

**The organisation of military higher education in Europe:**  
*Observations emerging from the replies to the questionnaires*

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Context and frame:

This stocktaking report on the European military higher education is an active part of the implementation and follow-up of the initiative for the exchange of young officers during their initial education, inspired by Erasmus. The stocktaking process started in January 2009 and is based on the contribution of the Member States. It is intended to provide the implementation group created in February 2009 with the relevant information for its work. The present reports thus aims to address the different priorities formulated by the political Declaration of the 27 Defence Ministers of November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and the lines for action defined for the work of the respective sub-groups.

General observations:

This preliminary report is based on the replies to the questionnaires for detailed stocktaking, as a follow-up to the previous one processed in September 2008; the breakdown of European military institutions from which replies were received is as follows:

	Land Forces	Navy	Air Force	Gendarmerie	Total
Academic education	21	14	18	4	57
Vocational education	29	17	23	4	73
Total	50	31	41	8	<b>130</b>

It should be noted that the numbers previously shown in the table are based on the fiction of considering joint institutions<sup>1</sup> as one entity in each of the branches and aspects of education (academic and vocational) they provide. This “fiction” will be maintained in this report. Total numbers are thus generally the number of answers from national education systems and not the number of institutions. In vocational education especially, it may happen that the number of replies be superior to the number of answering Member States because of the application level: schools are often dedicated to the training of one arm only (i.e. infantry, artillery, cavalry, etc.), which multiplies the number of replies received.

Some member States, concerning notably Medical officers<sup>2</sup>, communicated additional replies that were not included in this document due to the limited amount of questionnaires and the diversity of the national forms of these officers’ education. Medical officers’ training may either take place, formally, in the educational institution of their branch, regarding their future position in the armed forces, possibly in a national joint institution, or in a specialised military institution dedicated only to their training, or the training might be done in the form of short-commissioning courses, i.e. completing a military training after their graduation from civilian universities. Substantially however, excepted in the specialised institution or short-commissioning course cases, their academic training is not entirely, nor even mainly, assured by military institutions but very often by civilian higher education institutions collaborating

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<sup>1</sup> 11 Member States have “joint” institutions, either for the three (possibly four with Gendarmerie) main branches of the armed forces or for two of them only.

<sup>2</sup> Medical: BE, CZ, HU, IT.

with the basic training institutions. It was not possible, at this stage in the process, to construct a basis for effective comparison between these educational systems.

Additional information was also provided concerning specific branches of armed forces. Owing to the lack of comparable information, they were not integrated into this preliminary report<sup>3</sup>.

In general, the answering institutions are those that train the cadets to their future role as officers. They are, depending on the names given in their member States, academies, schools or universities of defence. More rarely, replies<sup>4</sup> were also provided concerning the training to the arms given at the application level within application or arm schools where the officers experience the apprenticeship of the arm they choose. The decision to provide or not specific replies from these schools was left at the appreciation of the Member States themselves. The few replies effectively received might be seen as a sign that application is not considered on the same level as higher education, with similar interests in exchanges in the context of the initiative. One element of explanation may certainly be found in the observable differences among the Member States in the equipment and arms used, which is an issue wider than the initiative itself.

#### Definitions:

- **Vocational training**, as understood in this questionnaire, includes both military basic training, including physical training (other than regular physical training), and professional training.

- **Military academic education**, in this questionnaire, also includes leadership and ethical education provided in an academic environment.

- **Undergraduate education**: Bachelor equivalent.

- **Graduate education**: Master equivalent.

- **Basic education** is also included in optional education: if, for example, in a national system master-equivalent education is normally part of higher education but cadets have the opportunity to attend it right after the completion of their undergraduate curriculum, master education is to be taken into consideration in this stocktaking<sup>5</sup>.

- In this report, the terms “**cadet**” and “**student**” are used interchangeably.

In order to allow the most efficient comparison between the different national systems of military higher education, this report separates the data for the four<sup>6</sup> major armed forces branches, when relevant.

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<sup>3</sup> Italy provided notably information related to the education of *Guardia di Finanza* officers.

<sup>4</sup> Belgium and Finland.

<sup>5</sup> This point is developed in section I of this report.

<sup>6</sup> Gendarmerie officers' educational systems are shown as belonging to a specifically dedicated branch of military education and in accordance with the structure of the European Gendarmerie Force.

## I. Time organisation in military higher education

The **organisation of time** in military officers' curricula is presented in the form of schedules in the database, in order to allow comparison with a view to exchanges between Member States. The intention is to give an overview of how officers' basic education is organised and its time shared between academic and military (practical and vocational) aspects of the training. Nevertheless, specifically national features observed make it difficult to categorise as related to basic education or not some of the elements presented.

### *The terms of the basic education:*

The stocktaking is not intended to include an in-depth study of the **recruitment processes** of the European cadets while not related to the objectives of the initiative, i.e. enhancing mobility for cadets in the course of their military education. The recruitment obeys national traditions and ends, which would require extensive sociological studies and is not to be reviewed in the context of the research for mobility improvement. However, national conditions for the entry of young students into military life, which were intuitively communicated by the Member States<sup>7</sup>, may give us clues about how the educational systems define themselves. First, and certainly the most important feature, it is clear from the replies that the European officers educational systems are unanimously in the higher education category. All the recruits must have completed at least their secondary education and, in some countries, some of the higher education. Therefore, basic officers educational systems also face the inherent challenges of the modern European higher education, which include notably the implementation of the qualifications and the Bologna process *acquis*.

Then, it appears from the replies intuitively given that some Member States allow citizens from other EU countries to become officers of their armed forces through the completion of their national curricula, which is important with regard to the issue of recognition: recruiting foreign citizens imply that their secondary education is necessarily recognised as such by the hosting Member State. However, their number was relatively limited<sup>8</sup> compared to the number of Member States allowing the recruitment of nationals only.

Intuitively, the Member States also answer that the recruitments are often conditioned by age limitation, by the success in passing physical, psychological and medical tests, more rarely by the examination of minimum height or criminal records.

Finally, it appears from almost all of the intuitive replies that the access to basic military officers education is conditioned by the success to knowledge examination organised under the form of competitions. This observation confirms the fact that, academically also, military education wants to be seen as a pole of excellence in allowing only the best students in. It shall be acknowledged, at this point, that one out of two of these Member States<sup>9</sup> setting entrance examinations or reviewing applicants' educational background include tests of the English language into these. Many of the European cadets are thus expected to be able to communicate in English.

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<sup>7</sup> No proposition of answer was made in the questionnaires. The Member States thus replied according to what they considered as the most important criteria for the recruitment.

<sup>8</sup> Three Member States only mentioned this possibility: Belgium, Greece and United-Kingdom.

<sup>9</sup> 5 Member States in Army education, 6 in Navy, 5 in Air Force and 1 in Gendarmerie.

Finally, five Member States emphasised the importance of **conscription**<sup>10</sup> in their replies, either in the schedules or in the recruitment conditions<sup>11</sup>. As conscription constitutes a person's first experience of military practice, it has been described verbally in the schedules at the beginning of the curriculum of a young officer.

Basic education prepares the cadet for the first post as a military officer and, as such, is separate from the **advanced education** conducted during the career, which is intended to allow the officer to take on new and higher positions within the armed forces. Formally, a young officer's first posting represents an objective and distinctive criterion for differentiating these two stages of the lifelong learning path.

In practice, master education might be an issue for some countries. It can be an option for the cadet, but, while the choice in this case is made before the first posting, our formal criterion applies and the master's course is legitimately presented in the schedules. In some countries however, master's curricula are not offered to officers in post until a few years<sup>12</sup> after their commissioning. Formally, this new stage in education is an advanced one. Regarding the objective of the initiative, i.e. enhancing exchanges of young officers, the master's level may be the most appropriate stage for exchanges in view of the more international pedagogical content (the bachelor's course is certainly more “nationally” focused) and the more advanced language skills, in particular. Furthermore, the first posting, if not too long, could be assimilated to a practice period, therefore linked to the basic educational process as a whole. This argument regarding the prospects for exchanges applies only if the students are not of too high a rank, otherwise the social aspects of the exchanges would be far more difficult to meet. For three Member States<sup>13</sup> then, advanced master's education was integrated into the initial training.

**Doctoral studies** may, in some countries, be undertaken right after the master's course. They are important also for the development of exchanges because, at this stage of the educational process, the social dimension in the exchanges is not as relevant as it might be for class-based training courses. Science is the priority here and exchanges at this level of education may be envisaged more flexibly. However, because of their flexible duration and accreditation from one educational system to another and because of individual practices, doctoral courses are not shown in the attached schedules.

#### *The actors of the basic education:*

The basic education of an officer, represented through the calendars, is the sum of education a cadet shall attend before being posted in units for the first time. From the replies, however, it appears that contributions from multiple educational actors may complicate the puzzle of the basic training. There may be a **coexistence of institutions** according to the academic-vocational axis or according to the level of instruction, but what is the most fundamental is the possible involvement of civilian actors in the academic training of the

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<sup>10</sup> As of 2009, 8 Member States still have conscription in force: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece and Sweden (on the way to be ended).

<sup>11</sup> Five Member States mentioned the prior completion of the military service as a condition for the recruitment of the cadets: Austria, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania (soon ended) and Sweden.

<sup>12</sup> 2 to 4 years for these Member States.

<sup>13</sup> Estonia, Finland, Lithuania. Their master's courses are delivered at Captain level at the highest.

future military officers. As they bring an effective contribution to this education, it is necessary to ask whether the training possibly provided outside the military sphere<sup>14</sup> is to be considered as a part of the initial training or not. In the systems concerned, this “delegation” of educational competence to external actors may be either informal or formal.

By “informal delegation”, it is meant that the contribution from an external actor other than those under the control of the Ministries of Defence is not a prerequisite in the initial training of the national officers. It is the case of the United-Kingdom system, in which a prior university curriculum is not a condition for the recruitment of a cadet: facts, however, showed that the cadets acquired an important university background prior to their entry into the academies<sup>15</sup>. The informal presence of civilian entities is not relevant regarding the objective of exchange investigation because, at this stage of the educational process, students do not have any experience of the military socialisation. They are not yet future officers, conceptually. Consequently, this part of their academic curriculum, even if it is knowledge-contributing, do not appear in the calendars of the initial training.

By “formal delegation”, it is meant that the contribution from civilian actors is a prerequisite for the commissioning of young officers, and therefore, that the Ministries of Defence intentionally gives competence to these actors for the training of their future officers. It is the case, for example, of the Slovenian system in which cadets are recruited from civilian institutions after the completion of their bachelor curriculum, or the Maltese Navy educational system regarding the prior completion of navigation watch or engineering watch certification in a specific civilian institution<sup>16</sup>. This delegation may also be met at the end of a curriculum as for example in Italian Navy and Air Force educational systems for some specialties like engineering, law or medicine. This form of delegation, due to the compulsory attendance expected from a future officer, is thus to be included in the scope of basic education: it is his/her educational baggage. Regarding the objective of the initiative for the enhancement of exchanges, considering these parts of the curricula is differently relevant following the fact that the delegation is at the beginning or at the end of the military education. Indeed, at the beginning of the curriculum, this delegation does not allow the students to experience military socialisation and the behaviour that is required from a future officer. Considering the delegation at the end of curricula, potential exchanges would be similar to those experienced with other civilian institutions, adding the considerable value of knowing that a European military educational system already entrusted the institution and its education.

Formal delegation, finally, is also hiding behind the flexible learning paths, which are often proposed for some specialties like law or medicine. The **condensed learning paths** for cadets recruited after they have already obtained a diploma, such as a master's degree in civilian

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<sup>14</sup> Delegations of educational competences to foreign systems by Member States having no national facility (Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta) remain outside this debate while the external contribution is the initial training. However, in the Maltese educational system, the participation to foreign courses is only proposed: cadets can either be graduated before their recruitment from civilian institutions or chose to follow an additional military curriculum abroad.

<sup>15</sup> See: <http://www.sandhurst.mod.uk/courses/cadets.htm> (1/08/09)

<sup>16</sup> The French educational system meets the same form of delegation but experiences a different organisation of it. It is indeed possible for a student to be recruited after bachelor studies in civilian universities, like in the Slovenian system, but a majority of the cadets actually come from “preparatory classes”. These classes of a normal two-years duration are organised within civilian institutions but due to their exclusive *raison d'être*, i.e. preparing the students for the entry competition, they shall remain very connected to the military education itself and be its anteroom.

education, are not shown in the calendars, because the limited duration of their military education makes it more difficult to develop exchange programmes. Furthermore, these cadets might have experienced exchange programmes in the course of their civilian curricula. Four Member States<sup>17</sup> mentioned the existence of specific curricula for graduate students in their replies. Besides, other Member States, like the Netherlands, mentioned the fact that they propose short-commissioning courses independently from the cadet's educational background. These options were not shown in the schedules either, for the same reason.

#### Looking for mobility windows:

In line with the requirement formulated in the context of the Bologna process of defining mobility windows in the curricula, the schedules highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the national systems regarding the objective of the enhancement of exchanges. The first observation that can be made is that no commonly shared window, which would mean that every systems have the same colour at a given stage of the curriculum (e.g. first semester of master curriculum), can be found. **Bilaterally** however, match can be flexibly found allowing willing institutions to organise an exchange for a suitable period, either academic, vocational or both. It shall be emphasized that this is a choice to be prepared internally by the responsible institutions.

The presentation of the curricula under the form of calendars might be helpful identifying possible match. To this regard, it is interesting to notice that almost all academic trainings are organised under the form of semesters, which makes a common basis for the discussion of the exchange duration especially for instructing staffs, and that these semesters are very often combining both the academic and vocational aspects of the military education.

There are also, at the first sight, opportunities to be studied regarding the periods dedicated to the drafting of study thesis. On the one hand, there object is scientific and thus imply that the supervisors trust the work of their European counterpart, which makes the exchange more the product of an "organic growth". On the other hand, the supervisors are often members of scientific societies acting as meeting circles, which accelerate the growth of trust needed by the exchange, and these periods might be –in cases where additional courses are not required– free from accreditation concerns. From the multiple occurrences of such entirely yellow periods, it seems that these scientific exchanges could be envisaged between many educational systems.

Regarding the specificities of the vocational training, it shall be said that the definition of mobility windows is not only linked to the match of the calendars, but also and certainly even more to opportunities, national equipments, facilities and know-hows. Apart from the completion of a basic military training course at the beginning of the cadets' curricula, vocational training may be done according to different orders in the Member States. It is not organised in study cycles but mostly in modules of different contents and skills that can sometimes be considered independently one from each other and be taught in different orders. Concretely then, a vocational exchange organised bilaterally between first year cadets and last master year ones may be conceptually balanced. Therefore, in order to identify mobility windows in this aspect of the training, it might be interesting to look at the content of the vocational programme itself or to generalise the preparation of **vocational catalogues**<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Lithuania (Army).

<sup>18</sup> The European Air Force Academies forum (EUFAFA) launched a similar idea in drafting catalogue of activities proposed by the participating institutions, including thematic academic,

presenting the training proposed in a given timeframe, allowing institutions to define the modalities of their exchanges.

