

HELLENIC AIR FORCE ACADEMY ATHENS – GREECE



ERASMUS STATEMENT POLICY

The Hellenic Air Force Academy's motto "**Άμμες δε υ΄εσσόμεθα πολλώ κάρρονες**", an ancient Greek proverb translated to "**We shall become much better than you**" and its emblem's integral part provides to our days the Academy's clear educational statement and the framework of a higher scope to be fulfilled. The proverb, originating from a popular ancient song's verse sung by dancing Spartan youth represents the final part of a dialogue between men of varying ages. During the discourse, the senior participants motivated by their nostalgic memories would assert "*Once upon a time we were brave young men...*" then the mature men would exclaim "*But we are brave now, try us if you want!*" while the youngest would reply "***We, however, shall become much better than you!***" Such motto serves as a constant reminder to both educators and students of the challenging task taken up by the Academy, to provide even higher standards of education and training for the officer generations to come.

The Hellenic Air Force Academy (HAFA), widely known as "Icaron School" (from the myth of Icaros and Daedelus) was established in September 1931, thus it is considered one of the first Air Force Academies in the world, responsible for training both pilots and aeronautical engineers. More recently, after the HAFA's reconstruction and relocation to its new premises at Dekelia Air Base, the Academy opened its doors to the international students. It was in 1962 when the first international students were accepted and have started their military and academic education according to the then proposed curriculum. In the years to follow, students from numerous, mostly African and Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan, Tunisia, Libya, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, the Central Africa Republic and Botswana graduated from the Academy. Within the framework of international bilateral agreements HAFA also cooperates with the Republic of Cyprus, an EU member state. The primary objective of such partnerships is to assist countries not disposing the required training facilities to develop a military aviation mentality and to promote a European based perception of an air force officer's basic education. The year 2003 has been a landmark year in the Academy's history, since HAFA was granted a legal Higher Military Educational Institute status, thus equivalent to Greek public universities. Most recently, in 2014 the Academy accredited by the Hellenic Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (HQA) for its High Quality Academic

standards and started implementing the Bologna process by applying for the Erasmus Charter of Higher Education (ECHE). In November 3rd 2016 the Academy became a member of the Erasmus+ family by receiving the Charter and commenced a wider reform process.

Today, HAFA is a public military Academy training pilots, aeronautical engineers and air traffic/air defence controllers covering the needs of the Hellenic Air Force. In particular, HAFA aims:

- To provide high quality academic education to its cadets both in terms of research and teaching methods on contemporary aviation science and technology, as well as to relevant theoretical and applied sciences.
- To develop and promote the pertinent military virtues and discipline to cadets in order to mould capable officers for the Hellenic Air Force (HAF) with both a proper military aviation mentality, as well as social, cultural and political skills embraced with all the capabilities enabling them to become competent leaders with comprehensive professional and scientific training.
- To co-organise with partner universities of Post-graduate Studies (PGS) and to conduct scientific research in the fields of interest to the HAF.

HAFA offers in that respect four (4) year bachelor/diploma studies in Aeronautics Sciences, Engineering and Air Traffic Control. The Academic programme also includes extended foreign languages courses of English Aviation Terminology, as well as other major foreign language courses (German and French).

Moreover, cooperation has been launched with the Hellenic Naval Academy in the field of Post Graduate Studies (PGS) recently. Such synergy lead to the development of a PGS titled **“Systems Engineering in Defence and Security”**. The programme available to both military and civilian students will commence during the winter semester of the academic year 2018-2019. HAFA has additionally extended its educational offer to Southern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East by concluding bilateral agreements with interested countries. Such campaign firmly promoted by the Academy and lead by the Hellenic Ministry of Defence has already resulted in the conclusion of an agreement with Italy, on cooperation and exchange of student pilots during flight training.

HAFA remains an institution of deep-rooted values but with global ambitions. Its strategic task is to continue serve a highly respected and internationally attractive Academy in the field of military aviation science and technology for the years to come. In order for such strive to be successful the Academy has developed an international strategy consisting of the following priority areas:

Encouraging and supporting students and staff mobility: In the framework of the ECHE, the Academy is interested in concluding inter-institutional agreements with universities/military academies sharing a similar profile of education in terms of values, educational offers, quality of education and scientific interests. Our task is to provide students the opportunity to study abroad, and take part in new academic environment, thus to improve among others, their personal intercultural competences. Mobility is additionally to be supported in all level of staff (professors, researchers, administration, teachers and military instructors). In particular, there will

be an annual call for staff mobility lasting 1 to 2 weeks. Mobility periods are to be supported by the Erasmus+ programme funds and are set to be an integral part of HAFA's mobility policy.

Improving the quality of higher education by establishing strategic and mutually-beneficial partnerships: HAFA, under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), is currently aiming to develop a strategic partnership with up to three Air Force Academies among the European Air Force Academies. Such partnership aspires to create an "**International Air Force Semester**" incorporated into both the HAFA's and partner Academies' current curriculum in a flexible way. It is therefore highly anticipated, and partners work towards safeguarding the compatibility of teaching and learning approaches and methods applied to their respective degree programmes.

Promoting and developing its international presence: HAFA is under a process of reforms. The additional external funding provided by the Erasmus+ Programme, has the potential to significantly assist the Academy in order to achieve its ambitious goals, promote its international visibility, by updating its online presence and by elaborating new promotional material (leaflets, students guides) to be shared with prospective partner universities/military academies. Moreover, encouraging our staff to participate in relevant international meetings and events (International Military Academic Forum and EUAFA Working Group) is outstandingly crucial in that respect. In that direction, recently HAFA became a member of ESDC network and started to participate in its Implementation Group (IG) meetings as a permanent member. Our strategic vision is to further promote such activities and succeed in attracting more like-minded partners from all over the world.

Such processes elaborated in this statement policy do reflect the major process of reforms HAFA is undergoing. Within such reforming framework, its participation to the Erasmus+ programme, as elaborated, remains a key element in achieving its ambitious goals. Consequently, we are looking forward to creating partnerships and synergies with interested institutions that share our values and aspirations.