



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION
DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION DIVISION

December 2008

Coordination Meeting on
“Regional Security Cooperation Initiatives in SEE –
Synergy and Regional Ownership”

After Action Report

for external use

Zagreb, 4th December 2008

The Coordination Meeting on “Regional Security Cooperation Initiatives in SEE – Synergy and Regional Ownership” was held in RACVIAC on 4th December 2008.

lessons for the work of the Regional Initiatives in SEE.



DPPI

The purpose of this meeting was to analyse the regional security cooperation challenges, to review the activities of the acting regional Initiatives and Task Forces in the security area as well as to paint the future for building a fully-fledged regional ownership system. The intended discussion was to critically assess the achievements and shortcomings in the security sector regional cooperation and to draw some



The meeting gathered staff officers working on this issue at a higher level in respective MoD, MoI, MFA and members of Task Forces and Initiatives with knowledge and experience in the field of security in SEE.

The meeting was opened by a keynote speech, followed by three panel discussions. The participants and lecturers were representatives from seven countries and seven organizations, namely: Albania (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3), Croatia (3), the former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ (3), Moldova (2), Montenegro (1), Serbia (3), NATO HQ in Brussels (1), NATO HQ in Sarajevo (1), European Commission Enlargement (1), OSCE (2), RCC - Regional Cooperation Council (3), SEESAC - South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (1) and DPPI - Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (1).

Meeting Opening

Colonel Tomislav VIBOVEC, Deputy Director & COS of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and H.E. Stanislav DASKALOV, Head of the RCC Liaison Office in Brussels opened the Meeting.



Opening Session

They were pleased to welcome all the participants and expressed their content with the participants` interest in the topic. Colonel Tomislav VIBOVEC pointed out that most of the countries in

the SEE were involved in different regional processes; initiatives and organizations and sometimes their activities needed better coordination in order to gain benefits from their activities and to give an added value for the development of the countries in different areas.

HE Stanislav DASKALOV pointed out the main tasks of RCC described in its Statute and he emphasised that RCC would assist the task forces/initiatives in gaining access to both, regional and international political as well as technical support, required to full-fill their objectives.

Plenary Session

The participants focused on three main issues: political framework of regional cooperation in SEE in the context of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, initiatives in the security domain in SEE - synergy and lines of cooperation, and on future cooperation ideas and needs of the SEE countries.

The meeting was held in an open and constructive atmosphere of discussions, during which several important ideas, views and conclusions on regional cooperation were launched.

The keynote speaker Mr. Alphan SOLEN from RCC gave an overview of the regional cooperation in SEE and the

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

role of RCC, pointing out the tasks that RCC was mandated with in connection with the expectations from the region and the establishment of coordination between the newly established RCC and the existing regional initiatives, task forces and structures.

Based on the opinions delivered during discussions, the moderators formulated several important recommendations.



From right to left; Mr. Paolo Toschi, Mr. Sabri Ergen, Col. Tomislav Vibovec, Amb. Stanislav Daskalov, Mr. Alphan Solen Keynote speaker, Col. Omer Faruk Basturk.

In the first panel discussion moderated by Mr. Alphan SOLEN from RCC, Mr. Sabri ERGEN, NATO representative, reiterated that enlargement and regional cooperation are mutually complementary processes, thus regional cooperation had never been nor should ever be eclipsed by NATO and EU enlargement. He pointed out that regional cooperation should boldly move forward, confident in its separate added value.

Mr. Paolo TOSCHI, EC representative, acknowledged that SEE region was progressively embracing its role. The EC underlined the need for a pivoting body,

a forum for the different regional security initiatives on which an efficient coordination could be established. Due to its mandate given by SEECF and its nature of regionally owned body, with a direct mandate from the SEECF, RCC could take over the function of this kind of forum. The EC looks at this development with favour and expressed its hope that MoUs between RCC and regional organizations could be rapidly established, in order to formalize their cooperation. The EC also confirmed its readiness to continue supporting all the security initiatives in the region on the basis of its updated political assessment of available resources, and subject to the existing formal constraints.

The second panel discussion was moderated by Mr. EfreM RADEV from RCC. He outlined the means and ways as how RCC builds its relations with acting Initiatives and Task



From right to left; Mr. Orhan Topcu, Mr. EfreM Radev, Br.Gen(ret) Ulrich Heider, Mr. Diman Dimov, LIC Thomas Mergel.

Forces, as well as how it executes its tasks aimed at enhancing cooperation in the field of security. He also stressed on

the role of SEE countries in drafting new project ideas and he drew attention to the impact of the World financial crisis on the security cooperation.

RACVIAC Deputy Director Colonel Tomislav VIBOVEC presented the organization and stressed that recognizing the regional ownership is not a sole phrase but an overall description of devotion of Regional Nations and hard work of any regional Task Forces and Initiatives. RACVIAC confirmed its readiness to comply with the principle of regional ownership by applying it in reality.