*Conclusion:*

Decoding the military education genome is very complex insofar as the organisation of time obeys the needs and traditions of national armed forces. For the time being, there is no single shared timeframe allowing a kind of multilateral “European semester”. Nevertheless, the parallel presentation of the timelines of the national educational systems emphasises the fact that periods of correspondence may be found bilaterally for an academic exchange, a vocational one, or a combination of both in a given timeframe.

## II. Qualifications fostered by military higher education – comparative approach

### The lack of a common approach:

With regard to the Europeanisation of higher education in general, notably through the conduct of the Bologna process, qualifications are expected to become the engine of the European mobility area. It means that the exchanges between responsible institutions be no longer motivated by programmes similarities only, but mainly by the contribution an other institution may bring to the set of required **knowledge, skills and competencies** a student is deemed to attain when achieving its education. A switch of mentalities is thus expected to take place but as it requires adaptations from the educational systems and also from the teaching institutional policies, it is a sensible issue for which implementation takes time, as it is observed from the Bologna process surveys<sup>19</sup>.

Owing to the specific nature of the cadets' education, however, differences in the level of implementation might be conceivably expected in comparison to the civilian higher education. Civilian higher education aims at “delivering” graduate students for the labour market in general. Their adaptation to their future positions is rather done on the job than during their education. In military higher education, the educational institutions are expected to deliver finished products, i.e. newly commissioned officers ready to command a unit for the unique employer; that is the national armed forces. To this end, it is less easy to enhance mobility, notably in the field of vocational training, if this means that the cadets would not attend parts of their core training. Therefore, by nature, the national institutions are the most adapted to train their national military officers and, even if their teaching might be already expressed in terms of qualifications, the European harmonisation efforts with regard to mobility can possibly be implemented differently from their civilian counterparts.

The **replies provided** on the generic competences, as defined by the European Qualifications Framework<sup>20</sup> (EQF) and the Dublin Descriptors (DD), and timelines for implementation were, at this stage of the stocktaking, very diverse.

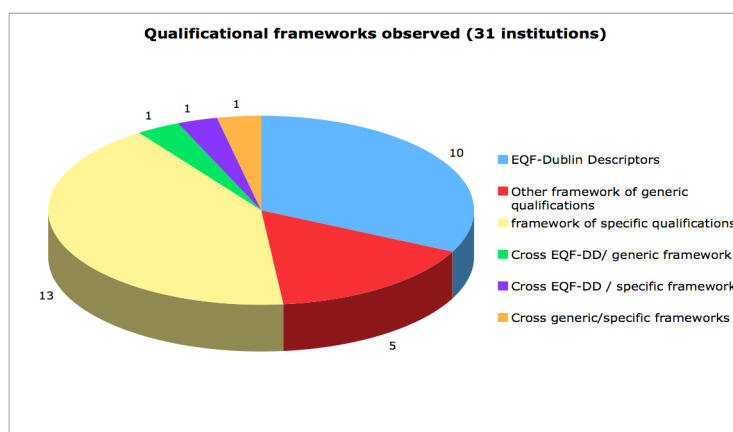
Regarding academic education, some institutions expressed their expected outcomes in terms of specific competences, some used other sets of generic competences, and others used a combination of different qualification vocabularies. The combinations are thus called “cross” in the graph below when an institution provided answers using the definitions of generic qualifications, i.e. using the correspondence knowledge/theoretical, skills/cognitive and competence/responsibility, but differently formulated (“cross EQF-DD/generic framework”) or applied to the different subjects contained in the programmes (“cross EQF-DD/specific framework”). In some cases also, institutions developed their own set of definitions, which they applied in a consistent and specific manner to the teachings proposed (“cross generic/specific framework”). Consequently, the replies collected did not allow effective comparison in this field.

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<sup>19</sup> *Report on Qualifications Framework*, Bologna Process Coordination Group for Qualifications Framework, submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group for its meeting 12-13 February 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Levels 6 (undergraduate education) and 7 (postgraduate education) for academic training, level 6 for vocational training.





In the case of vocational education, a similar exercise with the EQF proved impossible: 3 out of 36 replies referred to the EQF, 1 referred to another set of generic qualifications, 1 reconciled specific and generic qualifications, and 32 described the content of the programme or used specific qualification descriptors<sup>21</sup>.

From this investigation, it was not possible to assign a value to either system, regarding specific or generic competence comparison, and not possible either to create a tool to be proposed to the institutions for the comprehensive comparison of their qualifications discourses. A specific competence comparison is more difficult to make because of the link with the content of the programmes. Since educational programmes all differ from one institution to another, the sum of competences developed by national educational systems would not be comparable<sup>22</sup>. This does not mean, however, that the educational outcomes are not comparable in military education. In order to allow comparison, only a reference framework serving as a common language is needed. To this end, the EQF remains the best option because it is a framework created by the European Communities, which provides clear definitions of its components and separates the different stages of the higher education. Mechanisms for the reading and presentation of qualifications will be proposed in the next parts of this report.

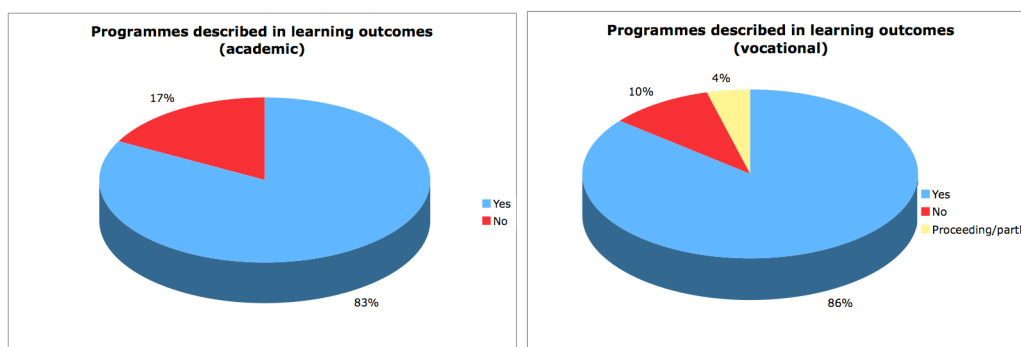
### *A growing culture of the qualifications:*

However, even if they do not allow comparison at this stage, these replies outline the fact that the institutions have developed **individual visions of the qualifications** to be attained by the cadets. The importance of the description of qualifications is generally assimilated and expressed in individual statements, either in generic or in specific terms. Many of the institutions replying referred to the EQF or the Dublin Descriptors in their

<sup>21</sup> In the questionnaires, it was proposed that generic qualifications defined by the EQF be evaluated in relation with the different modules of vocational education, which is methodologically biased. The result turned out to be closer to a specific qualifications exercise than a generic qualifications one.

<sup>22</sup> The Portuguese Army educational institution provided an “intermediate” solution in its replies. It produced a table which matches the generic competences defined by the institutions with the educational modules and then describes the way the qualifications are attained. Other institutions, when receiving their Bologna accreditation, may well also have prepared such tables.

statements. Furthermore, a large number of institutions have already described their educational programmes in terms of learning outcomes, as shown in the following figures<sup>23</sup>:



At this stage of the stocktaking process, it shall be reminded that the learning outcomes are “*the statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence*”<sup>24</sup>. According to this definition, agreed in the European context, learning outcomes are meant to be the translation of the qualification frameworks at the instruction level. They may thus be updated when the national qualification frameworks will be finalised and accredited on the basis of the overarching framework of qualification of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna process) and the EQF (European Communities), but regarding the present stocktaking, it appears that there is a growing culture of the qualifications in the military educational policies, in both academic and vocational aspects.

Regarding the end of this investigation, i.e. to outline the qualification equivalences between educational systems with the objective of exchanging their respective know-how, other indications may be provided by the **quality assurance** systems to which the various institutions are subject. The questionnaires were also intended to elicit information on the steps toward the acquisition of qualifications but the replies did not provide it; however, quality assurance partly solves the problem. The idea is to ensure that education is provided in time and in conformity with qualification expectations. Its role is to build confidence when a military institution is looking forward to benefit from the knowledge developed by an other institution. In order to build a common culture of confidence in European military higher education, two elements proved to be of major importance: common trends in quality assurance, together with a common understanding of the basis of quality, i.e. a common language in qualifications. Member States’ replies allow similarities in the field of quality assurance to be highlighted, notably the use of ISO 9001 guidelines (certified or in line with) or, in Navy officers’ education, the STCW 95 prescriptions of the International Maritime Organisation. Further information will be given in the next section of this report. Consequently, institutions’ commitment to generally follow a commonly understood qualification framework appears an essential step towards perfecting the construction of mutual confidence.

<sup>23</sup> Overall replies. Joint institutions are repeated in the data for the different branches.

<sup>24</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01), 23 April 2008, annex 1.

### Reading qualifications:

The exercise proposed in the questionnaire did not allow a clear comparative instrument on generic competences to be developed, but mechanisms may be proposed in order to compare different frameworks, for both academic and vocational training. In the recommendations formulated in the last Bologna process stocktaking<sup>25</sup>, the participating countries were asked to “*engage fully in developing and implementing coherent and transparent practices for the recognition of higher education qualifications, so that a qualification has the same value across the European Higher Education Area*”. This recommendation aimed at organising the recognition in the **intermediary period** between the start of the national works on frameworks and the general accreditation of them, which is the aim of the process. The difficulty is that educational institutions, including civilian ones, are currently standing in this transitional period, but not at the same stage. Some Member States have already defined their national qualification frameworks and had them accredited<sup>26</sup> on the basis of the overarching framework prepared in the context of the Bologna process (FQ-EHEA) and/or the EQF, while others have not yet done so. In practice, there can be no intermediate level between the EQF and the institutional framework of qualifications for the time being.

In this section, reading mechanisms of the qualifications will thus be proposed. During this transitional period, the newly defined **EQF may serve as a reference tool** when trying to compare different institutional frameworks. To see if the qualifications awarded by institution B are equivalent to institution A's own set of qualifications, institution A will read B's framework through the EQF or FQ-EHEA “translation”, their common denominators. At this stage of the implementation, more work could have been done by the Member States on their national qualifications framework with regard to the overarching framework of qualifications designed in the context of the Bologna process in 2005 than with regard to the EQF, which was designed later in 2008. It could then be conceivably easier to take the overarching one as the common reference needed. However, even if the EQF is not a formal implementation of this one, it inspired from it and has the advantage of defining the constituting concepts of the qualifications<sup>27</sup>. Practically, it might thus be easier to use the EQF as the most adapted common denominator.

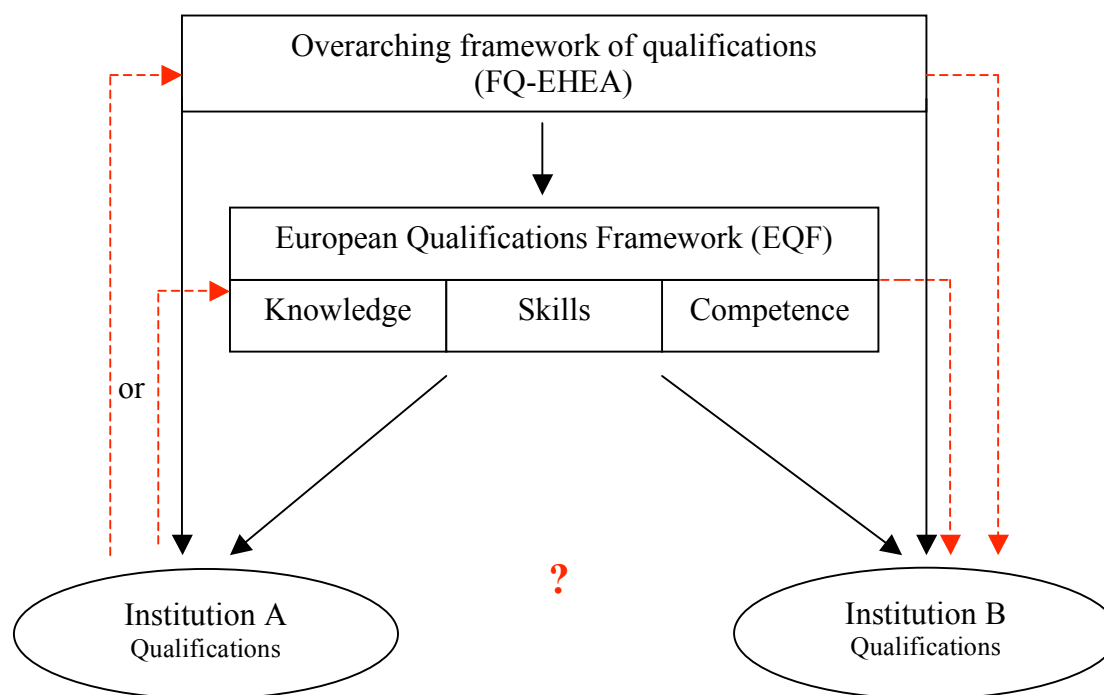
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<sup>25</sup> Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Numbers of Member States having already accredited their NQFs will be given at the end of this section. Early accreditation of NQFs on the basis of the EQF is more limited than FQ-EHEA accreditation because of the youth of the EQF.

