

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Common Module 2016 at the Hellenic Air Force Academy (Athens, Greece)

From the 4th to the 8th of April 2016, something extraordinary took place at the premises of the Hellenic Air Force Academy, an idyllic venue, moments away from the Parnitha National Park of Athens, Greece. Participants from a multinational and rather diverse environment, young officers, cadets and civilian students were selected to participate to the Common European Security and Defence Policy Common Module organized under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College and in the framework of the European Initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by ERASMUS.



Participants from EU countries, namely France, Greece and Poland coming from the armed forces, law enforcement, civil protection and the academia came together striving for experience and knowledge inspired by their sincere interest in the day-to-day operation of the EU. Indeed, that was the actual goal of the module, to develop and promote a better understanding of the Common Security and Defence Policy, as an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. In that respect the residential session, that followed the internet based e-learning session has been in my opinion extremely successful in providing useful insight from experienced speakers both in theory and practice.

The participants quickly acquainted themselves with the welcoming environment, since the Hellenic Air Force Academy took care of all our needs with professionalism. The welcoming environment and the excellent organization of the residential session in combination with the above mentioned factors soon paid off and the participants grasped the peculiarities but serious prospects of the EU in becoming a major actor in Defence and Security matters. The contribution of academics to the discussion has been crucial since they familiarised the participants with the domestic, EU-level and international environment in which the formation of such policies takes place. Interestingly enough, the lectures offered useful

insight of the EU space program, the active and past missions both of military and civilian nature and the actors involved.



The idea of perplexing the civil with the military was apparent in every lecture but mostly in the Common Foreign and Security Policy crisis during which there were heated debates and ample ideas' exchange between officers and students. Moreover, the crisis enhanced the practical crisis management skills of the participants and promoted team work in a rather stressful environment.



Concluding, one must note that except for the accumulated knowledge and experience, the initiative offered a once in a lifetime chance to each and every participant to discover the prospects of EU policy integration, where it comes from and what it has to offer. At the end of the day all of us felt more European, recognizing the benefits and the prospects of cooperation in diverse policies that nevertheless touch upon our respective nations' national policies.

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