



**Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union
European Security and Defence College**

**Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officer Profession (SQF-MILOF)
Supporting interoperability between the armed forces of the EU Member States**

High-level conference

15 September 2021, Brussels

The Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) have the honour to invite Member States to the high-level conference *Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officer Profession (SQF-MILOF). Supporting interoperability between the armed forces of the EU Member States* to be held on 15 September, in Brussels.

SQF-MILOF relates to lifelong learning for military officers. It is fully in line with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) applicable in the general education system and compatible with the qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area established by the Bologna process.

The EU Military Committee has encouraged Member States (MS) to implement SQF-MILOF at national level, under the ESDC's coordination. In its conclusions on security and defence (May 2021), the Council highlighted the ESDC's efforts to promote a better understanding of Common Security and Defence Policy as an essential part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy among the MS in the area of training and education. This includes efforts to align military officers' competences.

Why should MS be interested in implementing SQF-MILOF at national level? Although learning is its core business, the SQF-MILOF is more than a means of categorising different learning levels. The SQF-MILOF is a *framework for cooperation* that will support interoperability and Member States' efforts by:

- saving resources in the longer term by avoiding the duplication/repetition of training and education abroad.
- facilitating the (pre-) selection of appropriate staff to be sent to an international environment;
- identifying suitable training opportunities in other MS and facilitating the exchange of military students and course participants at any stage of their military careers.
- facilitating mobility across sectors and the employability of military personnel in civilian life/sectors through the link between SQF-MILOF and the National Qualifications Frameworks and the EQF.
- providing a shared vocabulary for (defining) competence management.

It is in this context that the conference will offer MS a forum for discussions and exchanges so as to facilitate the implementation of SQF-MILOF at national level. The target audience includes authorities dealing with qualifications at the level of directors, rectors, and commandants from the ministries of defence, defence staff, human resources/ education & training management directorates, as well as from defence and military universities, academies and schools in the MS.

Member States' representatives wishing to attend the conference are kindly invited to **register no later than 3 September 2021** by accessing the link:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=p7hlkxtab&oeidk=a07ei8kv4u4d86d36a1>

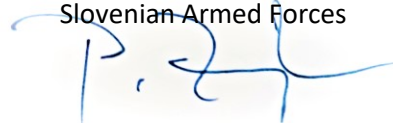
Please note that owing to COVID-19, the numbers of participants in the room will be limited. A draft conference programme is enclosed.

We look forward to welcoming you at the conference and to finding new ways of improving interoperability between the armed forces of the MS, through cooperation in training and education.

Dirk DUBOIS
European Security and Defence College
Head



Brigadier Peter ZAKRAJŠEK
Commandant Military Schools Centre
Slovenian Armed Forces



**Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officer Profession (SQF-MILOF).
Supporting interoperability between armed forces of the EU Member States.**

High-level Conference

15 September 2021

Venue: Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the European Union
Boulevard du Régent 45/46, 1000 Bruxelles

Programme

All times are displayed in Central European Time (CEST)

09.00-09.30

Registration, Coffee, Networking

09.30 - 10.00

Opening address

- *General Claudio GRAZIANO, Chairman EUMC*
- *Brigadier Peter ZAKRAJŠEK, Commandant of Military Schools Centre, Slovenia*
- *Mr Dirk DUBOIS, Head ESDC*

10.00 – 11.00

Session 1 – SQF-MILOF within the context of the European Qualification Framework (EQF)

The SQF-MILOF relates to lifelong learning for military officers. It is fully in line with the European Qualification Framework applicable in the general education system and compatible with qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area established by the Bologna process. This aim of the session is to discuss the principles and modus operandi of qualification frameworks and the intimate link between sectoral qualifications frameworks and the EQF.

Panel

Moderator: Mr Peter van der HIJDEN, Independent Higher Education Strategy Advisor

- *Mr Koen NOMDEN, Team Leader - Skills and qualifications recognition tools, DG EMPL, European Commission*
- *Mr John O'CONNOR PhD, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)*
- *Dr Anemona PERES, Head of Training Support Sector, FRONTEX*
- *Mr Dirk DUBOIS, Head ESDC*

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 12.30

Session 2 – SQF-MILOF as a reference tool for Professional Military Education and Training. Supporting military interoperability between the armed forces of the EU Member States

Education and training are the responsibility of the MS. However, a high level of interoperability can only be achieved through a transparent and critical approach to the development of military training, education programmes and systems. SQF-MILOF is a tool designed to promote cooperation. It does so by offering MS a platform that promotes the exchange of views on the requisite level of performance and learning needed by military officers. Participants will be invited to discuss the role of education and training in the context of military interoperability and the way in which SQF-MILOF can contribute to strengthen this.

Panel

Moderator: Dr Sylvain PAILE-CALVO, Senior Researcher, University of Liege

- *General (ret.) Mikhail KOSTARAKOS, former Chief of HNDGS and former Chairman EUMC*
- *Mr Mario BLOKEN, Director Permanent Secretariat, FINABEL – European Army Interoperability Centre*
- *Brigadier Peter ZAKRAJŠEK, Commandant of Military Schools Centre, Slovenia*
- *Brigadier General Georgios BIKAKIS, Director Concepts and Capabilities, EU Military Staff*

12.30-13.30 Lunch

Hosted by the Slovenian Presidency

13.30 -14.30

Session 3 – Implementation Roadmaps at EU, national and individual level. Implications for the Member States.

The implementation is a non-binding, voluntary process to which MS may align in accordance with their national priorities and agendas. To assist MS in this regard, several roadmaps have been proposed in SQF-MILOF publications. In this session, the MS will present their views on the possible implementation of SQF-MILOF at national level, as well as lessons and challenges identified. The purpose of the ensuing discussion is to explore limitations and explore possible implementation options at national level.

Panel

Moderator: Vinko VEGIČ PhD, Military Schools Centre, Slovenia

- *Representatives of authorities dealing with SQF-MILOF at national level*

14.30-15.00 - Coffee Break

15.00-15.45

Session 4 – SQF-MILOF Implementation Governance. Conclusions and Way Ahead

The implementation of the SQF-MILOF will be carried out under the supervision of the competent national authorities via the designated representatives, working as an SQF-MILOF governance body. The implementation of the SQF-MILOF will be a long process and will require a dedicated governance body to help and guide MS' efforts in this direction and potential other arrangements. What are their implications for the MS?

Panel

Moderator: Alin BODESCU, PhD, ESDC

- *Representatives of authorities dealing with SQF-MILOF at national level*

15.45 – 16.00

Closing remarks

- *Brigadier Peter ZAKRAJŠEK, Commandant of Military Schools Centre, Slovenia*
- *Mr Dirk DUBOIS, Head ESDC*

More information on and access to SQF-MILOF Publications at <https://esdc.europa.eu/sqf-milof/> or access the QR code below:

