



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1079 Vienna, 29 May 2024

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#### **EU Statement on Military education and the changing roles of military academies**

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1. Mr Chair, thank you for putting military education on today's agenda. As is the case for all the security dialogues envisaged under your Chairpersonship, this topic is of great relevance for the politico-military dimension and should rightfully be discussed in the FSC. We also thank all the panellists for their informative presentations. We value your insights into your countries' approaches to military education and the broader roles of military academies.
2. Allow us now to complement these by highlighting activities of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). The ESDC is the main EU actor for training and education in the field of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, notably for military personnel. It also ensures the EU's integrated approach by promoting joint civilian-military training to ensure that both civilians and the military remain aligned and that civilian-military aspects are covered. The College engages in geopolitical partnerships and offers a multitude of courses open to participants from candidate and third countries. The ESDC counts Ukrainian institutions among its partners.
3. With its highly developed network, the ESDC offers a multitude of courses for military staff at all levels of seniority. The European Initiative for the Exchange of Young Officers for ages 18-28 has been inspired by the Erasmus programme. This so-called "Military Erasmus" allows for exchanges of young officers, during their initial training, which are crucial for their long-term interoperability. The most recent addition to ESDC activities is the European Higher Military Education / EU War Colleges Initiative, which developed a mutually agreed-upon curriculum for a Common Training Module to be implemented in war colleges across Member States, on a voluntary basis. Combined with its other programmes, the ESDC leads the efforts to build capabilities in common defence education and to create a truly European security and defence culture.

4. Mr Chair, in addition to the more traditional elements of military education, your concept note also rightly highlights the emergence of new technologies which are already impacting our militaries, both when it comes to their education as well as on the battlefield, and are bound to intensify in the future. The ESDC has created a wide variety of cyber courses, strategic, tactical/operational, technical, and legal, designed to cover topics in the areas of: cybersecurity, external relations, cybercrime, network information security, hybrid threats, disinformation, and cyber defence. Emerging technologies, such as Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, are also priorities of the ESDC.
5. It is also important to emphasise the education and training of armed forces on the core commitments of international humanitarian law also stipulated in the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. They are crucial for any armed force and it is of utmost importance that these provisions are not only part of the official curricula, but also complied with in practice. Sadly we witness on a daily basis how Russia's forces violate these core principles and the existing OSCE acquis.
6. Mr Chair, speaking about military education more broadly, it must not be instrumentalised for political reasons. In that sense, we must express our deep concern at the reported growing military indoctrination of Russian children and young people by the Russian government. Reports indicate a systematic effort to teach young Russians a revisionist and distorted history, spread disinformation including about Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and stifle dissent in order to prepare young people for future conflict. This is in addition to Russia's appalling forced indoctrination and militarisation of Ukrainian children taking place in temporarily occupied territories. The EU and its Member States strongly condemn these actions and call for their immediate cessation.
7. To conclude, let us thank you once again, Mr Chair, for putting this topic on the agenda. The interventions in this room have clearly shown how timely and eminent it is in light of the current challenging circumstances. We also stand ready to provide additional information on the work of the European Security and Defence College and further engage on this matter both here and in other relevant fora.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, GEORGIA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.