ Declaration of the European Defense Ministers in November 2008, with the main objective of strengthening a European security and defense identity.

⁶ European Military Academies Commandant`s Seminar, with annual meetings (Army and common to several Branches). These meetings have been held separately at the level of the three AF Branches (which also include European Air Force Commanders - USAFA and European Naval Academies - EUNAVA). The first, with the presence of all commanders of the Military Academies will take place in Austria (Theresan Military academy) on 26 and 27 October 2018.

⁷ International Military Academic Forum, where the various MHE establishments send their representatives related to international activities (civil servants, civilian teachers and students with ERASMUS experience) to discuss and propose various themes, with the aim of obtaining conclusions that are transmitted then at Commander (EMACS) meetings.

representatives from all Member States and 81 institutions of higher military education European countries. All lines of development are underway and the platform is an important tool for updating, liaising and cooperating with all the actors involved through the site: www.emilyo.eu.

However, MHE establishments, in addition to being part of Military Erasmus, also participate in Erasmus Plus⁸, while continuing to participate in traditional bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

In order to better understand the process, we will now analyze the different actions taken by the EU to contribute to a possible harmonization of the systems and procedures of the MHE, and we will try to raise the real potential and potentialities of this process, certainly dependent to a great extent on the State of the Union.

We will also study the role of Portugal in the framework of this "European Initiative for the exchange of Young Officers, inspired by Erasmus", from the internal and external harmonization to the potentialities arising from ongoing actions with consequences in the near future.

With the certainty that the MHE has a specific, important and consequent role in higher education and in the consolidation of democratic states in a Europe that intends to be a reference in culture and values, we will also set some proposals for the future before the conclusions.

1. The European Initiative for the exchange of Young Officers, inspired by Erasmus

The different lines of development were associated with one or more States as coordinators. However, emphasis has been placed on the creation of common modules (from one to three weeks, comprehending 2 to 6 ECTS⁹) and to the institutionalization of different training actions. Portugal was also the lead-nation of the first pilot course, which had about 40 students from 19 countries and which took place between 7 and 11 September 2009, with a module on European Security and Defense Policy, taught at the three Military Academies (Naval Academy, Military Academy and Air Force Academy - with the support of the Ministry of National Defense).

The common modules, transformed into ECTS, have been the most appealing actions, with more than thirty-five courses, from "Basic Military English" to "Military Leadership", both with 2 ECTS, as well as "Small Units Tactics" with 4 ECTS. An international semester with 30 ECTS and eleven common modules (coordinated by Greece, Poland, Romania and Austria) is

⁸ Erasmus Plus (or +) is the new version of Erasmus, the European Union's program for education, training, youth and sport, which will give more than 4 million Europeans opportunities for study, training, acquiring experience and volunteering abroad.

⁹ European Credit Transfer System, which was developed by the European Commission to establish common procedures to ensure the academic recognition of periods of study abroad to measure and compare academic results and transfer them from one institution to another. ECTS credits are awarded to a given course and reflect the amount of work spent in each course on the total amount of work required to complete the full year (practical work, lectures, seminars, private work, home or library, examinations and other evaluation activities). In the ECTS system, three months correspond to 20 credits, one semester to 30 credits and one academic year to 60 credits.

currently under development. In these activities and according to the IG, had already participated in February 16, 2018, 1505 elements (of which 145 civilians) and 7214 days of training had already been developed.

The IG intends these modules to be part of the curricula of the different European countries (recommendation), which has been happening, though with some limitations. In addition to the difficulty in altering study cycles, in reconciling the start and end dates of the semesters and field training exercises, it has been important to note the large differences between the initial training models of officers in different European countries, particularly regarding the academic component.

On the one hand military and behavioral training could be associated bearing in mind very close values of a common doctrine of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the EU together with a not very different military condition between Armed Forces, from Greece to Portugal. On the other hand, in terms of the academic component, it was found that the education systems of the various countries and, in particular, the MHE models were very different, even between the academies of the countries themselves (between courses) and in the countries themselves (between AF and some Security Forces).

On the other hand, it was also noted that the problems of Portugal and Spain were similar to Greece's, due to decentralization and associated costs, even in very short periods (one week to two weeks) , a matter which has now been moved to the line of support for the development of legal mechanisms.

Another important action has been the meeting between commandants of the Academies (EMACS), where the process and topics of common interest are discussed, from linguistic training to leadership, and military and behavioral training. We participated in the EMACS that took place at the Military Academy of Modena (Italian Army) in 2014, which demonstrated the differences in training models and of the difficulty of implementing an Erasmus Plus in the same way as the European Universities do. We also noticed that most of the cooperation actions between the European Military Academies were still focused on bilateral relations, oriented towards visits of few days where students and teachers took part. Other ongoing activities concerned the exchange of students about to end their courses (master thesis) and short courses for teachers and students, mostly between countries closer to central or eastern Europe.

