



7TH WG-1 WORKSHOP ON TRANSITION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL
In Cooperation With the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia

WS-1
25th to 28th February 2008
Rakitje and Osijek, Republic of Croatia

One of the specific principles introduced to the existing modalities for the RACVIAC defence conversion activities in the field of military personnel transition, was the in-country approach. Its ultimate agenda is to support the regional ownership build-up. As a contribution to this important vision, Working Group 1 (WG1) has already managed to have two of its events executed outside of its Headquarters (HQ) in Croatia. First of them was in Duress, Albania in June 2007, and the second one occurred in November 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia.

Regional Ownership
Build Up



Workshop Participants - Group Photo, Rakitje

WG1 truly believes that the applied in-country approach equally enhances the regional diplomatic dimension of RACVIAC and enables direct exchange of

experience, delivered on site and primarily by the host country.

At this moment we can talk about the certain tradition

Economical Aspects

being established due to the fact that this approach is being widely accepted among the WG1 members. The latest example is Croatia, which expressed its readiness to more actively participate in the WG1 activities in 2008, and accepted the host role for the first WG1 Workshop in 2008.

The general purpose of the Working Group 1 (WG1) workshops is to enable faster, more transparent and efficient reform of the armed forces in the region.

In the case of the 7th WG1 Workshop, the specific objective was the requested display of the real

Real Life Examples

life examples of the successful individual transition stories. By its definition, the success in the individual transition is the fully established second career. This primarily means successful participation in the labour market or in other words, personal employment or self-employment in the desired field of work.

Additionally, the workshop had the task to emphasise the importance of regional approach due to specific regional aspects of economy, culture, history, availability of resources, mentality and transition support availability itself.

These were the starting points for the creation of the corresponding workshop

agenda, which was done in cooperation with the Croatian Ministry of Defence (MoD), which provided special programme in accordance with the requested criteria.

Activity Facilitators

WS-1 activity was planned, organized and executed as the joint event between RACVIAC and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, which equally shared corresponding organizational responsibilities.

The activity content of the workshop itself was developed in coordination with the Croatian SPECTRA Programme staff, primarily bearing in mind the described specific objective of this event – the provision of real life military personnel transition program examples in the form of success stories, including specific SPECTRA program features. Thus, the leading facilitator of this Workshop was the Croatian MoD.



Welcome Reception Hosted by the Croatian MoD, Zagreb
Amb Nedžad Hadžimusić, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation (standing third from the right)
Mr. Nenad Smolčec, Head of the Personnel Service, Croatian MoD (standing second from the right) - Reception Host

Activity Venue, Duration and Participation

The Workshop was held from the 25th - 28th February 2008. The event was divided into two organizational parts – the two separated events. The first part was executed on the 26th February at RACVIAC's facilities in Rakitje. The

second part of the Workshop comprised the study field trip to Regional Transition Support Centre in Osijek on the 26th and the 27th February, fully organized and executed by the Croatian MoD.

Importance of the Regional Approach

Workshop included total of 37 participants from 10 different countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Moldavia, Montenegro, Norway, the United States of America, and Serbia), various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Activity Description and Contents

The Workshop activity was executed as a combination of the seminar session and the study field trip. The seminar session comprised the main topic lecture and individual presentations.



Workshop Opening, Rakitje

From left to right:

Col Mihajlo Mladenović, Chief of the Defence Conversion Cell, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation

Mr. Peter Pashov, PhD, Bulgarian MoD State Expert - WG1 Chairman

Col Vladimir Superina, Chief of Staff and Deputy Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation

Maj Zvonko Popović, Head of the Transition Division, Croatian MoD, WG1 member and official representative of the Workshop host country

Mr. Petar Lovrić, Entrepreneur - Workshop's main lecturer

First day included individual arrivals, administrative processing, final

* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

coordination activities and initial welcome gathering.

The welcome gathering was sponsored and hosted by the Croatian MoD. The State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Mr. Mate Raboteg was announced as the host, but unfortunately he was unable to participate. The Head of the MoD Personnel Service, Mr. Nenad Smolčec represented the Croatian MoD, while its Director, Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić, represented RACVIAC. Both high officials addressed the participants in person, confirming the importance of the military personnel transition issue for the ongoing defence reform efforts.

The following two days brought intensive schedule, which included main topic lecture followed by the host county program.



Main Lecture - Mr. Petar Lovrić

Contents

Working Day One

1. Separated Military Personnel Employment Support Insight, including open discussion by Mr. Petar Lovrić, Croatia

Mr. Lovrić discussed the former military personnel employment support as the living example of how all-national institutional employment efforts should be incorporated and utilized together. As a former military, the owner of a successful business (a middle size employer - owns a factory and two employment mediation agencies) and the member of different NGOs dealing with the active support to former military personnel and war veterans, he shared his experience in following areas:

- Small and middle entrepreneurship;
- Own business start-up (good and bad experience);

- Institutional support to business start-ups (including micro crediting);
- Job fair participation (employers insight);
- Job market assessment;
- Employment mediation;
- Military personnel as civilian employees, etc.