Colonel VIBOVEC assured the participants that RACVIAC was aware of the challenges of synergic security cooperation in SEE region. He also expressed his confidence in RACVIAC readiness to effectively respond to those challenges. He reiterated that RACVIAC should continue both, to provide and seek support to / from RCC, DPPI and SEESAC.

He stressed that the indispensable support to all our efforts in the Region provided by OSCE, NATO, EU and other established organizations on a constant basis should not be forgotten.

Therefore, RACVIAC proposed holding these kinds of meetings with more focus on concrete issues as regular events.

Mr. Orhan TOPCU, DPPI Head of

Secretariat, provided historical background information on disaster preparedness and prevention, and stressed the importance of DPPI in the Region. He explained how DPPI was converting into a regionally owned initiative. He outlined DPPI achievements so far and presented on its future plans.

Mr. Diman DIMOV, Team Leader SEESAC said that SEESAC had successfully completed the process of transformation as a joint initiative between RCC and UNDP - United Nations Development Programme in 2008. The operational programme framework of SEESAC was established by the signing of the SEESAC 2009 project document between RCC and UNDP. SEESAC was also able to receive support within the framework of SEECF from the MoDs in SEE. The synergy with other RCC initiatives and regional partners was also increased by the signing of the MoU with RACVIAC and by establishing a coordination process with OSCE and NATO. Mr. DIMOV reiterated that SEESAC was well placed to continue providing technical support and advice to the countries in the Region on SALW policies and the implementation of specific SALW project at regional and national level.

Brig. Gen. (Ret) Ulrich HEIDER, Director of Security Cooperation, OSCE Mission to BiH, said that considerable improvement of the security situation in Europe after the end of the Cold War had resulted in a shift of attention from state level and interstate to intra-state problems with security sector reform and border security management as successful examples of this shifted process. The OSCE through its field Missions provides assistance in these areas. Most of the International commitments and standards requested by the EU, OSCE and NATO coincide when it comes to security related issues, confirming that the European security model is founded on values and requirements which are at the same time at the core of the national interests of the states concerned.

The third panel was moderated by LtC Thomas MERGEL provided the countries` representatives with an opportunity to present their thoughts concerning OSCE and co-organizers presentations and statements.

Speakers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro and Serbia presented their ideas and needs for future cooperation on security related matters.



LtC Thomas Mergel

The panel of six speakers represented a great crosscut of regional experience on politico-military and security related issues. They represented both academia and practitioners from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Defence with either military or civilian background. The leitmotiv of all presentations was the question of how to create synergy by simultaneously avoiding duplication, since it was a common understanding that duplication always came hand in hand with competition.

Almost all speakers identified regional security cooperation as a national security strategy goal of high importance. Furthermore, even when not explicitly stressed, this fundamental conviction was also inherent in the presentations. Nearly all presenters admitted that at least the limitation - if not the lack - of appropriate facilities, opportunities and capacities would not only justify regional cooperation, but

also provided even stronger urge for its enhancement.

The need for further assistance in administrative/institutional capacity building to support Euro-Atlantic and European integration processes - including language training - was voiced as the most urgent one.



PhD Tijana Turkovic

Additionally, speakers unanimously recognized organized crime as a major threat to the region of Southeast Europe, and pointed out the willingness and readiness of the region and international partners to closely cooperate on fighting the organized crime in all its relevant aspects – such as money laundering, trafficking of human beings, and corruption, just to name a few.

The spectrum of commonly identified topics for further regional cooperation ranged from disaster and crisis management to small arms light weapons issues, as well as integrated border management.

Other areas of security cooperation mentioned were: raising public

awareness of most relevant security concerns; supporting inter-ministerial and inter-agencies consensus building processes and providing general support to parliamentarians.

Finally, all speakers underlined the necessity to maintain and improve the achievements reached through arms control, security and confidence building measures, as well as to continue promoting security sector reforms.

Among many needs identified, evaluated, and ranked – there was just one concrete idea brought to the podium – one speaker introduced the idea to execute a regional survey on all relevant security issues in order to create common reality operational picture as a basis for further sound analyses. It was recommended this idea should be explored in order to outline concrete steps, and it should be discussed in depth at the next meeting with a similar purpose.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

The meeting offered an additional opportunity to review the work and activity of different regional processes, initiatives and organizations in the priority domains in SEE, providing a platform for identifying synergies among them.

Furthermore, a better coordination of activities of the regional structures could be achieved by establishing a viable network, meant to facilitate the exchange of information, to encourage exchange of best practices and lessons learnt, to adjust and streamline their activities related to concrete projects and programs in different areas of cooperation and activities. With reference to all the above mentioned it would be advisable to continue with the sectoral coordination meetings, which provide a practical platform for discussions and assessment of the opportunities, advantages and shortcomings of the processes, projects and programs launched in all areas of common interest and shared responsibility.

All panellists assessed the three panels as most successful and useful. They also recommended to the co-organizers to continue with the programme in the future.

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