



Brussels, 2 February 2026

Research Methodology Course on the CSDP

entitled 'The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP): Adaptation amid Rising Geopolitical Tensions and a Transforming Transatlantic Relationship'

**Piraeus, Greece
21-24 April 2026**

Act. No.25-26/DOC/70/1

INVITATION

The University of Piraeus has the honour of organising, under the aegis of the European Security and Defence College and its Doctoral School on the CSDP, the Research Methodology Course entitled 'The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP): Adaptation amid Rising Geopolitical Tensions and a Transforming Transatlantic Relationship', to be held in residential format in Piraeus, Greece, from 21 to 24 April 2026. The aim of the course is to enhance researchers' theoretical and empirically-based knowledge, analytical competences and skills in conducting methodical investigations of current CSDP-related issues.

The course consists of three parts: lectures, research methodology seminars and workshops. Lectures by experts from the ESDC, EEAS/EU bodies, civilian and military missions and academics will provide the framework for various topics and dimensions with regard to the evolution of CSDP in a world of rising complexity and uncertainty. Speakers will touch upon contemporary developments and complex issues within a contested global order, which are or which may become threats to the EU's security and stability.

Specifically, discussions will focus on international and European developments, the conflict in Ukraine and the growing global tensions that are reshaping the contemporary security environment. Particular attention will be paid to internal EU dynamics, EU funding mechanisms and the rise of advanced technologies — including artificial intelligence, drones and cyber capabilities — in assessing the EU's capacity to act as a credible and increasingly autonomous security and defence provider. Moreover, a dedicated panel will examine transatlantic relations, with a particular focus on EU–US relations, the United States' strategic priorities and the implications of the latter for European security, NATO and the development of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.



At the research methodology seminars, academics will provide insights into theories which shed light on perspectives in the field, explaining the EU control and machine rooms and crisis management mechanisms. During the workshops, PhD fellows will present and discuss their research designs and enhance their skills with regard to primary and secondary data collection methods and sampling and interviewing methodology, as well as in terms of securing publication in high-impact journals. Throughout the course, participants will have an opportunity for networking and for sharing their views and perspectives with peers and professionals from the CSDP field.

We would like to invite you to nominate participants for the CSDP Research Methodology Course and to support the accomplishment of the course's objective: to provide Member States and EU institutions with knowledgeable personnel capable of working in CSDP-related fields.

Fergal O'Regan
Head of the ESDC

Michael Sfakianakis
Rector of the University of Piraeus

Annex 1

Administrative remarks

Target group: the course is open to ESDC doctoral school fellows, researchers, academics and doctoral/postdoctoral fellows from EU Member States, relevant EU institutions and agencies and CSDP missions and operations who are either involved in or assigned to work on Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) matters. The course will also be open to researchers/experts from the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans countries.

Places and nominations: around 40 places will be available to international participants. Typically, one place is allocated to each EU Member State, but depending on the total number of requests, one additional place may be offered. A maximum of 20 slots will be allocated to fellows of the ESDC Doctoral School who may be considering taking part in this training activity. Our objective is to put together a group that is balanced in terms of both gender and professional background.

Applications from EU Member States and relevant EU bodies and institutions are to be submitted via the ESDC secure internet system ENLIST by designated nominators no later than 20 March 2026. A list with relevant ENLIST nominators can be retrieved from the ESDC website at <https://esdc.europa.eu/nominators/>. Each nominator is kindly requested to nominate participants, by order of preference.

Applications from the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans countries should be sent to the ESDC training manager, Maria Grazia Romano, at maria-grazia.romano@eeas.europa.eu by the institution/organisation that receives this invitation no later than 20 March 2026. The application must include the following details: candidate's full name, personal email address (functional mailboxes will not be accepted), the name of the dispatching institution, and the candidate's nationality, date of birth, passport number and passport expiry date.

Applications from ESDC Doctoral Fellows should be sent to the ESDC training manager, Maria Grazia Romano, at maria-grazia.romano@eeas.europa.eu, with Nikolaos Ntarzanos (ntarzanosnikolaos@gmail.com) in copy, no later than 20 March 2026.

Registration: registration will not be final until it has been confirmed by the ESDC Secretariat and the accepted participants have provided the requested personal data in ENLIST.

Attendance: attendance is mandatory on all days of the course. A certificate will be awarded to course participants who have completed the entire course. This course will not be offered in hybrid format.

Language: the working language is English (no interpretation will be provided), without translation.

E-learning: the course will be preceded by mandatory e-learning autonomous knowledge units (AKUs), to be made available on the ESDC e-learning platform ILIAS. Course participants will have to complete the AKUs before the residential phase begins (on 21 April 2026).



Information on how to connect to the e-learning platform will be provided in due course to all confirmed participants.

Residential part of the course: this part of the course will take place from 21 to 24 April 2026 on the premises of Piraeus University, Greece.

Costs: no tuition fee will be charged. The sending authorities must cover all costs relating to travel, accommodation and meals (including breakfast) for participants who are not Doctoral School fellows. No transportation will be provided by the course organisers.

Dress code: business attire for both civilian and military personnel.

Liability and insurance: in the event of a medical emergency, participants' medical insurance, provided by the dispatching country/organisation, will cover all the associated costs. The organisers will not provide course participants with any health or accident insurance.

Additional information: confirmed participants will receive further detailed information about the course (e.g. the schedule and precise location, etc.) in good time.

Inclusivity: the ESDC strives to create a gender-sensitive and inclusive environment in all its courses, activities and day-to-day work. Only in an inclusive environment can all people, and therefore also the ESDC and its partners, achieve their true potential. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation in any of our activities or operations. The ESDC and the training institutions will not tolerate any conduct that violates these values.

Please do not book any accommodation or travel before receiving the confirmation message from the ESDC Secretariat.

Points of contact

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