<sup>27</sup> “Knowledge”, described as theoretical and/or factual; “Skills”, described as cognitive (involving use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments); “Competence”, described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Figure 1: Searching for equivalent qualifications in the transitional period



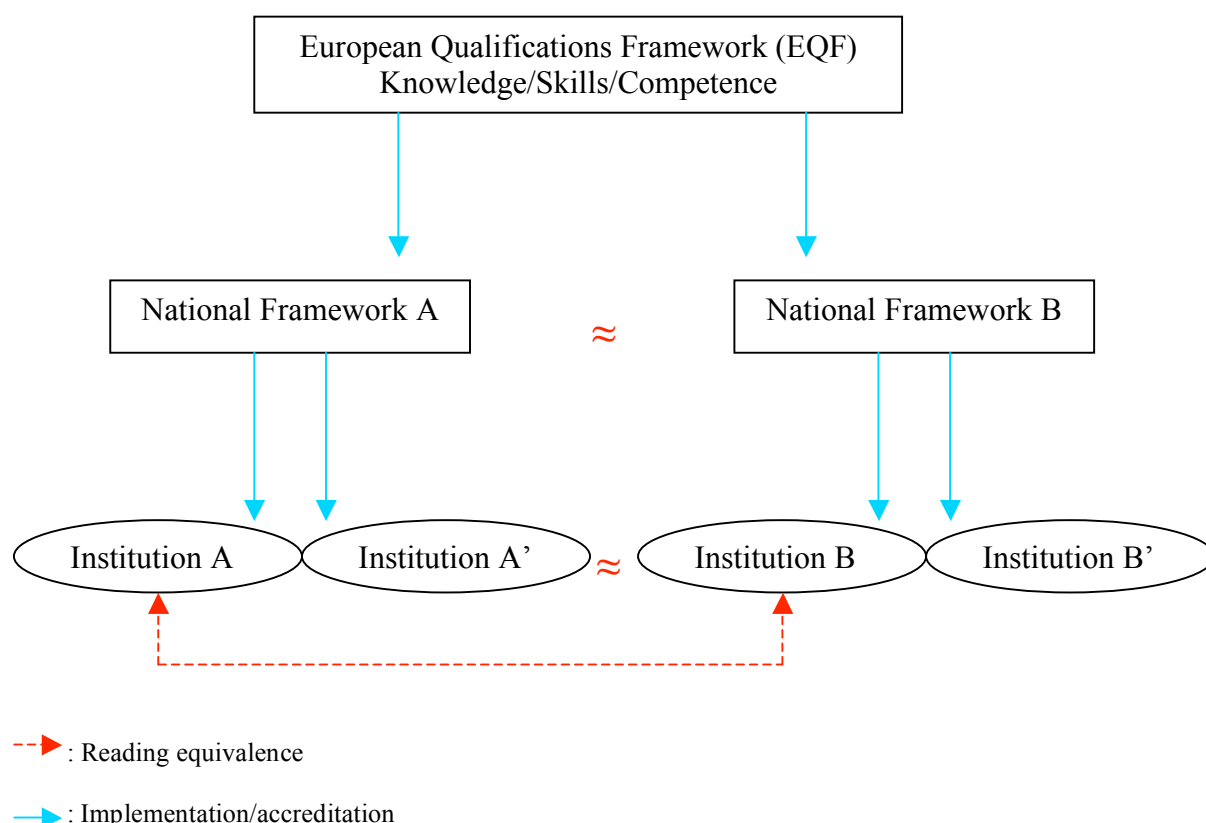
--▶ : Reading equivalence

➔ : Influence on the definition of qualifications

After this transitional period<sup>28</sup>, the Member States will have set national qualification frameworks, implemented and accredited on the basis of the FQ-EHEA and the EQF. Then, institutional frameworks will have a formal link – even if it is an indirect one – with the EQF. Institution A should then consider the institution B framework as describing **equivalent qualifications**, even if formulated in a different way. The accreditation is a formal self-certification process aimed at guaranteeing that a national qualification framework is designed according to the overarching framework, be it FQ-EHEA or EQF. In the figure below, the FQ-EHEA was not mentioned because the EQF, which will be a reference framework for the 27 EU Member States, is to be considered as the most adapted one with respect to the governing principle of subsidiarity. Nevertheless, it shall be said here that the same pyramid could be designed from the FQ-EHEA, which reinforces the equivalences to be found at the bottom.

<sup>28</sup> Expected in the context of the Bologna process to end in 2013 as regards implementation on the basis of the FQ-EHEA.

**Figure 2:** Comparing qualifications in the EHEA (after the transitional period)



Practically, in order to ease the reading of qualifications among institutions during this transitional period, in which mobility is dealing with both programmes and outcomes issues, it could be proposed to the institutions to develop tables based on the same model as provided by the Portuguese Army Academy combining both **programmes' contents and the EQF itself**. In doing so, it would allow potential partners to look at the "pace of the education" and the way the educational modules foster qualifications. If an institution focuses its exchange on the programme, the outcomes give an idea of the match between two similar courses given by different institutions<sup>29</sup>; if, as it is suitable, an institution bases its exchange on the qualifications, it can compare if the outcomes of a part of its curriculum are similar to those fostered by a foreign training. In the mean time, such instruments would allow identifying both generic and specific qualifications developed by a curriculum. The table below summarizes this particular proposition for automating the reading of qualifications, taking the example of a bachelor curriculum:

<sup>29</sup> Which are specific qualifications because in connection with the content of the programme itself.

		Knowledge			Skills		Competence	
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Year 1	Course X	X			X			
	Course Y	X	X		X		X	
Year 2	Course X1	X	X		X		X	
	Course Z	X		X	X			X
	Course Y1	X	X	X	X		X	X
Year 3	Course W	X	X			X		X
	Course X2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Course Z1	X		X	X		X	X

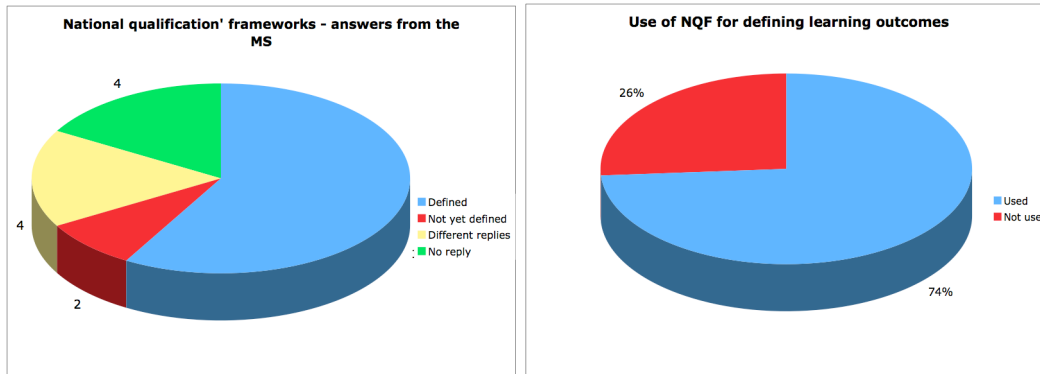
This kind of tool would allow seeing when the education provided by an institution meets the requirements suggested by the EQF. It shall be noted that such a table could also be set, separately as not to flood the analysis with the information for a possible partner, for the vocational training on the basis of the EQF level 6.

It appears from the questionnaire replies that some Member States have already implemented their **national qualification frameworks** (NQF). Nevertheless, the replies also show that the issue of qualification frameworks is not entirely clear in all cases. Some institutions stated that the NQF was implemented while others said that it was not. However, in the countries where the NQF was unanimously said to be implemented and in those where divergences exist, it appears that the issue is considered to be a priority: 72 % of their military academic institutions define their learning outcomes with regard to their NQF. According to its own survey, the coordination group for qualifications frameworks of the Bologna process<sup>30</sup> showed that, for the European higher education in general and on the basis of the national reports provided, this implementation would take time and efforts. At the beginning of 2009, 9 EU Member States had declared having implemented, or were about to do so, their national frameworks while it was undergoing for 9 other Member States. 7 of these 9 Member States having implemented their national frameworks stated they had self-certified their framework with the FQ-EHEA while 11 other were currently planning to do so<sup>31</sup>. These numbers, however, do not take into account the link that shall be made between the national frameworks and the young EQF, which is now an important issue following the Bologna-related documents<sup>32</sup>. Then, countries where the link is already made or about to be made between the national framework and the FQ-EHEA might be in the situation where updates will be needed in order to fit the EQF also. The mechanisms for the recognition of equivalence between institutional qualification frameworks are thus gradually converging.

<sup>30</sup> Bologna Process Coordination Group for Qualifications Framework, *Report on Qualifications Frameworks*, submitted to the BFUG for its meeting on 12-13 February 2009, pp.20-24.

<sup>31</sup> Self-certification is the next stage after implementation in the Bologna process, which explains why two Member States had already implemented their national framework but had not self-certified it at the time of the review.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, p.6.



### Conclusion:

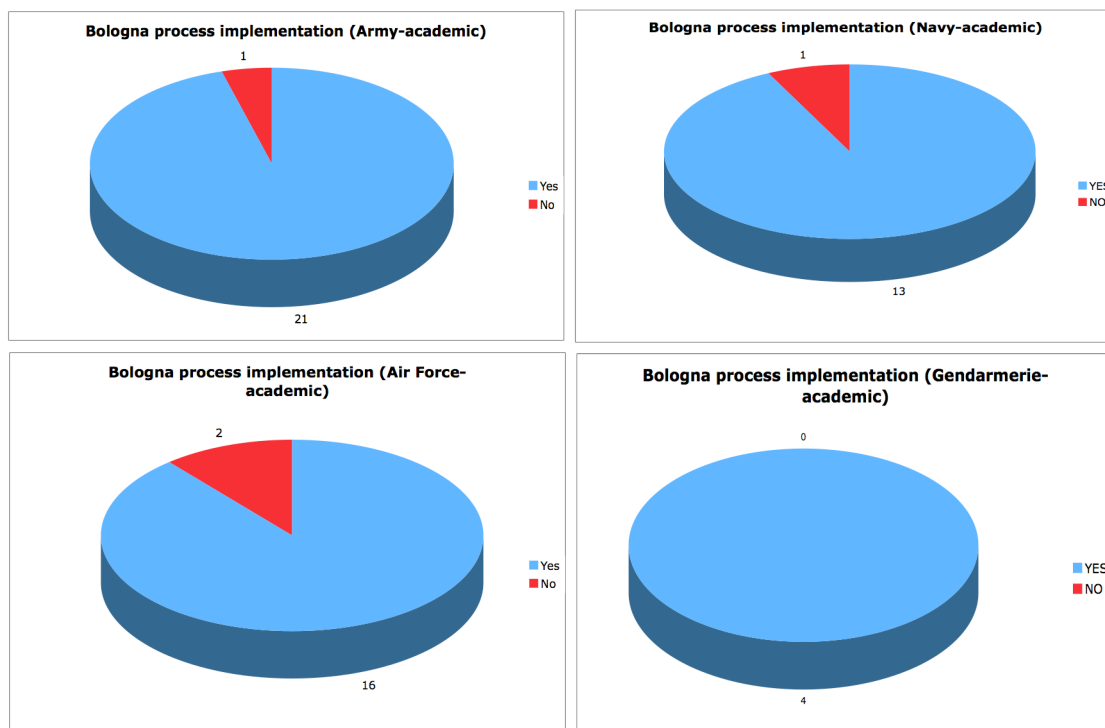
Conceivably, there could be a difference between civilian higher education and its military counterpart with regard to the use of the qualifications as an engine of the exchanges. It is too early to effectively observe this difference in facts because the implementation of qualifications is an undergoing process requiring a coordination of all the actors involved in higher education. Nevertheless, military institutions show their willingness to integrate this trend of modernisation, thus proving their pro-activity in the development on the European Higher Education Area.

The replies to the questionnaires did not make it possible to develop a common understanding of the knowledge, skills and competences to be achieved by European military higher education. Individually however, the institutions showed that they have a vision of the qualifications to be attained by young officers, either generically or specifically, and that they have developed cultures of excellence for their education. The issue of qualifications in higher education in general is still pending while national implementation remains an ongoing process. Although no comparative instrument can be developed from the replies to the questionnaires, institutions should ideally refer to a common overarching framework, such as the EQF, when accrediting their curricula, in order to show the equivalences that may exist between the education they provide and education in other countries. To this end, they may use a tool crossing both the programmes and the qualifications, which would allow their potential partners identifying their educational similarities. The institutions may also be invited to communicate on this central issue for mobility through the structures created for the initiative for the exchange of the young officers, acting as a forum and resource for coordination.

### III. Implementation of Bologna process/recognition conditions

#### 1. Academic training and the Bologna process:

The Bologna process was referred to in the political statement by the 27 Ministers for Defence as a major element for the recognition of education provided by the military educational institutions with regard to the objective of improving exchanges. In the second questionnaire circulated to the Member States, answers provided showed that general **implementation is almost complete** as regards the academic aspects of military higher education<sup>33</sup>.



The four institutions which gave a negative answer also said that they are currently proceeding with implementation.

In these data, however, the delegation phenomenon observed in the first part of this report is not taken into account. The contribution of other actors, notably civilian, to the education of cadets is not to be forgotten: it might have an impact on the recognition of academic levels. A cadet who has previously obtained a degree from a civilian institution of his/her Member State should not be discriminated in his/her exchange for not having acquired it in a military institution. Thus, the recognition of the studies shall go beyond the military characteristics of the curriculum and focus on the degrees. This would considerably reinforce the integration of the military higher education and, therefore, its visibility in the European Higher Education Area.

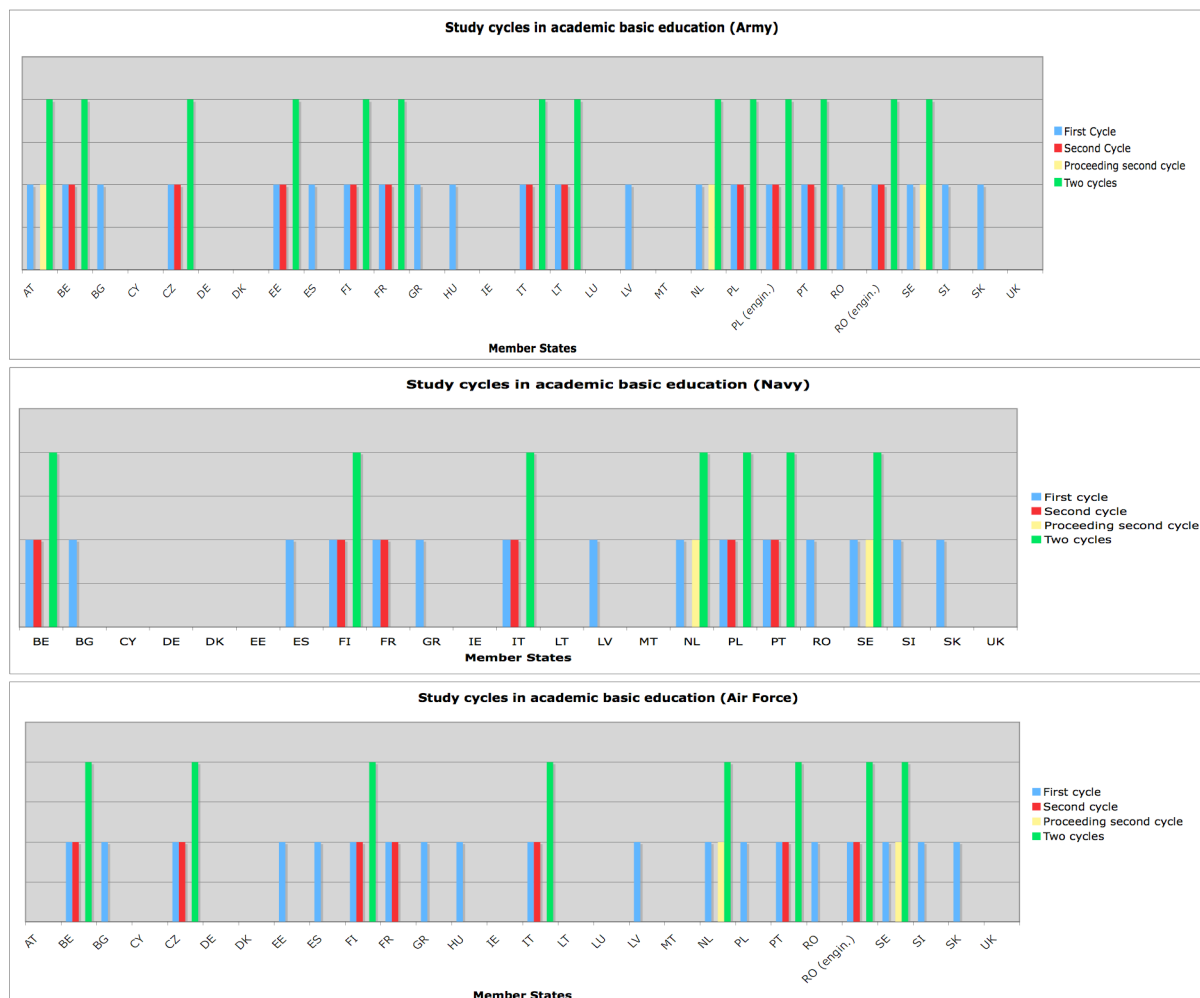
<sup>33</sup> In the first stocktaking, the question of the implementation of the Bologna process was asked with regard to the Member States themselves and their military education taken as a whole. In this second stocktaking, the question was asked regarding the branches and their academic education. Systems where military education does not have an academic part do not appear anymore in the “noes”, then.



