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“Military Erasmus” on the move: read the seminar report / Seminar report

(L’ « Erasmus militaire », un projet en marche : lire le compte-rendu du séminaire)

L’ « Erasmus militaire », un projet en marche – Compte-rendu du séminaire

The European “military Erasmus” initiative has been officially launched, and brought together experts to discuss its implementation with a view to creating a common European defence culture.

"I consider military Erasmus as an opportunity for Europe", said the Chief of the French Defence Staff, General Jean-Louis Georgelin, at the seminar on the “European initiative for exchanges between young officers”, held on 13 and 14 November at the École Militaire in Paris. Lieutenant-General Wlastimil Piček, his Czech counterpart, speaking on behalf of the forthcoming Czech Presidency, shared this point of view.

On Monday 10 November 2008, the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted a declaration launching the European initiative for exchanges between young officers based on the university programme Erasmus. In line with the determination of the EU defence ministers, the seminar specified the issues and implementation terms of this ambitious project. Major rewards are expected in the fields of operations and capabilities, as underlined by General Henri Bentégeat, the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee.

These exchanges between young officers aim at beefing up the interoperability of forces as well as further developing a European defence and security culture. Selected officers will be able to perform some of their training in another Member State.

"This is one of the EU’s flagship projects”, says French Air Commodore Antoine Creux, the seminar moderator. “It should lead to the creation of a common basis of knowledge on European defence, exchanges of students, teachers and teaching among military schools and academies for the intersecting qualifications of European officers”. This project should also lead to the development of common teaching modules by European initial officers’ training schools and academies.

In his closing speech, Jean-Marie Bockel, the French Minister of State for Defence and War Veterans, emphasised the importance of "training tomorrow’s military chiefs to understand, appreciate, love and protect what we have in common as well as our differences".