

Workshop on Transition of Military Personnel - Study Visit to Vocational Advancement Service in Federal Republic of Germany C-01-W/2009

- Hosted by the Federal Ministry of Defence -

RACVIAC- Centre for Security Cooperation, Rakitje, Stari hrast 53, 10437 Bestovje, CROATIA

Tel.: 00385 1 333 0 803, Fax: 00385 1 333 0 809, www.racviac.org

Abstract *In the period of 2 to 4 September 2009, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Vocational Advancement Service of the Ministry of Defence of Federal Republic of Germany co-organized the study trip of Working Group on Transition of Military Personnel to Service's headquarters in Bonn and to the regional Vocational Advancement Service in Koblenz. The goal of this very successful trip was to provide the permanent members of the WG with a sort of a look into the future - an insight into the core concepts of one of the most advanced transition systems, which is extremely purposefully designed and successfully integrated into the existing system of military personnel management. In this particular case, all of the support mechanisms actually represent a comprehensive welfare programme designed to support acquisition and retention of high quality personnel. Its starting point is the fact that in the environment of developed economy, the military organization must have sufficient resources in order to be competitive on the labour market. The career transition support mechanisms actually represent an added value, which often serves as the decisive point in choosing future career among young people who are just starting their working life. The event has been assessed as fully successful, and there have been many recommendations to continue with this newly introduced type of activity for WG1.*

Activity Background

Designed as an expert forum, Working Group 1 (WG1) evolved in accordance with the paradigm introduced by RACVIAC - separated military personnel career transition as the permanent function of any human resources management system. This approach enabled full spectrum of case studies dealing with always-different aspects of the process itself. Equally, WG1 continues to apply the real-time support modality, which means that the members are in a position to directly present their own requirements in accordance with the latest defence system development needs. This principle became particularly critical during the last two years in the context of ongoing defence system modernization processes, including the omni-present creation of all-volunteer forces (professionalization).

One of the frequently repeated requests for RACVIAC has been to provide WG1 members with the opportunity to study a specific example of well-established advanced system in one of the Western European countries. The joint WG1 member countries' conclusion was that the Federal Republic of Germany presents the best choice for this purpose.

For this reason, one of the main goals regarding RACVIAC WG1's activities in 2009 was to provide its members with the opportunity to visit an organization that is the main proponent in the same field of interest, in this case named the "vocational advancement support".

Look Into the
Future

The main goal of this study visit was to provide WG1 core members with a sort of a look into the future - an insight into the core concepts of one of the most advanced career transition systems, which is extremely purposefully designed and successfully integrated into the existing system of military personnel management.



Participants Group Photo - Visit to Vocational Advancement Service, BMVg Bonn

Activity Facilitators

This activity was planned, organized and executed as the result of cooperation between RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Federal Ministry of Defence (hereafter BMVg) of the Federal Republic of Germany. In accordance with the in-country approach and the nature of the event itself (study field trip), the Agenda was developed in close coordination and ultimately arranged by the host itself - Vocational Advancement Service, BMVg.

At the same time, all organizational responsibilities were coordinated and shared in advance and in accordance with the RACVIAC's standard policy when it comes to activities that are organized outside RACVIAC HQ. Support provided by BMVg in this matter was more than adequate and efficient, which was acknowledged by all participants, including RACVIAC staff involved.

"Vocational
Advancement
Service"

Study Field Trip



Welcome Reception hosted by Federal Ministry of Defence

Delegations" leaders (from left to right):

Col Mihajlo MLADENOVIC, RACVIAC SSR Programme Manager

Mr. Jürgen Schmidt, Head of Vocational Advancement Service, BMVg

Activity Venue, Duration and Participation

After highly enjoyable reception at the BMVg during the day before, joint work started with the existing vocational advancement system familiarization. This first part of the visit was

carried out in Vocational Advancement Service in BMVg Bonn, while the second day included field trip to Koblenz, the location of the Regional Vocational Advancement Service.