More recently, in 2017, we participated in the EMACS, in Estonia (Tartu), and we felt that much has been done under the banner and with the support of the IG and the ESDC, in particular regarding the exchange of information, training, teaching and even research, always respecting each other's differences and specificities. We also noted a strong commitment from other countries such as Austria, Poland and Romania, in terms of trying to increase harmonization among EU countries as regards the Military Higher Education (MHE) as a way to facilitate exchanges. We perceived that, for these countries, it is essential to educate future officers with knowledge, but especially with a critical and prospective sense, in order to face the new world (but also the old enemies ...).The next EMACS will take place in Austria (Theresan Military Academy), on 26-27 October 2018, in which the Commandants of all Military Academies (regardless of whether they train officers for one or more branches) will

participate. This constitutes another important step towards accepting the Legal Framework under the Military Erasmus¹⁰, with a view to harmonize procedures and create a genuine European Security and Defense Identity.

Despite the difficulties, the challenges remain, as the process continues to have numerous advantages arising from the mobilities of future Armed Forces officers, namely:

- in terms of knowledge;
- interaction between students from several countries (more internationalization and more Bologna - student-centered teaching);
- consolidation of English language learning (even in 5-day modules);
- developing various competencies;
- in health (by means of tests made in the meantime and linked to motivation);
- in learning outcomes;
- in the classifications.

As frequently mentioned by Col. Harald Gell, of Austria, the Chairman of the EU IG for the "European Youth Exchange Initiative, inspired by Erasmus", the main objectives set by this process of exchanging young European officers have been achieved during this decade:

- to strengthen the European security and defense culture;
- to raise the awareness of future European officers on the fact that future challenges can only be managed and overcome together.

These objectives embody the potential of the "European Youth Exchange Initiative, inspired by Erasmus", which will be measured in the years to come, in situations that lay side by side, in peace, conflict or war, young officers who knew each other, understood each other and worked together, under the banner of the same values of freedom, equality and fraternity. On the other hand, its achievement is a complement and never an alternative to the initial training given by the different European countries.

2.Potential of (and for) the Military Higher Education in Portugal

The Military Higher Education (MHE) in Portugal has undergone profound reforms over the last decade, especially as a result of the evolution of higher education in Portugal (whose legislation covers the specificity of the MHE) and in the European Union.

The option for the Bologna process by the different Military Academies, materialized a set of legislation and actions that inevitably approached the MHE of higher education in general,

¹⁰ That Portugal has not yet signed. According to the MoD "the acceptance of the Legal Framework does not have obligatory implications for the countries, it only legitimizes the ESDC in its activities". In practice it is about regulating, disciplining and facilitating the relationship between Member States receiving and sending cadets for exchanges in the field of Military Erasmus.

honouring Armed Forces and Security Forces and Services (SFS¹¹) officers (entering the cadres by means of completing the integrated masters) within the general civil service cadre and within the more global framework of the EU.

Both at the political level and within the framework of the AF and the SFS, the option was to move closer to European higher education, not only at the level of education, but also at the level of internationalization and research, two structuring and growing pillars of education and in the MHE in Portugal.

The materialization of the reform that had been going on for more than a decade (in terms of structures and study cycles), came into effect with Decree-Law No. 249/2015, on October 28, on the new MHE and the creation of the Military University Institute (IUM), which incorporates in its functional dependence the Naval School, the Military Academy and the Air Force Academy as Autonomous Organic University Units (AOUU), in the hierarchical dependence of the respective Heads of Staff. With this diploma, which had as reference the legal regulation of higher education institutions in Portugal, the specific nature of the MHE was maintained, the military condition was respected, the weight of the Military Sciences was reinforced as a relevant vector of the AF and the Guarda (GNR) and improved the quality of teaching, without neglecting the military and behavioral training of the future officers of the permanent staff of the AF and the GNR.

Since then, both the IUM and its AOOU have worked together (both personally and institutionally - since new common bodies such as the Board of Directors, the Scientific and Pedagogical Councils and the General Council, among others have been created), bearing in mind institutional accreditation and its different cycles of studies by the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES). For this agency, internationalization and research are becoming more and more decisive. Priority has, therefore, been given to these pillars, namely in the relationship with Portuguese universities (and the security and defense industry), but also with the counterparts in European countries.