As the Bologna process is not a standardisation process, differences legitimately remain between the basic officers' curricula. Two models of **study-cycle** organisation appear:

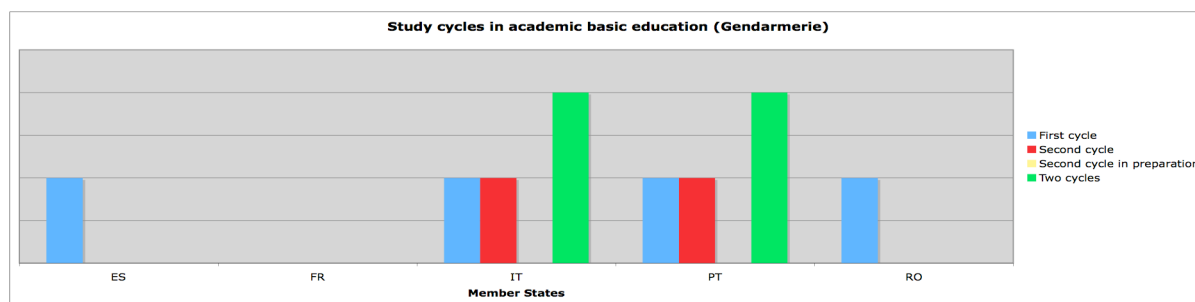
- Organisation of the undergraduate (first) cycle only<sup>34</sup>;
- Organisation of the two cycles, undergraduate and postgraduate<sup>35</sup>.

The following two graphs show the curricula proposed by the Member States at the basic level of education (first cycle in blue, second cycle in red, systems currently preparing the implementation of a second cycle in yellow). For systems proposing both cycles a green bar has been added to show that they would be able to exchange with any other system in the academic field. Systems where a master's degree is formally provided at the advanced level of education but nevertheless included in the context of the initiative have been incorporated.



<sup>34</sup> The Slovenian military system does not organise the first cycle of academic education. Candidates are recruited on completion of their studies in civilian institutions. A cadet must thus have completed bachelor education in the course of his basic curriculum.

<sup>35</sup> The phenomenon of formal delegation is included because contributing to the educational baggage of a cadet.



The question one might ask about the organisation of the military education is if it corresponds to the organisation of the civilian higher education. With other words, it is about characterizing cadets' education as being fully "higher education" or revealing a "military approach" with regard to the study-cycles. In looking through the calendars of the national educational systems, it appears that there is indeed an important diversity in the duration and accreditation of similar degrees. Military bachelors, or first cycles in general, can thus extend from 3 to 5 years (from 180 to 240 ECTS) and masters, or similar degrees, from 1<sup>36</sup> to 3 years (from 60 to 180 ECTS). In the civilian higher education, similar observation can be made<sup>37</sup>: the implementations of the cycles' system nationally differ. They may even leave space for internal differences; for example one country may authorise both 180 and 240 ECTS bachelors.

A quick look at the calendars allows drawing an almost perfect **parallel between national higher education and national military education**. Only a few differences may be found regarding the accreditations but they are sometimes caused by the transition toward the Bologna process. The differences remain exceptional. Nevertheless, it shall be noticed that the military specificity of these curricula appears when looking at the durations of the cycles. As shown in the calendars, the cadets often cumulate academic and military training within the same period. The transmission of the academic knowledge takes thus more time than in the civilian educational systems<sup>38</sup>. Only a deeper investigation could help concluding that the final amount of academic studies equals the civilian learning paths, but there is undoubtedly a search for the most perfect equivalence by the military institutions. Therefore, it can be concluded that military education strictly obeys the rules and developments of the national higher education systems. The responsible institutions prove once again the curricula they offer do not differ from the excellence that is looked forward by their civilian counterparts.

**Third cycles** (doctoral studies) do not appear in these graphs because of their very ambivalent nature regarding the distinction between initial and advanced education. However, possibilities exist for some young officers to complete doctoral studies within initial training institutions (7 Member States in the Army, 3 in the Navy, 7 in the Air Force, none in the Gendarmerie). Other replies provided stated that the implementation of doctoral studies within military educational systems was envisaged. The number of possibilities, either within military institutions themselves or in collaboration with civilian institutions is thus expected to grow in the near future. This development, in parallel with trends observed in civilian higher education, reinforces the perception of officers' education as being fully part of the EHEA. This point may be important in the sense that doctoral studies are flexible, not only in

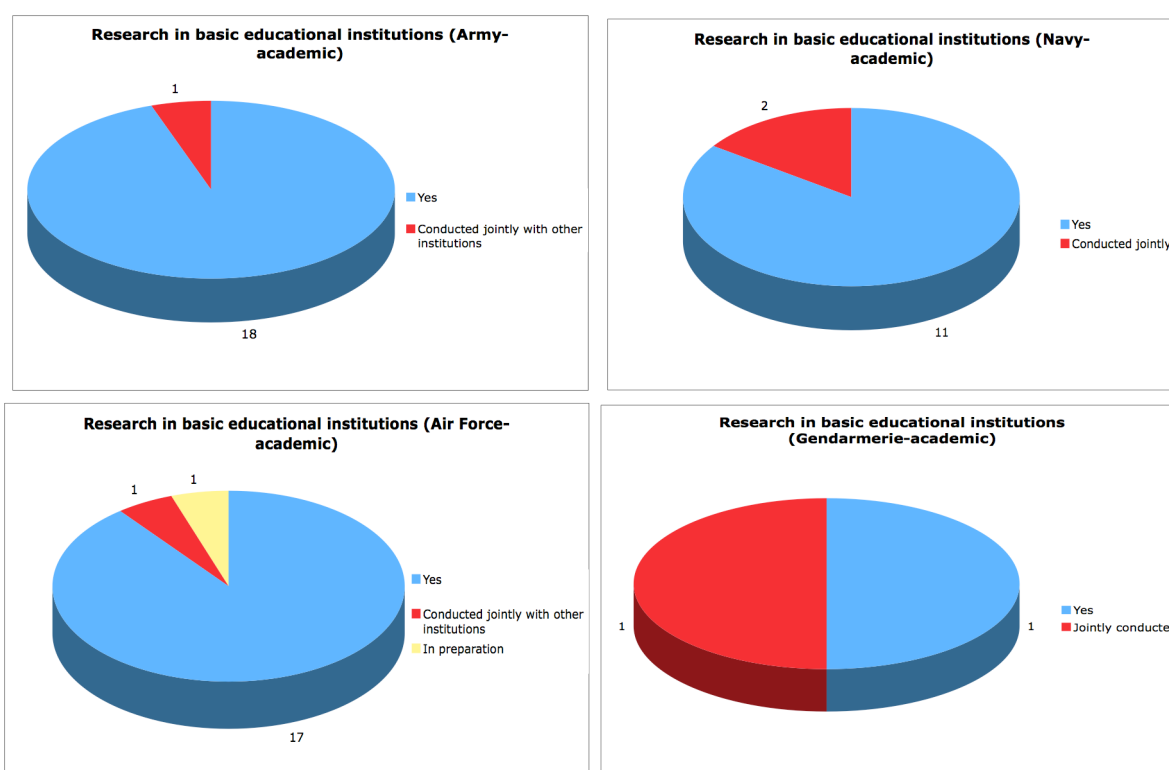
<sup>36</sup> In the case of the Lithuanian Army master, studies are extended on a 2 years period but the total amount of study is inferior to one year.

<sup>37</sup> *Higher Education in Europe 2009: Developments in the Bologna Process*, Eurydice, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> In some systems, the difference of the lengths between civilian and military educations is compensated by an extra load of hours in the schedules of the cadets.

terms of time organisation but also as regards accreditation, which remains free according to the Bologna process action lines. Therefore, the implementation of doctoral studies open new opportunities for the mobility of the officers in general.

In the same vein, it appears from the questionnaires that **research is a widely shared asset** of military educational institutions, whether conducted individually or jointly with other institutions, often civilian. As a resource for developing and updating academic education, research may also be an instrument for ensuring the quality of a curriculum and, in the context of this initiative, it may be a pro-active field for exchanges of scientific and academic staffs. These exchanges can only be the results of a slow maturation obtained from the connections established among the different staffs and the discussions of their respective fields of activity. Exchanges could then be organised within tight deadlines provided that they can rely on pre-existing connections. As a matter of fact, except the Gendarmerie, almost all institutions in every branch organise research activities<sup>39</sup>.

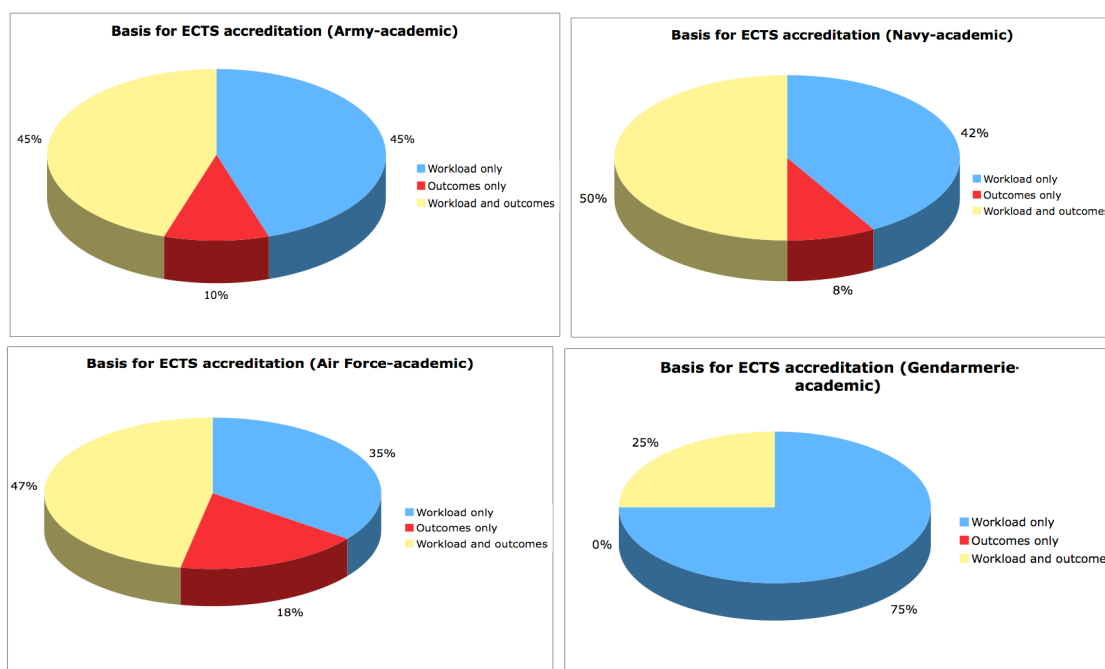


A central element of the Bologna process is the implementation of an **accreditation system** allowing courses and modules to be exchanged between different institutions by considering a course in another country as equivalent to a nationally provided course. The ECTS system, or at least a compatible system with regard to credit transfer and accumulation, is also generally implemented in the institutions following the Bologna prescriptions (100%)<sup>40</sup>. Nevertheless, differences remain regarding the basis for accreditation used by the different institutions. Some use only the student **workload** estimate, and some only the

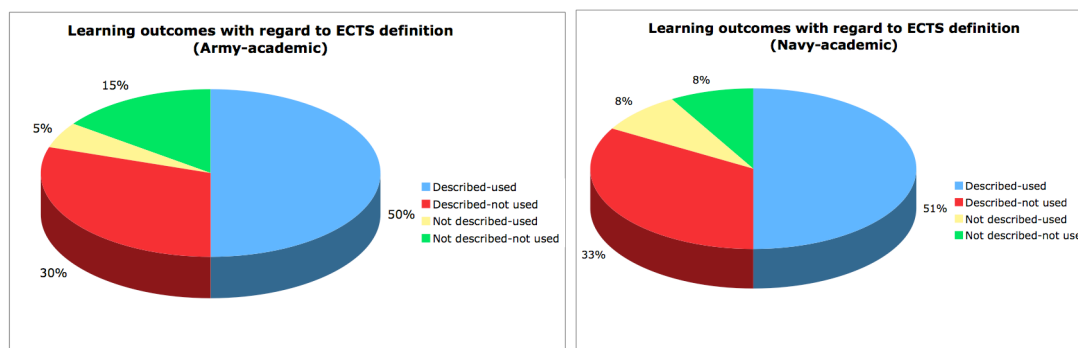
<sup>39</sup> It shall be noted that the Netherlands Defence Academy is counted twice (one in “yes” and one in “conducted jointly”) in the graphs because research is organised on both an institutional and shared basis.

<sup>40</sup> The Polish Air Force Academy, which has not yet implemented the Bologna process, is also using ECTS accreditation for its educational content.

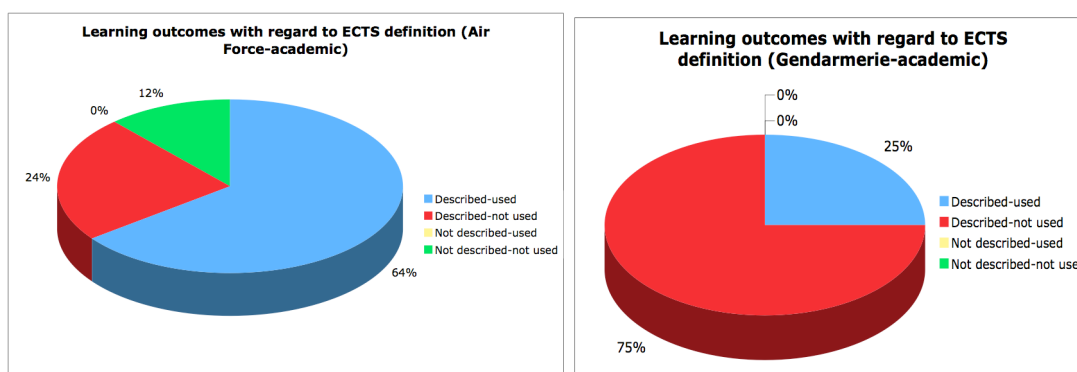
**learning outcomes** expected from the course or module, while others use both of these criteria. The Bologna process particularly encourages this trend and intends it to become general practice. One question was if the number of hours used for the estimation corresponded more to simple contact hours of students and teachers than actual student workload. From the replies provided by the institutions, in general, the criterion of a 20 to 40 hours estimation fits the 25-30 average usually retained in the context of the Bologna process for the student workload. The use of this criterion seems to be generally assimilated by the military institutions.



The use of the workload estimate in a large majority of accreditation processes may be explained by the objectivity of this criterion<sup>41</sup>. It can be expressed in figures, unlike the learning outcomes that involve a more subjective assessment of the qualifications by the institutions. However, it should be noted that some institutions do not use learning outcomes as a criterion for accreditation, although they described them in the education programmes. For these institutions, full completion of the Bologna expectations is thus only a small step away.