2. Military Personnel Transition – Specific Features of the Croatian Model by Major Zvonko Popović, Croatia

3. Job Interview Simulation Methodology – Analysis Demonstration by Captain Alana Malić

As the event co-host, Croatian MoD presented the military personnel transition model features, specific for the Croatian Military Personnel Transition System, especially the importance of an individual approach.

The presentation included demonstration of the analysis of the specific job interview simulation methodology (using multimedia technologies).



Resident Workshop Session, Rakitje

4. Successful Stories – Personal Experiences / Testimonials by Mr. Gordan Kolak and Mr. Krunoslav Matijević-Klobučar, Croatia

These testimonies focussed on self-employment examples in the field of services, regionally more characteristic of the Zagreb area. Mr. Gordan Kolak and Mr. Krunoslav Matijević-Klobučar provided information on their individual military background, personal transition process experiences and utilized support programs. These reviews covered both good and bad sides of the process, indicated problems faced during individual transition processes and suggested successful solutions.



Resident Workshop Session - Mr. Gordan Kolak presenting his personal SPECTRA experience

The second part of the Workshop included study field trip to the Osijek region, and this part of the program was fully provided by the Croatian MoD. It was equally designed to support stated WG1 members' requirements and underline the importance of the regional approach, which initially is not so much present in other countries. Additionally, its purpose was to encourage the team building among the usually permanent members of the WG1, since the nature of the WG1 events is not purely academic.

Working Day Two

6. Study Field Trip to Regional Transition Support Centre Osijek, including:

6.1 Visit to the Regional Transition Centre – Importance of Regional Approach by Ms. Zora Dragun-Šmital, Croatia

6.2 Regional Success Stories – Personal Experiences / Testimonials, Mr. Zoran Čutura and Mr. Julije Novak, Croatia

6.3 Self-Employment Success Stories – Field Examples by Mr. Željko Vrselja, Croatia



Field Trip - Regional Transition Support Centre Osijek

This field study trip emphasized and witnessed the importance of the regional approach considering the process of military personnel transition, due to differences in economy potentials, available resources, historical context, cultural varieties, specific mentalities and the availability of transition support itself. The real life examples in the area of self-employment support provided the participants with the opportunity to study Croatian military personnel transition model and again to witness the importance of the regional approach.



Field Trip - Self-Employment Examples, Osijek

7. Follow-up WG1 activities; agenda for the next WG1 Meeting; final conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

The participants evaluated the event as successful, but highly intensive due to limited workshop duration combined with demanding field study trip.

The 7th WG1 Workshop confirmed that this new in-country approach has been recognized and accepted by all members without exceptions. Taking this into consideration, all WG1 events for the 2008 were designed to support this approach and besides this 7th WG1 Workshop, which was hosted by the Croatian MoD, the next one will be held in Bulgaria as announced by the WG1 chairman and Bulgarian representative Mr. Peter Pashov, PhD. In this way, WG1 efforts for this year will benefit even more from the practical examples, and this time from Bulgaria, which has been known as the country with the longest experience in the field of

military personnel transition. The anticipated dates for this event are 3rd to 5th June 2008, and again the agenda will consider employment and business start-up processes or, in other words, economic aspects of the military personnel transition process. Possible topics are as follows:

1. Small business start-up
2. Bio-structure Analysis - "Structogram Training System" (Value-free analysis of personal potentials, based on genetic-biological principles)
3. Opportunity and Principals of the work to EURES (European Employment Service)
4. Visit to Regional Information Consulting Centre in Plovdiv



Field Trip - Main Conclusion Session, Ilok

In the field of mediation of bilateral cooperation, this Workshop has been the most successful so far. It resulted in three bilateral cooperation initiatives, now waiting to be formalized:

1. The first one between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia,
2. The second one between Albania and Bulgaria, and
3. The third one between Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonian experts will visit Bulgaria from 8th to 11th April, while Albanian expert delegation is going to execute their visit in period from 20th to 23rd April 2008. This confirmed Bulgaria as the leading

WG1 country in the field of bilateral cooperation.

One of the major requests considering future workshops' contents was the development of the comparative analysis of the legal frameworks for the transition of military personnel in the western EU countries. RACVIAC took over this responsibility and it is to be initiated as soon as possible. This request was submitted by the Macedonian delegation.

Additional Observations

Additionally, we can conclude that Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Montenegro considerably increased their participation in our activities. Both countries were for the first time represented by the personnel to be directly involved in the similar programs in their own organizations. This means they have accepted the new paradigm introduced by RACVIAC a year ago – military personnel transition is not one-time limited project, but it presents the permanent function of the modern human resources management system. We consider this as a significant success.

Dr. Peter PASHOV

WG-1 Chairman

Ministry of Defence of
Republic of Bulgaria



RACVIAC - Mediator
of the Bilateral
Cooperation