

Future Perspectives of the European Security and Defence College

*Paper by Julia Lieb and Nicolai von Ondarza**
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The **European Security and Defence College (ESDC)** started work in **July 2005** by means of a Joint Action of the Council.¹ The public's limited awareness of it is probably due mainly to the constraints set as regards its institutional and financial capacities. However, its current contribution to the creation of a European security culture is broadly recognised and the applications for participation regularly stretch the available capacities.

A report on the "activities and perspectives" of the College, as foreseen in Art. 13 of the Joint Action, was drawn up under the Portuguese Council Presidency and has been transmitted to the Council. This report will lay the foundation for a possible revision of the Joint Action in the course of 2008.

The positive further development of the **College could become a showcase for joint EU training and a model for the whole area of EU foreign and security policy**, spelling out how concrete cooperation in a field still marked by serious reservations can lead to results that will strengthen the coherence of European foreign policy both as regards its internal functioning and external effectiveness.

This paper will give a short introduction to the ESDC's objective, structure and training measures and will then present some future perspectives for the College from an academic point of view.

Objective and structure of the College

The declared, ambitious **objective of the ESDC is to »further enhance the European security culture«** (Joint Action, Art. 3(a)). The ESDC shall communicate to the training participants an understanding for the diverse aspects of ESDP as well as its place in the overall context of CFSP, thus generally increasing the expertise on ESDP on the various levels of European and national institutions. In addition, it shall promote networking and exchange between relevant actors and institutions in this field.

The »virtual« College is organised as a **network of »national institutes, colleges, academies and institutions within the EU dealing with security and defence policy issues«** (Joint Action, Art. 1(2)). It is supported by the EU Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS) in Paris, while various institutions take part from a multitude of member states (see Annex I). This way, the ESDC is sure to include an approximate concordance with the various security cultures within the EU as well as a certain broadness in regards to content.

Within the ESDC, a Steering Committee and an Academic Executive Board are responsible for the coordination and direction of training measures. A small permanent ESDC Secretariat is located within the General Secretariat of the Council.

The planning and conduct of training measures is supported by the General Secretariat of the Council, the European Commission as well as the European Parliament. Their lecturers and facilities contribute to the successful implementation of the training programme especially in Brussels. Those involved describe the cooperation between the permanent ESDC Secretariat and the Commission as both regular and constructive.

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¹ Council Joint Action 2005/575/CFSP of 18 July 2005 establishing a European Security and Defence College (ESDC), Official Journal of the EU 2005 L 194.

The ESDC's financing is provided by the member states, as well as by the participating institutions on the national and European levels and the attendees of the training programme (**principle of »costs lie where they fall«**). Financing the College from the EU budget is so far not in consideration.

The ESDC's training measures

The main task of the ESDC is to organise and conduct **EU training measures in the strategic area of ESDP**. To this end, it basically offers two different training activities: ESDP High Level Courses (HLC) and ESDP Orientation Courses.

The **Orientation Courses** aim to provide general training on ESDP issues. Annually, four to five weekly seminars for approx. 60 attendees are conducted preferably in Brussels, as this helps to keep costs low and the proximity of relevant actors can be put to use for the training measures. The seminars are aimed at a broad spectrum of attendees drawn from national officials from EU member states and candidate countries, but has recently been expanded to include representatives from third states and international organisations.

The group of participants for the **High Level Courses (HLC)** is considerably smaller. The HLC are aimed at civilian and military senior officials from Member States and EU institutions, who come into contact with the strategic aspects of ESDP or pursue a career in this area. The classes are structured in five modules for one week each, offered over a period of seven months for approx. 60 attendees. The participating institutions usually hold the classes at their respective location as well as in Brussels and in co-operation with other institutes in the ESDC's network (for an overview on the HLC between 2006-2008, see Annex II).

Perspectives for the ESDC from an academic point of view

→ Promoting institutionalisation

Until recently, the responsibility for the ESDC lay primarily with a single official within the General Secretariat of the Council. In the course of 2007, two national experts joined the ESDC's permanent secretariat as foreseen in the Joint Action establishing the College.