<sup>41</sup> The objectivity of this criterion nevertheless depends on a unanimous definition of what is to be considered in a student's workload.



The **quality assurance** section of the questionnaires highlighted some diversity in the systems adopted by the educational institutions, as shown by the data. However, common trends emerge. All academic institutions have the quality of their education reviewed, both internally and externally. According to the survey, **internal** quality review is carried out by regular internal investigations, internal institutional structures (such as commissions – permanent or not – or educational councils), scientific research, often in accordance with ISO 9001 standards, and in most cases students are involved in the process through filling in questionnaires or participating in programme approval and review. On the latter point, military education, given its hierarchical social structure, has created a system of daily monitoring of cadets' opinions regarding the quality of the education. As part of the military socialisation process, senior cadets are designated to act as the link between the students and the commanding officers<sup>42</sup>.

**External** review of the quality of education is notably carried out by the Ministry of Defence, which is the end-user of the education. As such, it might be seen as both an internal and an external reviewing process. Further review might be also conducted by agencies linked to the Ministry of Education – which are in most cases reviewed by international audits and belong to international networks<sup>43</sup> – or by international associations dealing with quality assurance in higher education, such as the European University Association. This external review may sometimes involve student unions and/or international participation and these European structures act also as advisors when coming to the preparation of an external quality assurance system. They may thus be consulted also by military institutions.

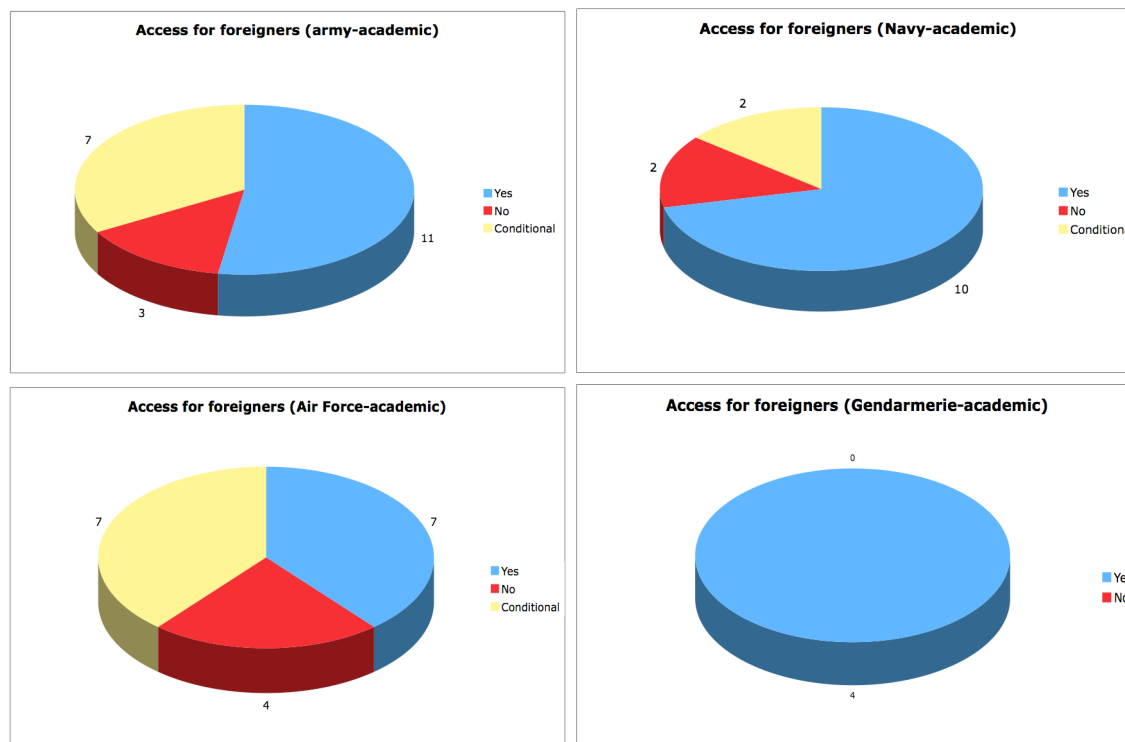
It is not a purpose of this stocktaking to review the quality assurance mechanisms set by the institutions because they fit the idea one institution has about the level of quality its education should have and about the means to engage in order to fit the standards defined in the Bologna process. Guidelines towards the realisation of the standards were also suggested by the Bologna process documentation and they can be helpful to the institutions that are currently working on the structures of their quality assurance review. Owing to the possible feeling of disconnection between military education and civilian higher education purposes, it may be suggested to organise, in the context of the initiative a dialogue between institutions having already organised their review and those which are currently doing so. Indeed, the object of the quality assurance - i.e. the programmes, qualifications and their subsequent

<sup>42</sup> Unlike civilian student representatives, these senior cadets fulfil a daily role, which includes responsibility for every aspect of a cadet's life, not just the academic aspect.

<sup>43</sup> This explains why, in the database, mention of the international reviewing process was added when an institution stated its external quality assurance system is reviewed by national agencies although it was not appearing in the replies received. According to the Bologna Process Stocktaking 2009, most of the EU countries have their national quality assurance agencies internationally connected or reviewed.

practical consequences on education in general – differs from one system to another, but the instruments of the review may be similar.

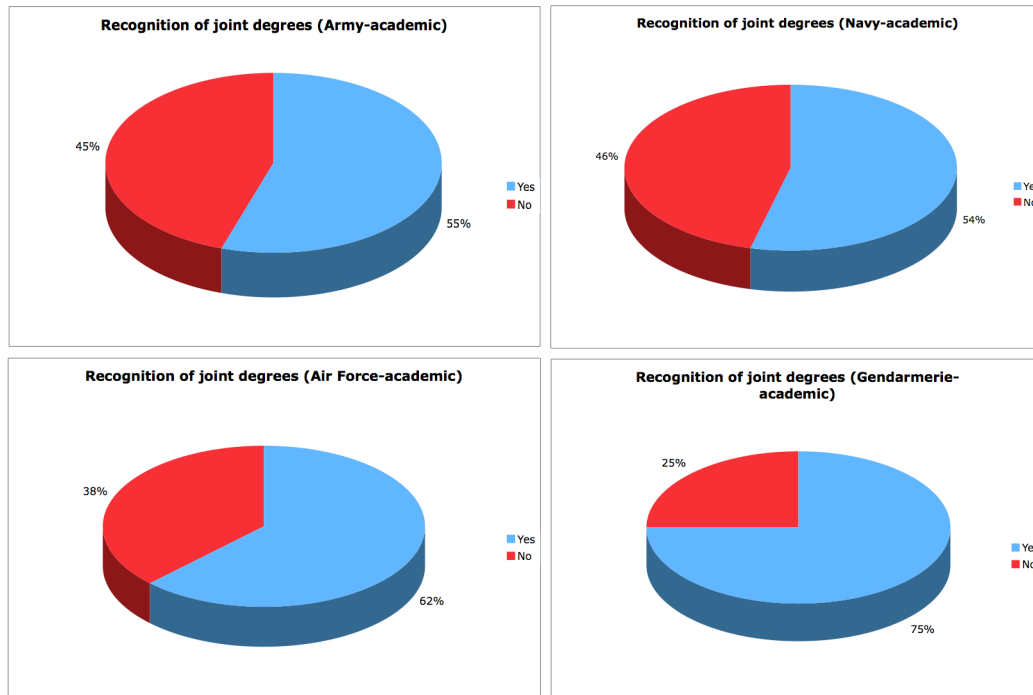
Another fundamental obstacle to mobility dealt with by the Bologna process is **access for foreigners** to the curricula, which may be different from civilian education because of the sensitive nature of security and defence education. Nevertheless, Member States' replies showed that, in general, their academic educational systems were open to foreigners, with EU nationals being first in line. This access to the whole academic curriculum<sup>44</sup>, sanctioned by a degree, is often subject to requirements such as an additional diploma and/or the review of the application by a jury or by the national Ministry of Defence.



Mechanisms for recognition of **joint degrees**, i.e. educational modules proposed by at least one external institution to the cadets of a military institution as a part of their national academic training, do not seem to have been put in place yet in European military higher education. To be effective, the creation of joint degrees would need notably that mechanisms for accreditation be convened, visibility in the programmes assured and recognition in the diploma supplement granted. This might prove important for the future of academic cooperation on exchanges and sharing of knowledge, notably through the creation of joint diplomas or common modules. As such, the implementation of mechanisms for recognition of jointly prepared degrees shall become a short-term priority of the initiative for the exchange of young officers. Projects are already prepared for giving a common instruction in a European environment, like the common module on ESDP, and further possibilities are

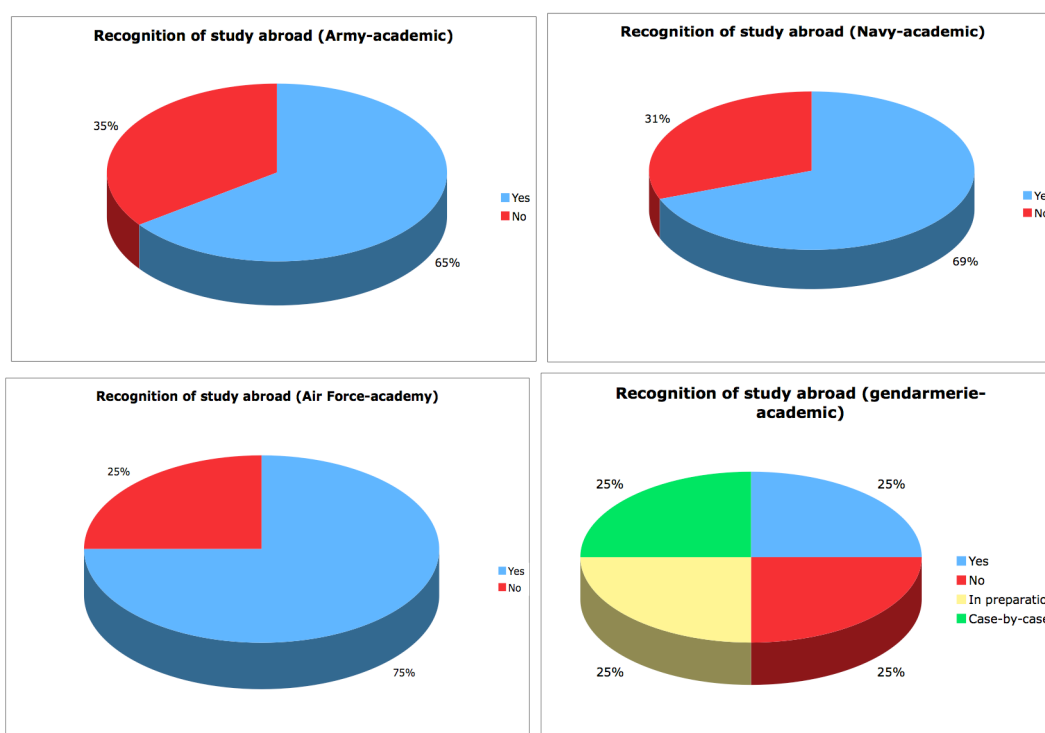
<sup>44</sup> These are not conditions for hosting an academic student for an exchange period but for access to a curriculum. This should be also differentiated from the possibility offered by some Member States to train foreign nationals for becoming hosting country's commissioned officers. This latter possibility might be observed from the data related to the recruitment.

offered by the Erasmus programme in creating joint degrees<sup>45</sup>. In order to concretize these efforts toward integration, coherence in the importance given to these projects needs to be organised.



As regards the **recognition** of study periods abroad, it should be noted that the national prescriptions do not yet allow full mobility in the sense that knowledge acquired abroad would be considered as equivalent to knowledge available at national level. This issue is linked to the outcome of the qualifications' implementation: if the content of the programmes is the basis of the exchange (considering that the national curriculum is by definition the most adapted one for the commissioning of an officer) it might restrict the recognition of foreign education and therefore the possibilities of exchanges. In facts, a majority of military institutions stated they recognise, either by principle or on a case-by-case basis, education taken abroad. Despite the limited number of negative answers, this might be a significant obstacle to the outward mobility of cadets.

<sup>45</sup> Notably through helping to the creation of Erasmus Intensive Programmes. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc900\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc900_en.htm) (12/08/2009).



Finally, when asked about the **challenges** they face in the Europeanisation of their higher education, the military institutions, irrespective of the branch of the armed forces concerned, ranked the priorities proposed as follows:

Rank	Challenges faced by military higher education
1	Quality assurance, accreditation
2	National level governance, strategy and legislation for higher education
3	National qualifications framework, outcomes-based qualifications
4	Student and staff mobility (more related to students)
5	Research (including doctoral studies)
6	Funding (including better allocation of resources; management)
7	European dimension in programmes, joint degrees
8	Degree system
9	Issues at institutional level (including autonomy)
10	Recognition
11	Employability and stakeholder involvement
12	Lifelong learning
13	Widening participation

It should be remembered here that the respondents are initial training institutions and that they necessarily work closely with the Ministries of Defence, for which they have a monopoly in educating future “employees”. Among the potential reforms needed, “widening participation” is thus, not surprisingly, considered as the least important challenge faced. While basic education institutions deal exclusively with the preparation of the future officer for his first posting, “lifelong learning” – often dealt with by other institutions during the course of the officer’s career – is not considered as a priority, either. “Employability” has a double meaning in military education. On the one hand, it concerns the ability of education to give graduates a relative assurance of a professional outcome; in this acceptance of the term, it does not apply to initial military training institutions since employability is dealt with at the stage of

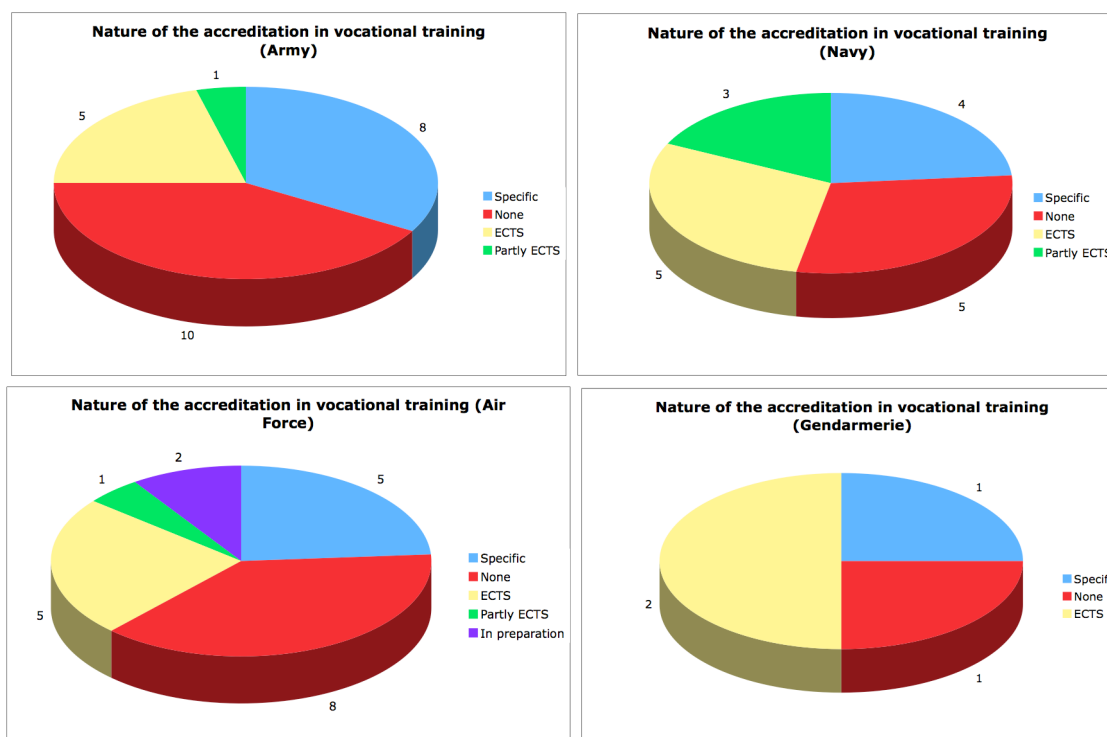


recruitment<sup>46</sup>. On the other hand, it does concern an officer's ability to find an equivalent position on the civilian labour market if he, or she, wants to leave the armed forces. Since this is not a concern in the context of the initiative for the exchange of young officers, it is not considered a priority, either. It is more surprising to meet the recognition (of education in general) as one of the last priorities but, again, this can be explained by the importance of the programmes with regard to military curricula and, therefore, mobility. Finally, it seems that this particular investigation emphasizes the need for discussions and actions regarding quality assurance in the context of the initiative, as it was proposed earlier in the report.