We have been receiving more European students and teachers under the Military Erasmus and the Erasmus Plus¹² programs and have been sending more students and teachers to different European military academies (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Poland, Greece, Romania, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary, among others), far beyond the traditional bilateral and multilateral relations of cooperation. We have started to organize and to hold international events (seminars, colloquia, etc.), which have been included in the EU IG agenda. We are working in order to create and integrate research and development projects together with other European military academies (that is the case of a Leadership project with Greece and Poland, which will give rise to four new common modules).

¹¹ The specificity of higher education provided by the ISCPSI was also recognized.

¹² The Military Academy in particular has held the Erasmus Charter since 2005 (ongoing 2014-2020 - the Naval School also holds the Erasmus Charter). Mobility is aimed at conducting master's theses, academic weeks or other research work. In the case of teachers, they accompany the academic activities and also teach classes of their specialty (in English).

One of the examples, which should be a reference for future events, was the "Third International Symposium on Command and Leadership" held at the Military Academy on February 15 and 16, 2018. This event, which was part of the IG agenda, had the participation of Col. Harald Gell, who reinforced the need for harmonizing some procedures which can allow greater mobility in terms of the initial training of European officers, arguing that European AF face the same threats and values that are shared by European officers as a whole.

The potentialities of the European initiative for the exchange of young officers is already visible, particularly for those who monitor the evolution of the HME in Portugal and the European Union in more detail. Thus, we highlight some of those that we have identified:

- to strengthen the pillar of internationalization;
- to develop in students specific skills related to adaptability, accountability and autonomy outside their comfort zone;
- to improve the linguistic level, in particular the English language;
- to enrich oneself, with the knowledge and experience of other comrades in arms, other Academies, other AF and other realities and contexts;
- to strengthen specificity and scientific knowledge, in particular in the field of Military Sciences;
- To contribute to the creation and strengthening of a European identity among FA officers, open to knowledge and with common values;
- to create more synergies between European AF through privileged relationships between their senior permanente staff;
- to harmonize structures, processes, knowledge and doctrine at different levels, in particular as regards the military sciences.

In practical terms, it has been the involvement of Higher Education with Erasmus Plus to bring MHE establishments even closer more than the specific process of Military Erasmus. Though being more limited in financial terms, the Military Erasmus has always been receptive to other initiatives and other kind of support, therefore reinforcing the potential of the specific project on the exchange of young European officers.

The Austrian EU presidency (July to December 2018), followed by Romania, will certainly invest more in Military Erasmus, namely starting with the meeting with all the commandants of the European Military Academies, where other issues will be discussed such as: the creation of new modules (case of "ethics and new technologies applied to security and defense"); investment in cooperative ID & R projects and the signing of the Legal Framework for Military Erasmus. A more political issue, which is not yet on the agenda, will also involve a greater commitment to Military Erasmus (especially in research...), yet in the framework of the new permanent structured cooperation, more associated with capacity building and armament.

3.Paths for Military Higher Education in the European Union and Portugal

Antonio Machado, the Castilian poet, wrote "The way is made by walking". This is, indeed, what has been done at European level within the MHE, regardless of the more or less favorable political circumstances.

Much has been done in a very difficult area, conditioned by the taboos and by the understanding of the sovereignty of Jean Bodin, which significantly makes it difficult for any kind of harmonization at the level of the AF of the European countries and, in particular, with regard to the initial training of the future officers of the cadres¹³.

Much has been done in terms of European higher education in general, partly because of the high success of Erasmus (now Erasmus Plus), with millions of European students as a standard of mobility, cooperation, employability (with less expression in the MHE) identity and quality. Regarding the MHE and Military Erasmus, however, the steps have been slower but necessarily influenced by the larger and more comprehensive EU process. There are effectively two instruments used by the MHE institutions, with different but complementary objectives and tutelage as regards the creation of a true European identity and the development of a culture of security and defense.

At the level of the MHE, the road ahead is still long and necessarily dependent on the political choices of the States, since the Security and Defense matters are too sensitive and often touch the frontiers of autonomy, so precious to the States and their citizens (who defend that the Union should intervene more in these matters). Let us take a look at some suggestions for the consolidation of the ideal path, which is still very dependent on the political, economic and financial conjunctures.

In the first place, there is a need to resolve internal harmonization processes of the countries regarding recent organizational changes (which is the case of the creation of the IUM in Portugal), since the MHE is still not consolidated as far as courses or models for officers' training are concerned within the different States (matter of the Member States). Nonetheless, a lot of work has been done, influenced in part by the EU, namely at the level of the choice of the Bologna process and then by Erasmus (military and Plus) in terms of exchanges between students, teachers and staff, far beyond traditional cooperation in bilateral or even multilateral terms.