The establishment of a sufficiently staffed and institutionally adequate permanent secretariat is the *sine qua non* condition for further progress and the development of an identity for the ESDC. Only the central coordination of its activities can guarantee a coherent orientation of the College and a visible position for it in the EU structures. In this context, external representation of the College through a single spokesperson could also be considered.

Central administrative structures and the operational network of national institutes can work hand in hand together. With this autonomy-preserving reform, the participating institutes would maintain the principal responsibility for the training measures and thus relieve the central coordination-, planning- and evaluation-station. The national training centres could expect to gain from this design both in expertise as well as through their greater integration into current ESDP developments.

→ Material and political support

Any extension of the College's training measures and other activities has to rely on sufficient financial and staff resources as well as access to premises. The member states as main financial backers of the College might be reluctant in this respect. If the financing of the ESDC can not be shifted towards the EU budget in the future, the reference to its previous achievements should generate the necessary political will to acquire appropriate funds from the member states.

Political symbols should not be underestimated for the further success of the ESDC. In the past, a part of the publicity enjoyed by the College was due to support from the highest level. For example, High Representative and General Secretary of the Council, Javier Solana, issued the invitations for the high-level courses and, when possible, ceremonially presented participants with their degrees.

→ *Retaining the training balance*

Attendees have generally evaluated the content and progression of both training measures positively. Yet, the regular evaluation of the programme also reveals that the standard curricula of the seminars and modules have to be refined further and adapted to the needs of the various participants. In this context, a pool of persistent and experienced lecturers could help strengthen the coherence and the continuity of the College's training measures. An additional challenge is to achieve a balanced combination of civil and military aspects as well as the proper relation between participants coming from different fields.

Within the College, new training objectives and concepts are under discussion and being implemented. The College now offers courses for key personnel from national Press and Public Information Staff. A range of courses for different actors in the field of ESDP are under consideration. An extension of training measures could help increasing the general awareness level and visibility as well as the effective reach of the College.

→ *Exploiting the potential of the internet*

Contrary to the initial provisions set out in the Joint Action, the internet has so far played only a marginal role as a platform for training activities. The internet could indeed be used in a twofold manner to bring about improvements to the training: On the one hand, web-based training constitutes an affordable alternative for the extension of the training programme. On the other hand, the internet allows for an external representation of the College and at the same time enhances the permanent network between participating actors and institutions. The existing enhanced co-operation with partners which are experienced in this respect (such as Belgium's Royal Higher Defence Institute) can be regarded as a first important step towards an expansion of the College's capabilities.

→ *Strengthening the network character of the ESDC*

The institutions participating in the ESDC are in constant contact due to their close co-operation in the framework of the Academic Executive Board, the co-ordination of the training programme and the occasional joint conduct of training modules in the High Level Courses. Nevertheless, the insufficient continuity in the orientation of training measures should be remedied by eliciting binding commitments from national institutes as regards their participation in the College's activities.

A further avenue for development lies in the intensification of established contacts as well as an extension and diversification of the ESDC network beyond the boundaries of the EU. In this context, co-operation with other training measures in ESDP should be considered, such as the frequent military, civil-military or police exercises. The existing regular meetings of participating institutes in the various training measures are leading the way. Last but not least, the benefit of the establishment of an alumni-network should not be underestimated, as it could promote contacts between various officials working on security and defence policy across Europe.

Concluding remarks

A revision of the Joint Action in the course of 2008 offers an opportunity for the College's structure and activities. In order to help soothe possible reservations with regard to a further development of the College, the existing demand for its training measures and its concrete added value could be regularly emphasized.

Yet, it should also be underlined that national autonomy in education and training policy in the area of security and defence policy will not be questioned by a further institutionalisation of the ESDC. Furthermore, concerns in view of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty will have to be respected during the deliberation of the ESDC.