## 2. Recognition in vocational education:

The Bologna process in the fullest sense does not relate to vocational education. Indeed, organisation in cycles, which is a fundamental issue in the process, does not apply to vocational education, which is not meant to issue diplomas but to supply cadets fully qualified for further professional development. We should then refer rather to “recognition” of the vocational aspects of the basic officers’ training. However, issues dealt with in the Bologna process may arise in vocational education and may help this specific aspect of training to develop interfaces with other European systems.

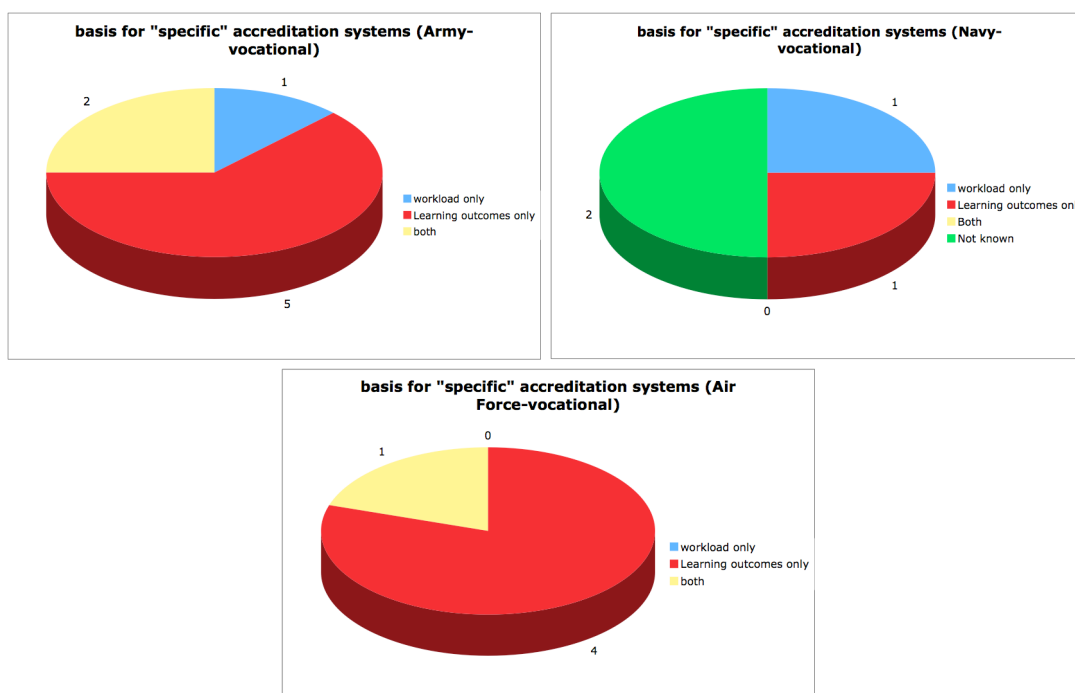
There is evidence that vocational education, at this stage of the stocktaking process, **could use ECTS accreditation**. Nevertheless, in general, other systems of accreditation are used nationally or the courses are not given accreditation because of their pragmatic nature.



It should be noted that partial ECTS accreditation is often given to modules which are of a fairly academic nature but which are nevertheless included in vocational education.

<sup>46</sup> Institutions grant access to their courses according to the personnel needs of their Ministries of Defence.

The specific systems for the accreditation of vocational courses nevertheless show that the move from internally developed accreditation to the ECTS would require some adaptation. **Workload** remains, once again, the most important criterion. However, in this aspect of the military education, workload and contact hours between cadets and instructors cannot be differentiated since there is usually no other load than the participation to the training. In cases where leadership training is considered to be vocational, leadership becomes a natural characteristic of the young officer. Behaving as he, or she, was trained is not a quantitative workload.



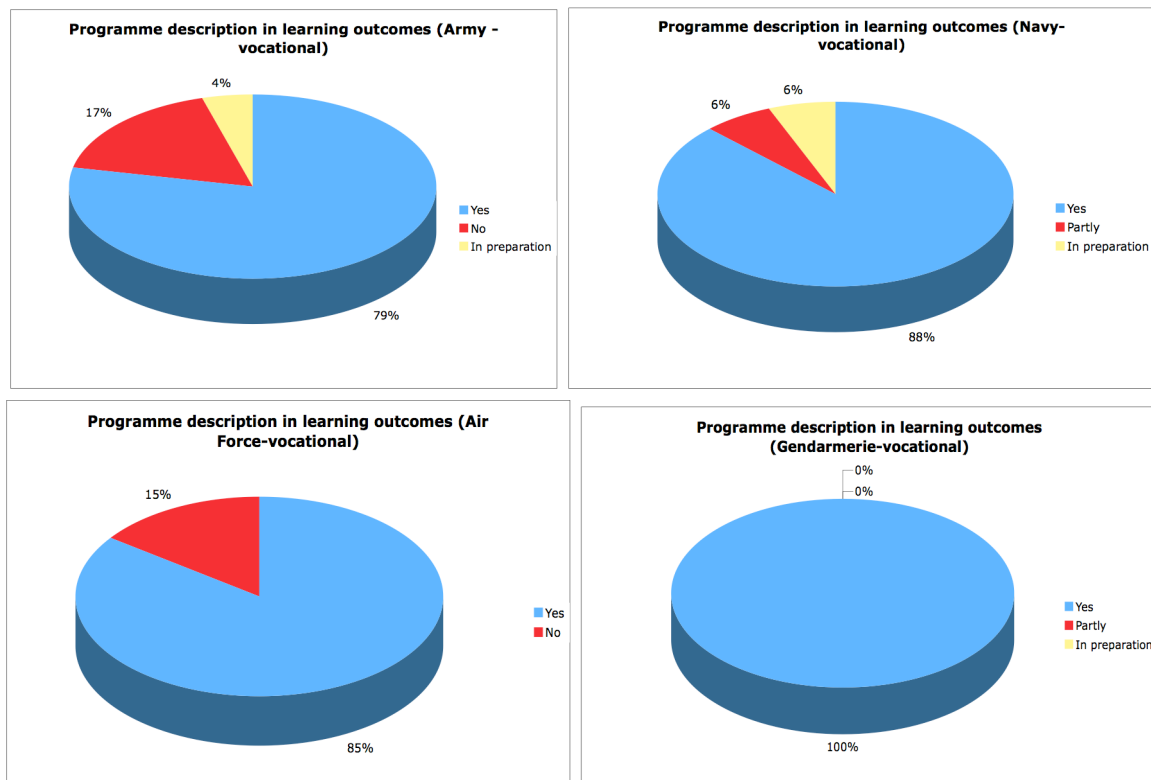
As in the case of academic education, the survey showed that a majority of vocational training institutions did actually describe the **learning outcomes** to be attained through the curriculum. This means that the use of ECTS accreditation would be conceivable for more educational systems than those who answered so. When asked about the possibility to implement ECTS also in the vocational training if not already done, institutions' opinions were diverging:

- In Army education: 5 systems would be in favour against 8;
- In Navy education: 2 systems would be in favour against 5;
- In Air Force education: 3 systems would be in favour against 5.

Two thirds of the expressing institutions would be against this solution *a priori*, most certainly because it would require a complete change in the accreditation of their programmes. Besides, three institutions said they would be willing to consider adopting the ECVET accreditation<sup>47</sup> or an accreditation system specifically designed for military vocational training. Accreditation remains thus one of the main issues to be addressed in the initiative, as it was emphasized in the funding political Declaration, because this lack brings a correlative difficulty in the recognition of the training taken abroad and, thus, the

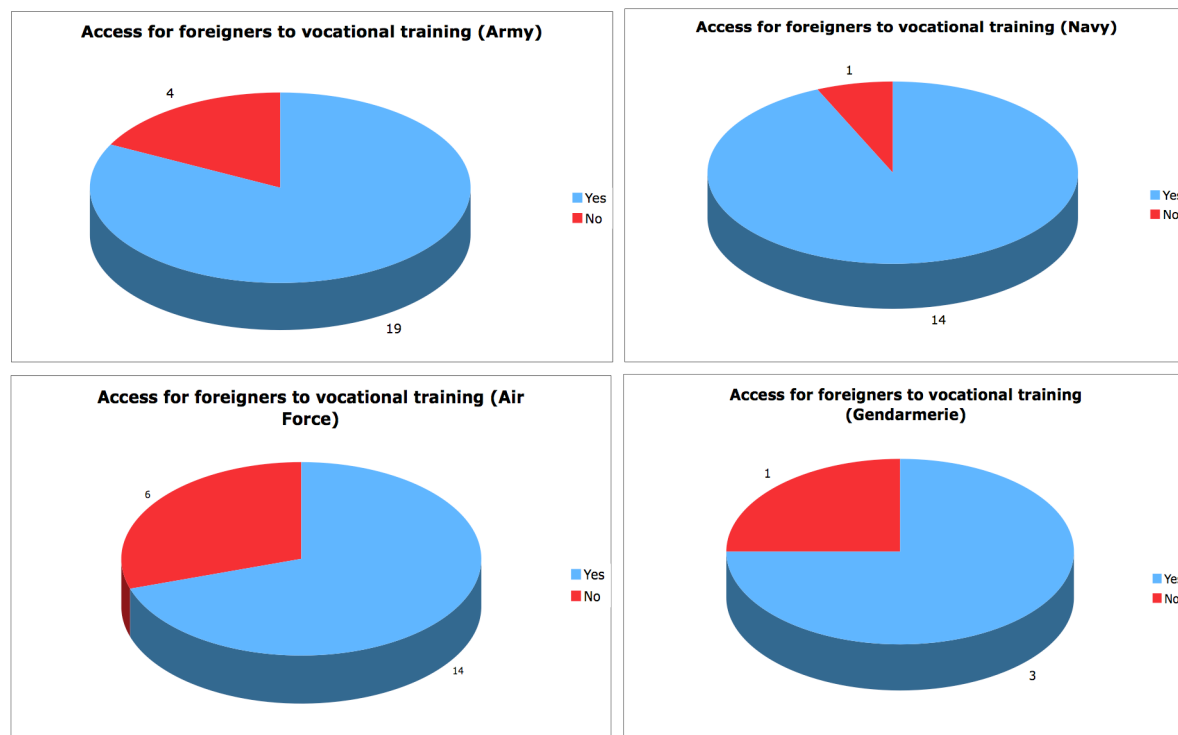
<sup>47</sup> ECVET accreditation, before 2007, gave access to the Leonardo Da Vinci European exchange programme. Since 2007, the Erasmus programme encompassed also the exchanges in the field of vocational training for students of the higher education ("student placements").

enhancement of exchanges. In the context of the initiative, then, needs remain to communicate on the importance and eventually convince the institutions to address the question of the vocational accreditation. What might be proposed from the observations made above and the obstacles raised is to create a military vocational accreditation system that would allow full recognition of the training abroad and attenuate the concerns related to calendars fitness. This **specific accreditation** shall be also, as a requirement, compatible with ECTS as to allow conversion for systems having already set an ECTS accreditation for their vocational training.



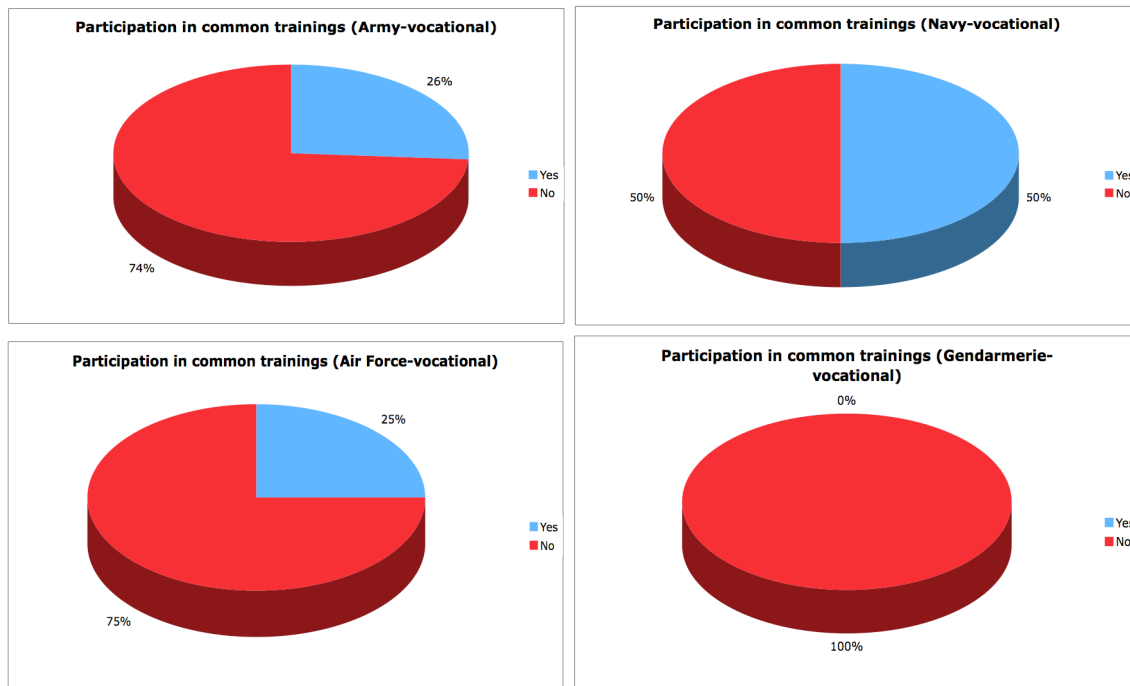
**Quality assurance** systems in military vocational education are close to those experienced by academic institutions, except as regards research and the involvement of international civilian associations. This may be explained by the fact that many of the institutions which replied provide both academic and vocational courses. In their case, the quality assurance system encompasses both dimensions. Navy officers' educational institutions mentioned that they are following guidelines and requirements set by the International Maritime Organisation (STCW 95), even if they did not present that as a formal quality guarantee. In the same way, vocational Air Force institutions may be placed under their national aviation authorities and have to respect minimum standards set by the IATA and ICAO. The general picture, then, is that all vocational institutions stated that they are subject to quality assurance systems. In parallel with the quality assurance of the academic education, it may be proposed to organise the dialogue between institutions having already organised their review and institutions currently doing so. It would be even more necessary than for academic education because it is dealt here with the exclusive specificity of the military education, for which the guidelines defined in the context of the Bologna process might be sometimes inadequate because of the technical and sensible aspects of the training.