Secondly, there is a need to better articulate the relationships between all the actors involved in the European Initiative for Youth Exchange, in particular between the MHE institutions of the countries, the Community institutions and bodies (in this case the IG) and the mandated representatives (normally) by the ministries of defense, which participate in the meetings.

In general and in reality there is still a very large gap between the political decision at the level of each state (many of which have not yet signed the Legal Framework for Military Erasmus) and the praxis of MHE institutions at the level of the European initiative, which is mitigated, to

¹³ See, for example, what is recommended in Article 165 (4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

some extent, by military academy commandants in meetings with their European counterparts (EMACS, USAFA and EUNAVA).

Thirdly, we believe that it is imperative that there be more and better political and financial support for MHE's choice of cooperation in Europe, namely through the more active involvement of MHE establishments in the different internationalization processes in the framework of Military Erasmus and even Erasmus Plus. Much more important than participation in military academy commandants' meetings (highlight on the recent choice of commandants from all military training academies) and IG meeting are concrete actions, such as strengthening mobility, through the participation of more students (and teachers) in modules and common courses, the option to participate in the common semester (in the process of consolidation) and greater commitment to European research and development projects. If the financial and bureaucratic problems are resolved and the priorities for greater participation in the different training actions are redefined, we will certainly have officers with a greater sense of European identity, but above all, more prepared and more able to carry out their duties, especially in the field of international missions.

Only this way will we meet the spirit of Bologna regarding increasing awareness in the political and academic fields in terms of creating a more profound, comprehensive and broader Union, in particular by considering and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social, scientific and technological dimension .

Only then will we meet the objectives of the EU's foreign and security policy, in particular as regards the promotion of international cooperation and the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and individual freedom.

This is the only way we will achieve the objectives set out initially under the European Youth Exchange Initiative to "enhance interoperability", to "bring initial education closer to European officers" and to "strengthen the culture of European security and defense", with a view to a freer and safer Union.

Conclusions

After pointing out the potentialities and work in progress in the field of Military Higher Education in the European Union and in Portugal, with emphasis on Military Erasmus, we are certain of its high potential and we are also aware that we still have a long way to go.

But we also felt that Military Higher Education is a structural issue related to European values; to European awareness; to reinforcement of European identity at a cultural, and security and defense levels; and to the European Way of Life .

For all the reasons outlined above, and taking into account the lessons already learned, we have left some suggestions for consolidating the ideal path, being aware of its direct and indirect dependence on political, economic and financial situations, not only in the Union but also in Portugal.

Regardless of the paths to come, there is something we are sure about: the future of our young people (civilian or military), especially of the European Union's senior staff, is built and

consolidated during their initial training, either in the University in general, or in the MHE establishments of the countries of the European Union in particular. Hence, this higher education will have to invest in the quality of teaching, research and internationalization, and above all, it will have to invest in anticipating the future.¹⁴

¹⁴ We would like to acknowledge Assistant Professor Sofia Menezes for the translation of this article.

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Abstract:

The Military Higher Education has been used by the States and more recently by the European Union as an important instrument of identity, but also to encourage a closer approximation to the level of higher education in the Armed Forces and in some Security Forces.

The political actions developed at the end of the twentieth century, despite the gradual advances, were faced with obstacles related to the great differences of training models and to the specificity and interests of each State. Meanwhile, in the area of security and defense, the Bologna process, which began an irreversible process of establishing a European higher education area in 1999, was reinforced in 2008 with the "European Initiative for the Exchange of Young Officers" (the Military Erasmus) with the aim of reinforcing the European identity of

security and defense, followed by the commitment of the different establishments of Military Higher Education in the more recent Erasmus Plus, with different funding sources, but simultaneously more international, interventive and flexible.

Since the very beginning, Portugal has participated in the Erasmus Programs, although with differentiated contributions; the same happened with the adaptation to the Bologna process, which has led to the European higher education reform process having, therefore europeanised the MHE irrespective of the political situation in the European Union and in the country.

In this article, we characterize the reform process in Military Higher Education in Portugal and we identify different potentialities at different levels, which can come into effect depending on the political will of Portugal, but also of the different Member States of the European Union.

We have listed a number of proposals in order to increase interoperability, to help bring the initial education of European officers closer together and to strengthen the culture of European security and defense. Investment in the training and exchange of Armed Forces and Security officers will allow for greater interoperability and for an increase in their capabilities, which, together with a European set of values, could reinforce the European security and defense identity. Consequently we will, then have commanders with more knowledge, leadership skills, critical and dynamic knowledge, which constitutes an investment in a future of Peace, Security and Development.