At the same time, EU Members should come to an agreement over the long-term objectives to be pursued with a ESDC. This would raise questions on the concrete relationship between the College and national training institutes as well as more generally on the necessary and desirable content and priorities for European training in the future.

Annex I: National institutes participating in the ESDC

Member State	Institution	Homepage	Location
Austria	Landesverteidigungsakademie / National Defence Academy	http://www.bundesheer.at/organisation/beitraege/lvak	Vienna
Baltic States	Baltic Defence College	http://www.bdcpl.ee	Tartu
Belgium	Institut Royal Supérieur de Défense (IRSD/KHO) / Royal Higher Institute for Defence	http://www.mil.be/rdc	Brussels
Czech Republic	Vítejte na Univerzitě obrany / Czech Republic Defence University	http://www.unob.cz	Brno
France	Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale (IHEDN) / Institute of National Higher Defence Studies	http://www.ihedn.fr	Paris
Finland	Tervetuloa Maanpuolustuskorkeakouluun / National Defence University	http://www.mpkk.fi	Helsinki
Germany	Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik (BAKS) / Federal College for Security Studies	http://www.baks.bundeswehr.de	Berlin
Greece	Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Hellenic Defence College	www.mfa.gr / www.setha.mil.gr	Athens
Hungary	Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem / National Defence Academy	http://www.zmne.hu	Budapest
Italy	Istituto Superiore di Stato Maggiore Interforze (ISSMI) / Higher Institute for National Defence	http://www.difesa.it/SMD/CASD/Is tituti+militari/ISSMI	Rome
Netherlands	Institut Defensie Leergangen (IDL) / Netherlands Defence Academy	http://www.nederlandsedefensieacademie.nl	The Hague
Poland	Akademia Obrony Narodowej / National Defence Academy	www.aon.edu.pl	Warsaw
Portugal	Instituto da Defesa Nacional / National Defence Institute	http://www.idn.gov.pt	Lisbon
Romania	Colegiul National de Aparare / National Defence College	http://www.unap.ro/ro/unitati/cnap/cnap.html	Bucharest
Slovenia	Ministrstvu za obrambo / National Ministry of Defence (Institute)	http://www.mors.si	Ljubljana
Spain	Centro Superior de Estudios de la Defensa Nacional (CESEDEN) / Higher Centre for National Defence Studies	http://www.ceseden.es	Madrid
Sweden	Försvarshögskolan / Swedish National Defence College	http://www.fhs.se/sv	Stockholm
United Kingdom	Defence Academy of the United Kingdom	http://www.defac.ac.uk	Shrivenham

Source: General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, 2007

Annex II: ESDP High-Level courses in 2006-2008

High Level Courses 2006-2007

Module	Location	Organiser	Supporter (financial/logistic)
<i>1. Foundation Module</i>	Brussels	IRSD/KHID Council Secretariat Commission	Netherlands Luxembourg
<i>2. Crisis Management Capabilities</i>	Paris	IHEDN	
<i>3. Crisis Management Missions</i>	Athens	Greek Diplomatic Academy with support of the Hellenic Defence College	Italy Austria
<i>4. ESDP in regional context</i>	Madrid	CESEDEN	Polish National Defence Academy
<i>5. Future Perspectives of the ESDP</i>	Berlin	BAKS	

High Level Courses 2007-2008

Module	Location	Organiser	Supporter (financial/logistic)
<i>1. Foundation Module</i>	Brussels	IRSD/KHID Council Secretariat Commission	Netherlands Luxembourg
<i>2. Crisis Management Capabilities</i>	Lisbon	Portuguese National Defence Academy	BAKS
<i>3. Crisis Management Missions</i>	Prague	Czech Republic Defence University	UK
<i>4. ESDP in regional context</i>	Tartu	Baltic Defence College	Austrian National Defence Academy
<i>5. Future Perspectives of the ESDP</i>	Ljubljana	Slovenian National Defence Institute	

Source: General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, 2007