**Access for foreigners** to the national vocational education systems is generally guaranteed in the Member States replying, although less so for Air Force and Army training than for Navy training, probably because of equipment and procedures. However, the restrictions remain limited. This might certainly be, on the one hand, the result of the standardisation processes, notably taking place in a NATO context, and of the growth of a mutual trust in sharing know-hows. On the other hand, national “specialties” become arguments for the attractiveness and visibility of a Member State’s military know-how. Mutual arrangements according to the respective weaknesses and strengths in the provision of vocational training allow rationalising the capacities. Eventually, the question of the specialisation of the training resources might be asked.

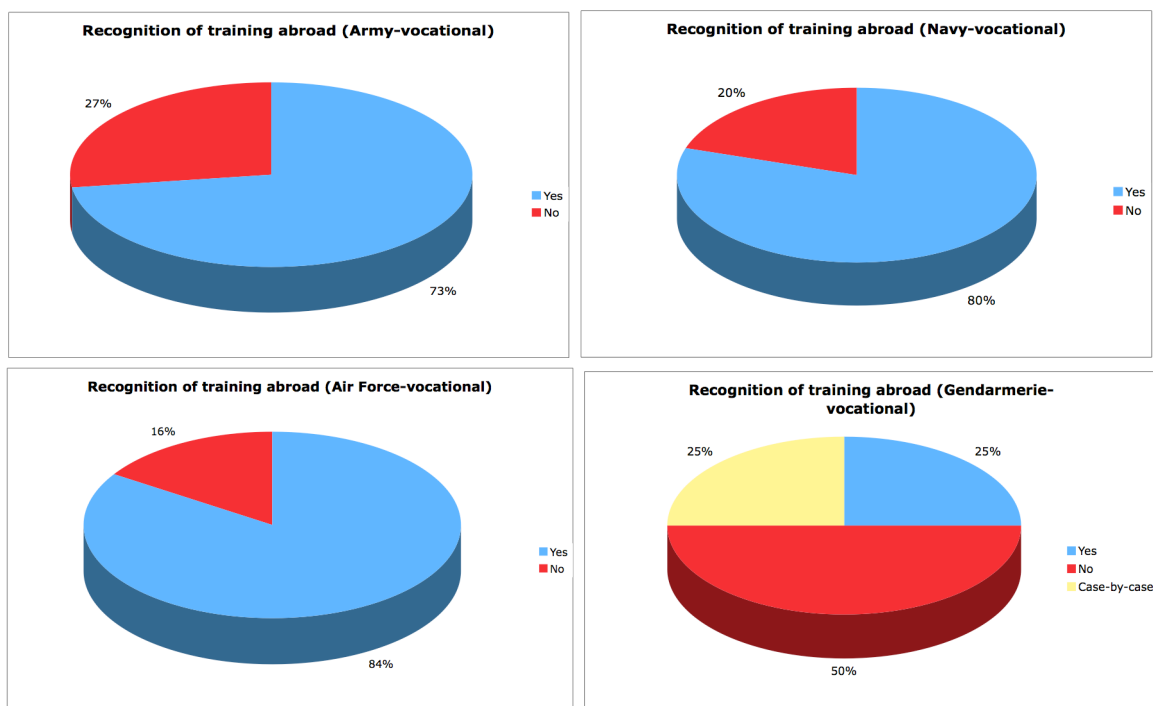


Joint degrees are not relevant to vocational education since no diplomas are awarded. However, the prospect of **common training courses** does exist. It shall be differentiated from the access for foreigners, seen above, for which individuals or groups benefit from a national training: the common training benefits to the military educational systems. Therefore, recognition is a central element. The results of the stocktaking, at this stage, show that educational institutions have very limited experience of this aspect of cooperation. The Navy is more proactive in this field with the organisation of training cruises and the opportunity for institutions to invite their counterparts to take part<sup>48</sup>. The vocational training in general, however, requires a coherency and an *esprit de corps*, which are the constituting element of a socialisation to the arm. Creating the necessary conditions for this socialisation might be more difficult considering the needs raised by a common training, for example a common language for instruction. This particular issue will be dealt with later in this report but it may be linked with the small amount of common trainings met in the replies from the institutions.

<sup>48</sup> A few Member States studied in the past the possibility of setting a European military school fleet for the training of the Navy officers. *Déclaration du Conseil franco-allemand de sécurité et de défense*, 12 October 2006.



Finally, the main requirement for implementing exchanges between institutions, i.e. the **recognition of periods of training abroad**, seems to be globally met in European military vocational education. Restrictions remain, however, and may be explained by the fact that programmes are compulsory and are considered to be necessary at national level, but also by the lack of a common ground for the accreditation of this specific part of the military education.



Conclusion:

European basic military education clearly shows considerable efficiency in implementing the Bologna process action lines, especially since they are sometimes not taken into account by the process itself. Implementation has generally been completed, or is expected to be completed in the case of some educational systems, and the main actions, such as organisation of study cycles or implementation of the ECTS accreditation system, are already assimilated. Military higher education undoubtedly demonstrates pro-activity in integrating the European Higher Education Area and its will to educate the officers not only as elite battlefield soldiers but also as intellectual elites. In the vocational part of military education, stocktaking shows that implementation of the ECTS - or at least an accreditation system - is possible and desirable. Recognition of training courses taken abroad, which is a central issue for the future of exchanges, is well on the way to becoming general practice and, here too, the common implementation of a culture based on qualifications and not only on programmes is the key to eliminating the remaining obstacles.

#### IV. Exchanges in military higher education

The data concerning exchanges of students and staff for academic and vocational training courses taking place during the academic year 2008-2009 will be put on the forthcoming database. Where available, the topics of the exchanges mentioned by the sending institutions are also given.

The data do not take into account the possible short-term exchanges that may be taking place either in academic or vocational education, related to courtesy visits, short events or competitions, as they were already mentioned in the first stocktaking. However, it shall be emphasized that this form of exchange is widespread and is undoubtedly a source for social interaction between the young officers and a possibility for improving the visibility of the institutions concerned. For this second and detailed stocktaking, the intention is to highlight the exchanges that involve knowledge or know-how. This may be effective only if there is a continued learning period.

On the basis of the 2008-2009 picture, it seems that around 3,1% of the military students are exchanged within the EU<sup>49</sup> per year in their **academic education**. In comparison, the Erasmus programme covers only 0,8% of the civilian students in higher education per year. Military education is thus very pro-active in the academic field, but the necessities of the officer's profession justify that the greater number of students should have the opportunity to experience mobility. Moreover, mobility is not equally offered: if 4,7% of the Army students are exchanged per year, only 1,6% of their Air Force and 0,7% of their Navy counterparts are<sup>50</sup>.

In the same year 2008-2009, only 1,4% of the cadets were exchanged in the field of vocational training, which demonstrates that **vocational** mobility is, as supposed along this report, more difficult to realise than academic mobility. Here again, differences between the components could be found: 2,1% of the Navy cadets were exchanged although only 1,5% of Army and 0,3% of Air Force cadets were. It may be supposed that the diversities in the equipments play a role notably regarding the difference observed between Navy and Air Force statistics.

Concerning academic education at the European level, the following **average durations** of student academic exchanges<sup>51</sup> were found:

- 7 weeks in Army education;
- 16 weeks in Navy education;
- 13 weeks in Air Force education;

This time, it shall be noticed that the exchanges of civilian students, within the Erasmus programme, are more important in their duration (28 weeks) than the military exchanges<sup>52</sup>. Besides, the longest military exchanges in the academic field are mainly for thesis purposes. Usually, the vocational exchanges extend on a very brief period, like a week, excepted -in some cases- for longer Navy exchanges and cruises.

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<sup>49</sup> Exchanges with EU third-countries and civilian institutions are not taken into account in the numbers presented hereafter.

<sup>50</sup> These differences in the numbers may be partly explained by the fact that short-term exchanges were not taken into account in this stocktaking.

<sup>51</sup> The European Union average is calculated on the basis of the national average duration, not the number of exchanges declared by the institutions.

<sup>52</sup> Statistics on the Erasmus programme:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc920\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc920_en.htm) (12/08/2009).

Nevertheless, these data do not take account of “**full curriculum**” exchanges. Some Member States decided to send their Army or Navy students to another Member State for the whole of their basic education, academic and vocational. These exchanges are to be carefully considered because of the highest level of trust they suggest: the national armed forces, in this particular case, commission an officer who has never followed the “classical” curriculum and who is used to other working techniques and environments. The examples met are summarised in the following table, but Member States which have no national educational facility and non-European exchanges are not included.

Armed force branch	Sending Member State	Hosting Member State	Average number of students per year
Army	BG, RO, SK, LV, FR, DE	GR, CZ, FR, DE	15
Navy	EE, BG, DE, FR, PL	FI, GR, DE, FR, LV	6

With regard to the **exchange strategies** developed by the educational systems, leaving aside the particular situations in Cyprus, Luxembourg, and Malta where all the cadets experience cultural exchanges, two institutions mentioned the fact that all their students have to go abroad at least once in the course of their curricula. In the French Army and Austrian Army systems, almost 100% of the cadets take part in exchanges during the course of their basic education.

The answers provided by the Member States and some complementary investigation provide data on the participation of basic educational institutions in *fora*. These *fora*, organised in branches of the armed forces, are of primary importance because they have been in existence for so long and because they provide students with their first experiences of exchange<sup>53</sup>. They allow institutions sharing the same identity and priorities and similar objectives to meet and discuss appropriate options for improving their education in a spirit of integration. The exchange of young officers is meant to provide them with the conditions and instruments allowing them to take their own projects forward. In this regard, **three major *fora*** should be considered as suitable examples as they are highly representative of the general picture of contemporary military education. The table in the annex is intended to show the participation of Member States<sup>54</sup> from which questionnaires were received (*red cross* = information based on complementary investigation; *green cross* = no specific reply received from the participating institution). Where educational institutions could be identified, a large majority – and all the Army institutions - are taking part in their respective *fora*. It shall be noticed that some Member States have arrangements in force with third-EU countries for the training of Navy or Air Force officers, which forces to relativize the smaller percentages observed for these branches: the educational systems exist but they are somehow “empty” for a representation at the *fora*. The *fora* are thus representative of the European picture of educational systems and may even be considered as almost exhaustive in terms of the range of institutions identified. Besides, there were other *fora* mentioned by the institutions, relating to specific specialties or engineering, for example. This report will not

<sup>53</sup> Notably in the context of sporting competitions, cultural tours and courtesy visits. These forms of exchanges have not been included in this report because of their short duration. Their symbolic importance is nevertheless significant.

<sup>54</sup> The data take the educational systems into account even if no institution could be identified but do not take into account Member States in which the branch of the armed forces concerned does not exist.

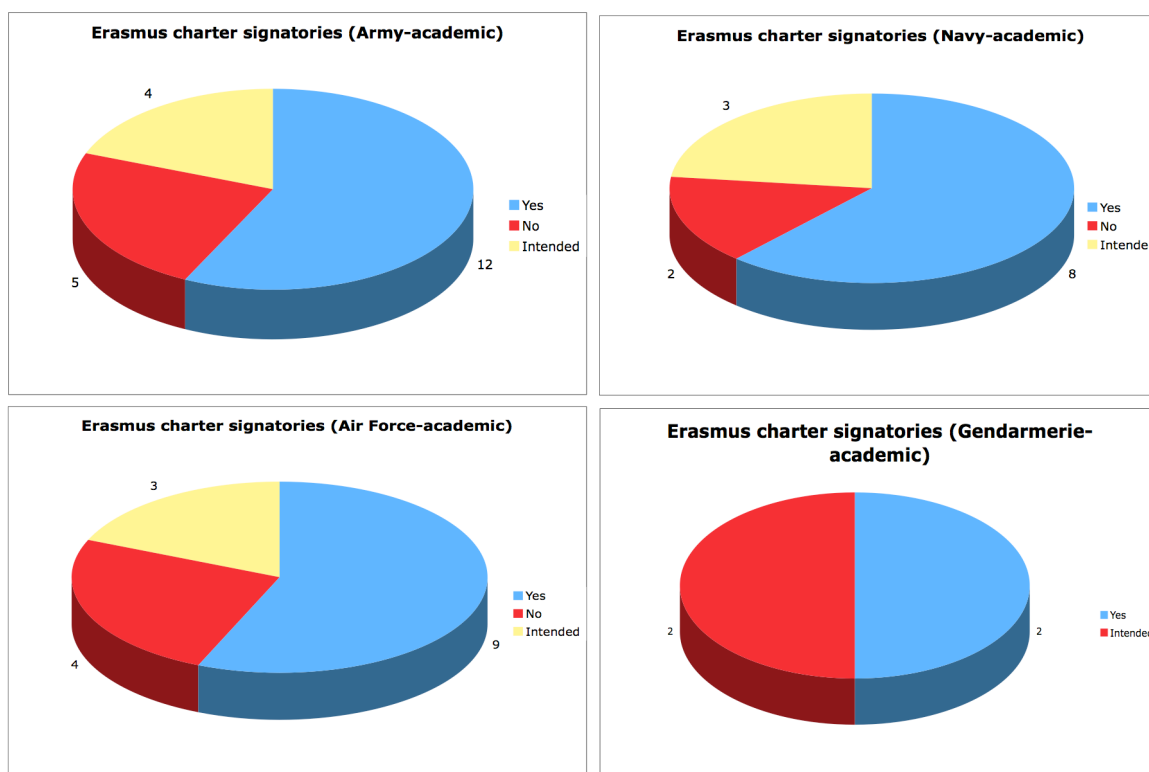


highlight them particularly, even though they will also benefit from the actions undertaken through the present initiative.

	<b>European educational systems' representations in the fora</b>		
	European Military Academies Commandants Seminar EMACS (Army)	Conference of Superintendents (Navy)	European Air Force Academies EUAFA (Air Force)
AT	X		
BE	X	X	X
BG	X	X	
CZ	X		X
DE	X	X	X
DK	X	X	X
EE	X		
ES	X	X	X
FI	X	X	X
FR	X	X	X
GR	X	X	X
HU	X		
IE	X	X	X
IT	X	X	X
LT	X		
LV	X		
NL	X	X	X
PL	X	X	X
PT	X	X	X
RO	X	X	
SE	X	X	X
SI	X		
SK	X		
UK	X	X	X
Int.	None	3	3
% EU mil. Instit. rep.	<b>100 %</b>	<b>67 %</b>	<b>59 %</b>

Finally, the signing of an **Erasmus charter** by the European military education institutions seems to be becoming general practice and an assurance of quality of the education according to some replies provided. As it was observed in the first stocktaking, there was a remarkable growth of the signing since 2005, which is still going on while some institutions stated they started the process towards signature after the initiative was launched by the political declaration. Nevertheless, none of the exchanges taking place between military institutions were described as being Erasmus exchanges<sup>55</sup>. Nor did any of the vocational education institutions state, at this stage of the process, that they had exchanged cadets on the basis of such agreements. The Erasmus instrument might have been used, however for exchanges of students and teachers between military and civilian institutions.

