



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

9TH WG-1 WORKSHOP ON TRANSITION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL

WS-5

17th to 18th December 2008
Rakitje, Republic of Croatia

Activity Background

The main conclusion made during the 8th Workshop on Transition of Military Personnel held in Sofia, Bulgaria, was that the next WG1 event ought to be completely in support of the requirements presented by the representatives of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova - to discuss the issue of the separated military personnel career transition system legal framework as the basic prerequisite for its successful establishment and efficient functioning.

Direct Programme
Support by Core
WG1 Member
Countries

Due the fact that the real-time support makes the foundation of WG1 operations, immediate preparations were initiated including direct involvement of the core member countries with already established systems. Their involvement was mainly in the form of the provision of subject matter information in the written form, and in advance to subject event.

Beside the support purpose, the idea was to create for the first time a joint publication on a specific expert issue, while the ultimate goal for this effort was actually the creation of the institutional memory for the Working Group 1. RACVIAC again served as the expert mediator and all submitted materials were processed and compiled by its staff.



9th WG1 Workshop Opening - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje

Activity Facilitator

WG-1 activity was planned, organized and executed solely by RACVIAC DCC WG1 staff. However, the Workshop Agenda and its contents were developed in close cooperation with WG1 core member countries.

Five of them were directly involved in creation and presentation of the main Workshop output / written workshop proceedings titled "Transition of Military Personnel - Organizational and Legal Framework Previews for WG1 Countries".

Activity Venue, Duration and Participation

The Workshop was held from 17th to 18th December 2008 in RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, in military barracks "Vitez

Damir Martić", in Rakitje, Croatia. It was organized within the time frame of two working days as an organizational extension of previous, immediately concluded event - NATO-RACVIAC Conference on Resettling Redundant Military Personnel, but still as an independent RACVIAC activity with the genuine and highly specific topics.



Workshop Session - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje

The Workshop included total of 25 participants from 11 different countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Moldova, the Kingdom of Norway, Poland, Romania, the United States of America and Serbia), including representatives from OSCE and NATO, RACVIAC staff and expert speakers.

Activity Description and Contents

The Workshop activities were conducted as a combination of the concerned members' presentations and expert lectures. Beside previously defined topic requirements, it was designed to support "NATO-RACVIAC Conference on Resettling Redundant Military Personnel" as its logical thematic extension, due to fact that these two events were organizationally combined and based on the participation of WG1 members.

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name



National Legal Framework Presentation - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje

From left to right:

LtC Mirsad Ahmić (speaking), Chief of J1, Joint Staff of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina

LtC Ulrich Knüppel, Personnel Management Advisor in Croatian MoD, Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany

Mr. Peter Pashov PhD, State Expert, Bulgarian MoD, WG1 Chairman in 2008

Col Lihajlo Mladenović, Chief of RACVIAC Defence Conversion Cell

Ms. Bojana Nikolić, Legal Expert in the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia

Due to already stated fact that the Workshop was organizationally combined with the NATO-RACVIAC Conference, some standard social elements were merged. In this way, the Workshop had exclusively working character and its execution was more intensive than usual. The Workshop opening was brief, deprived of any formalities and primarily dedicated to the Agenda. First working day brought standard review of the individual national programme updates, while the second one was solely dedicated to the main workshop topic, where subject matter presentations were followed by the main topic lectures.



National Legal Framework Presentation - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje

Maj Zvonko Popović, Head of the Transition Division, Croatian MoD

First to open working part of the Workshop was LtC Mirsad Ahmić, Chief of J1 of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and

Herzegovina, who was followed by his counterparts: Maj Zvonko Popović, Head of Transition Division in Croatian MoD; LtC Gjorgji Mitrinovski, Head of Resettlement Section in Macedonian MoD; and Col Nicolae Anghelescu, Chief of Professional Reconversion, Veterans and Retired Military Personnel Service in Romanian MoD.



National Legal Framework Presentation - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje
LtC Gjorgji Mitrinovski, Head of the Resettlement Section, Macedonian MoD

They all individually presented respective legal and organizational frameworks for the corresponding national separated military personnel career transition systems.

The presentations were based on the previously submitted written material and served as the starting point for joint comparative analysis of mentioned legal and organizational frameworks in WG1 member countries.



