

Collaboration Between the Military and Civilian Sectors in the Field of Education and Research

Andrej Koren

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenija
andrej.koren@siol.com

Valerij Dermol

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
valerij.dermol@mfdps.si

Nada Trunk Širca

University of Primorska, International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
trunk.nada@gmail.com

Abstract

In the second year of the VoKa project, we conducted a qualitative study focusing on three key areas: collaboration between the military and civilian sectors, military education, and military science and research. Through 40 in-depth interviews, valuable insights were gathered regarding current challenges and opportunities. It was found that while cooperation between the sectors is well developed in some cases, it is mostly unsystematic, dependent on individuals, and lacks a long-term vision.

Military education faces issues such as a lack of flexibility, poor recognition of civilian qualifications, and limited access to specialized programs. In the field of science and research, there is a noticeable absence of a dedicated military research institute, an undefined status of military researchers, and insufficient funding. Scientific findings are often not translated into practice, reducing the effectiveness of research efforts. Interviewees emphasized the need to institutionalize scientific work and provide systemic support, including the development of a research career path and greater integration of the Slovenian Armed Forces into European research networks.

For the long-term modernization of defence knowledge and to enhance the legitimacy of the military, the following are essential: recognition of civilian and international qualifications, mentorship, establishment of a research institute, strategic cooperation with academia, and the inclusion of modern topics such as cyber defence and artificial intelligence. The study concludes with a call for a political decision to treat knowledge, research, and collaboration with external partners as a strategic pillar of the development of the Slovenian Armed Forces.

Keywords: Military-civilian collaboration, Military education, Defense research, Institutional support, Strategic development, Modernization of armed forces