<sup>55</sup> Slovakia provided an addendum to its reply stating that its Armed Forces Academy will exchange students with the National Defence University of Czech Republic using the Erasmus programme, starting from the first semester of the academic year 2009-2010. The Czech institution was granted loans in the framework of the Communities' programme to this end.



Regarding the policies for the **improvement** of outward mobility in the military institutions, a majority of replies state that efforts are now taken in order to organise and concretize the steps made with the signing of Erasmus charters notably in discussing bilaterally with their counterparts the respective opportunities for mobility. The institutions also demonstrated they are aware of the necessities to act internally and/or at their national level, in the first place, in order to create the suitable condition –Bologna *acquis* but also language training- for this enhancement. The work is thus starting on these points and the database of the initiative might prove most helpful in order to build comprehension and dialogue in these efforts.

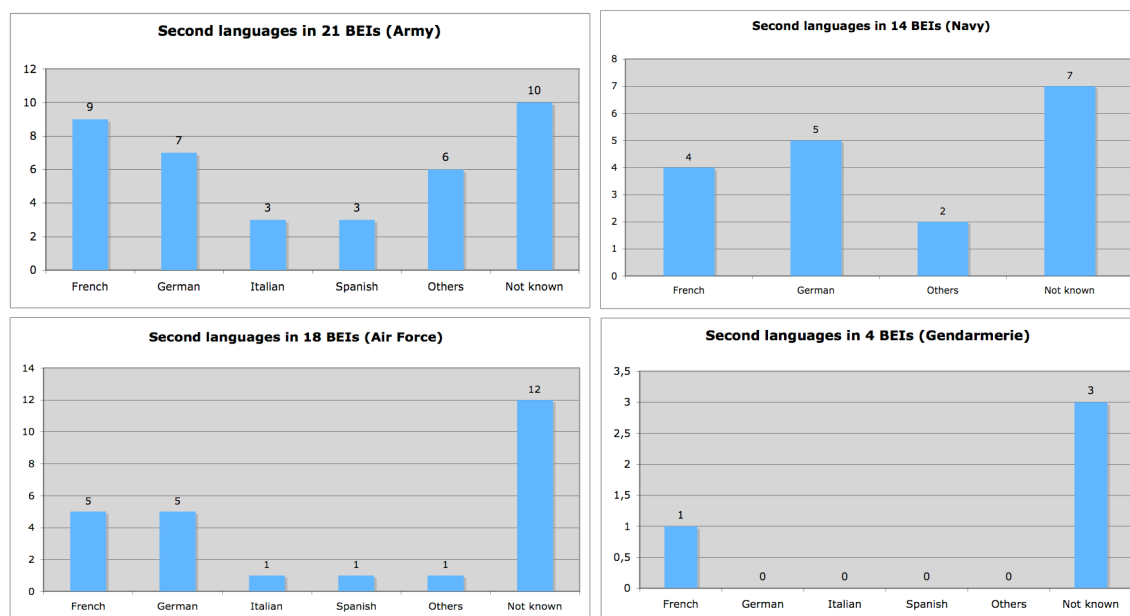
Finally, almost unanimously, the military institutions taking parts to this investigation shared the fact that they already have financial mechanisms in place which may be used for the mobility of their students, notably. As the financial question remains, naturally a sensible one when dealing with the objective of increasing outward mobility and the creation of joint degrees, it shall be suggested that the possibilities offered by the participation to the Erasmus programme, as the legitimate actors of the European Higher Education Area they became, be the object of further explorations.

### Conclusion:

The military higher education institutions are well equipped to enhance exchanges. A large majority of them have regular discussions with their counterparts within long-established *fora* of similar institutions and have, more recently, signed Erasmus charters giving them access to the European exchange programme. Some Member States, in order to avoid issues of time organisation, have also developed real confidence-based connections by exchanging cadets for the whole duration of their curricula. The means and communication needed exist and have proved that they can be used for exchange projects of varying size and content.

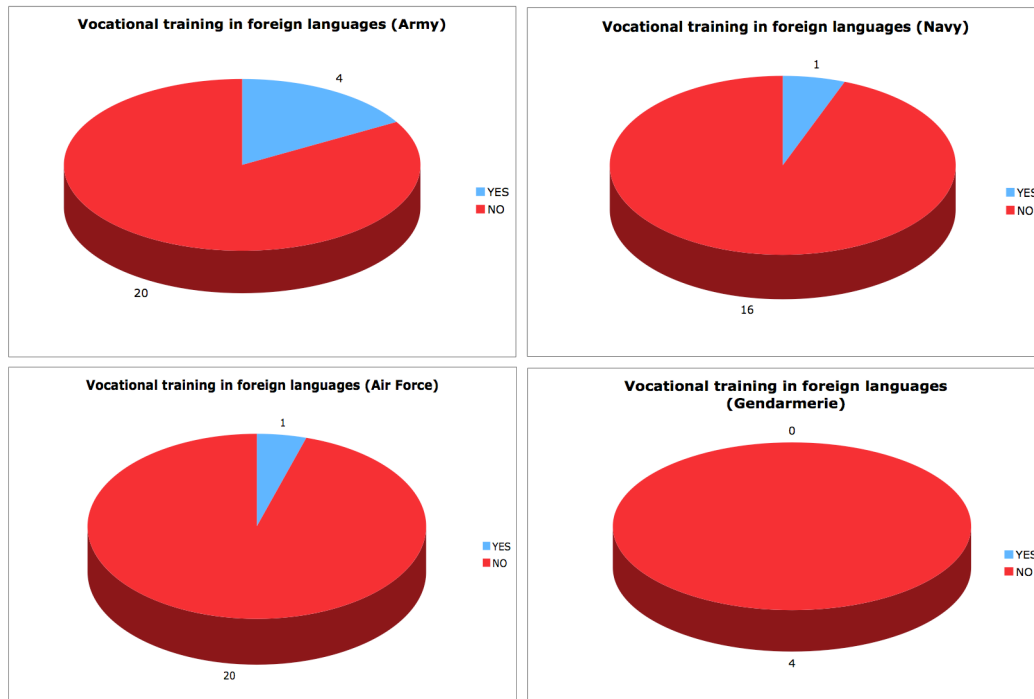
## V. Language education

There are two aspects to language education in academic training. One is the **teaching of foreign languages**. The other is teaching “through” foreign languages, i.e. using foreign languages as the teaching medium. At this stage of the stocktaking process, it should be noted that the first aspect is approached differently depending on the system considered. Some link ECTS to such teaching while others organise courses alongside the regular curriculum. What is observable is that in the programmes defined by the institutions, and contrary to a majority of civilian higher education systems, at least one foreign language regular course is to be chosen compulsorily by the cadets. This fact highlights again the openness to the international realities, which shall be a feature of the European military officer, and the readiness of the cadets in mobility enhancement. English remains the main first foreign language taught, but in a majority of basic education institutions other languages are offered. On the basis of the answers received from the institutions (although a high proportion put “not known”), French and German are at the top of the list of second languages offered.



**Education “through” foreign languages** remains a very limited option and is not easy to present in graph form. Use of a foreign language as the medium of education is subject to resource considerations, and the opportunity to host a foreign lecturer may be the only reason why English, in particular, may be used as the teaching medium. It should be noted that most of these specific courses are given in Air Force and Navy curricula, no doubt because of the needs of the different branches and their long tradition of using the English language. The list of courses run in English by the academic institutions will be available on the database. Then, as a first conclusion, it shall be suggested to the institutions to continue developing their offers or converting them to English language as they started to do so. This would take time in the measure that it is a process requiring not only a “pedagogical” will but also, and above all, the needed pre-existing capacities in terms of adapted teaching personnel.

In **vocational training**, the choice of English as a medium of education is even more limited than in academic training. Member States' answers are summarised in the following graphs.



This limitation may certainly be explained by the requirement of a perfect social interaction in the vocational training, also called “socialisation to the arm” earlier in this report, which can presumably only be thought by the military institutions as taking place in the national language(s). Some Member States, however, declared that they intend to develop foreign languages as the medium of vocational training in the next few years. This would undoubtedly ease the access for foreigners, the creation of common training modules, and correlatively improve the visibility of the proposing institutions in the European area. In the immediate term, communication related to such issue and the necessities for the responsible institutions to envisage such transformations could be enhanced and organised in the context of the initiative in order to explore the ways for vocational training to increase its accessibility.

The education through foreign languages that is proposed by the military institutions, either academic or vocational, shall legitimately and particularly be emphasized in the possible catalogues of education that would be issued.

### Conclusion:

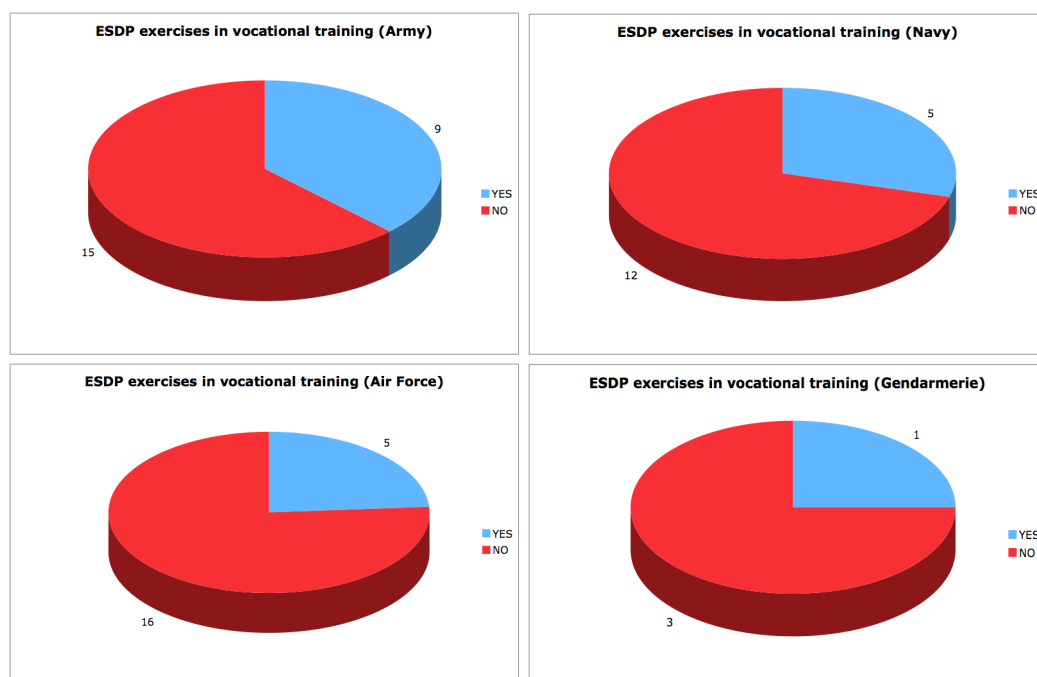
The culture of foreign languages in military education is shown to be even more significant than in some civilian higher education institutions. Very often, a young officer is required to have two foreign languages, thus confirming how proactive the institutions are in their preparation for European realities. These institutions are increasingly beginning to train future officers to use foreign languages “in the field”, or are considering doing so. Languages are thus as an important challenge to mobility enhancement and dealing with this issue will necessarily go through a slow process, but the institutions already proved, as a first step, they are aware of the important role of languages in creating the best conditions for the mobility of people and knowledge.

## VI. European Security and Defence Policy education

From the replies provided by the Member States, it seems that European Security and Defence Policy is seen as a topic to be developed in **academic education**. Almost all institutions offer courses. In some cases, entire curricula are proposed relating to international and European security, but courses offered to students following other curricula are more difficult to show in the data. It is also clear from the replies that there are few courses dealing specifically with ESDP. Most seem to include parts of international security topics alongside ESDP. Moreover, even if it was not the object of a particular investigation through the questionnaires, some programmes also include teachings related to the construction and functioning of the European Union. Such courses are also important for the learning of the values which compose the European project.

Teaching ESDP is not only important because it is the central objective of this initiative but also because it fulfils a double mission. On the one hand, it is a scientific issue that requires a study by the future actors of this policy. On the other hand, it contributes to the construction of the leadership of the future military elites, giving them the keys to understand the needs and functioning of the European military actions, and more generally of the international operations, and training them to behave according to shared values. Therefore, projects consisting in transmitting these knowledge and values in an environment easing the social interaction, such as the module on the ESDP, are to be considered as adequate solutions with regard to the fulfilment of this double objective and it shall already be envisaged to promote its regular organisation in order to answer this need and give the chance to the greater number of cadets of being trained to the modernisation of the security and defence concepts.

ESDP-related **exercises** -i.e exercises conducted in a European configuration and possible trainings to ESDP missions- in vocational training are also embedded in international security subjects, but are gradually emerging as shown in the following figures:



In parallel with the projects of academic modules, the question may be asked whether the double hat of the ESDP –as a practical science and a contribution to leadership- might be also

best approached through the organisation of common trainings. Cadets would thus be offered the possibility to experience close-to-reality conditions of the European missions.

Conclusion:

The data gathered from the replies to the questionnaires do not allow concluding on the importance of the ESDP education in the European cadets curricula. Its embodiment in international security apprenticeship generally observed, in both academic and vocational aspects, might be either a negative or a positive signal. Either it might be assimilated only as a tool in the international security toolbox, or it is considered as being an omnipresent reality. The initiative and its subsequent effort to highlight the European coherence *vis-à-vis* the international insecurity will undoubtedly help the cadets in learning the importance of their role in a growingly integrated Europe.

**Conclusions of the report:**

As the lines of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) become clearer with the practices undertaken through the Bologna process, military higher education and its institutions are demonstrating their proactive approach to the objective of removing obstacles to movement of knowledge and actors. Bologna process action lines are generally well assimilated and military institutions are continuing to promote openness to international realities by giving their students the tools to understand these trends and interact with their future collaborators in the maintaining of European security.

However, qualifications must be the *raison d'être* of the exchange rather than the exact content of the programme itself and must be seen not only as a goal but also as a means for providing education: description of the programmes, ECTS definition, quality assurance, etc. The whole issue of recognition of what a counterpart can provide for an individual curriculum revolves around the qualifications.

European military education demonstrates that its specificities and the traditions of the various branches of the armed forces can be preserved even when they take part in the development of the EHEA. A European culture of security and defence will necessarily be based upon general confidence in each other's educational practices. The data collected from the questionnaire replies confirm that this is indeed a shared expectation. The initiative for the exchange of young officers, inspired by Erasmus, should now address these issues in providing the means of communication or favouring the creation of supportive instruments for the improvement of the exchanges of knowledge, skills and competences.