National Legal Framework Presentation - Main Seminar Room, Rakitje
Col Nicolae Anghelescu, Chief of the Professional Reconversion, Veterans and Retired Military Personnel Service, Romanian MoD

For the same purpose, the Workshop Agenda included an example of a lasting and well-established legal solution in the same field of interest from one of the western countries, as the final element for the mentioned comparative analysis. In this case, LtC Ulrich Knüppel, Personnel Management Advisor to Croatian Ministry of Defence, represented the Federal Republic of Germany.



Expert Presentation - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje
LtC Ulrich Knüppel, Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, Personnel Management Advisor to Croatian Ministry of Defence

LtC Knüppel's presentation was accepted with the highest interest and it was evaluated equally.

Comparative
 Analysis of Existing
 Legal and
 Organizational
 Frameworks

The previews were followed with the legal expert's insight regarding the process of establishment of the legal framework for a completely new area of activities within the existing defence and national legislation systems.



Expert Presentation - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje
Ms. Bojana Nikolić, Legal Expert in Serbian MoD

Ms. Bojana Nikolić, Legal Advisor in Serbian Ministry of Defence, who presented the first-hand experience from the expert's point of view, was the one to provide this specific insight.

Due to fact that the Workshops content was strictly designed in accordance with the requirements submitted by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova, Workshop was concluded with the presentation on the current situation regarding the reopening of the Retraining and Resettlement Centre in Chisinau Technical University as the joint project between Moldavian MoD and OSCE Mission to Moldova. These information were provided by Captain Alexandru Roman, Senior Desk Officer in Policies Cell of Human Resources Directorate in Moldavian MoD, and Col Adam Daca, Military Advisor in OSCE Mission to Moldova.

Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the main objectives for RACVIAC DCC Working Group 1 is to provide "real time" support to its members in the form of relevant exchange of experience and lessons learned in the required area of expertise. This principle enables instant reaction to the latest developments regarding the existing military personnel career transition programmes in SEE region. Following the same principle, 9th WG1 Workshop was carefully tailored to satisfy the most significant requirement submitted to WG1 by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova during the last joint gathering in Sofia, Bulgaria - the elaboration of the separated military personnel career transition programme's legal framework as the major prerequisite / foundation for the successful establishment of the corresponding system. Unfortunately, the Workshop could not be held in Moldova as initially planned, but our assessment is that the Workshop's

outcome was equally successful. Prior to this event, all WG1 members were invited to contribute by providing relevant written materials, which are to be processed, compiled and published by RACVIAC as the basis for the Workshop discussions. This publication was the main Workshop output, available to all participants and primarily to the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Serbia were first to answer this initiative by submitting relevant documents. By this, the WG1 initiated the process of creation of institutional memory, which is very important due to fact that this expert community works together for more than three years. The goal is the creation of the corresponding knowledge base by the end of 2010.



Workshop Evaluation Process - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje

Participants individually evaluated the Workshop as the successful one, while the final conclusion session delivered following suggestions:

- To continue with the initiated reviews of the western countries' transition support systems
- To share experience on participation on job forums (fairs)
- To extend WG1 activities to other government institutions (ministries) that have to face the same issues of downsizing and redundant personnel career transition support (WG1 can transfer accumulated knowledge and experience to them)

- WG1 should continue to evolve - future gatherings should include discussion on its future
- To discuss IT support tools (especially in planning process)
- To maintain the initiative to have one of the future workshops in the Republic of Moldova

At the end of the event, WG1 unofficially celebrated the third anniversary by honouring all of its chairpersons. For this purpose, and on behalf of Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Colonel Mihajlo Mladenović, Chief of RACVIAC Defence Conversion Cell, handed over RACVIAC's certificates of appreciation to Major Zvonko Popović (Croatian representative - WG1 Chairperson in 2006); Ms. Ivis Nočka (Albanian representative - WG1 Chairperson in 2007); and Mr. Peter Pashov PhD (Bulgarian representative - WG1 Chairperson in 2008).



Workshop Closing Session - RACVIAC Main Seminar Room, Rakitje

Mr. Peter Pashov, PhD, State Expert and WG1 Chairman in 2008, Bulgarian MoD

The Workshop was closed by the chairmanship handover ceremony between Mr. Peter Pashov, PhD and LtC Gjorgji Mitrinovski as the oncoming chairperson. Both distinguished members of WG1 addressed the assembled colleagues and shared their personal visions of the past and the future of Working Group 1.

Dr. Peter PASHOV

WG-1 Chairman

Ministry of Defence of Republic of Bulgaria