Due to the nature of the event itself, on this occasion the participation policy was slightly different than before, with regard to the number of participants per country and involvement of WG1 members that do not originate from core countries.

There were a total of 17 participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Moldova, Norway, Serbia, including the members of RACVIAC staff, and organizations being in direct support of the corresponding activities in member countries.

The event itself had a standard WG1 activity structure and lasted for two working days, during the period from 2nd to 4th September 2009.



Introduction Presentation - BMVg Bonn

Mr. Jürgen Schmidt, Head of Vocational Advancement Service (speaking)

Activity Description and Contents

This type of event (study field trip) had never been conducted before. Thus, it fully supports new policy of RACVIAC on introduction of new activity modalities for the year 2010.

For the same reason, this concept was obvious refreshment for the permanent WG1 members, who were in the position to gain experience at the very source. As scheduled, the visit started with welcome reception and dinner, which was hosted by Mr. Jürgen Schmidt at the BMVg in Bonn. WG1 delegation was received with sincere hospitality and openness, which continued

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

throughout the entire period of the activity and beyond.



Visit to Vocational Advancement Service, BMVg Bonn

The visit programme itself was designed as a combination of subject matter expositions, open discussions and, what is most important, direct insight into the existing support mechanisms and available resources. Mr. Jürgen Schmidt himself opened the first day with a comprehensive introduction into the subject matter. He was followed by Mr. Jörg-Michael Winkler, who presented core concept and achievements of German Vocational Advancement Support System, while Mr. Peter Leßenich spoke about the specific solution regarding the corresponding military training, which is recognized by the civilian vocational training system and can thus be organized within the existing military training system. This is one of the major components that most of the regional countries still lack and it should be resolved in the future developments of their national education systems.

Full System Integration

The first working day was concluded by Mr. Ferdinand Bolzius who delivered expose on another subject that has great utilisation potential for all of WG1 member countries when it comes to their security integration efforts, or in other words their future participation in joint international missions abroad. He spoke on special social benefits for members of the armed forces taking part in international military missions, including some special military personnel categories, such as military being disabled as the result of this participation.

After first day, of a more introductory nature, the second one brought more practical issues and it was based entirely on the field trip to Regional Vocational Advancement Centre in Koblenz. The visit was actually executed in the Metal and Technology Centre of the Chamber of Crafts, which is the BMVG's strategic partner in the key

activity of the entire process - the vocational training.



Presentation in BMVg Bonn

Mr. Ferdinand Bolzius

In this modern state-of-the-art training facility, head of the Regional Vocational Advancement Centre Ms Christiane Heintze introduced WG1 members with the mission, the scope and type of the vocational advancement support services provided at the Centre.

Direct Cooperation with the Industry



Visit to Regional Vocational Advancement Service Koblenz - Presentation at the Metal and Technology Centre of the Chamber of Crafts

Ms Christiane Heintze (presenting)

The programme continued with comprehensive information on the cooperation between German Bundeswehr and the industry.



Training Facilities in Metal and Technology Centre of the Chamber of Crafts (1)

Col (ret) Hans-Joachim Benner, Head of the M&T Centre (speaking)

From the presentation of Col Hans-Joachim Benner and the real-life examples that were shown during the participants' walk through the training centre, it was more than obvious that German industry is truly interested in gaining personnel who is trained in accordance with the latest technological requirements.



Training Facilities in Metal and Technology Centre of the Chamber of Crafts (2)

Col (ret) Hans-Joachim Benner, Head of the Centre (speaking)

Obviously under the impressions from this visit, one of the major proposals given is to continue with this newly established and evidently successful practice. There was a direct request stated to have another visit in the near future to following two countries: France and Kingdom of Norway.

RACVIAC will definitely support this initiative and try to include one similar activity in its future programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Participants marked the entire event as highly interesting and useful. It was evaluated as one of the most successful WG1 activities in 2009.

It was evident that in case of Germany, all of the career transition support mechanisms actually create a comprehensive welfare system, which is primarily designed for the purpose of acquisition and retaining of high-quality personnel. Its starting point is the fact that in the environment of developed economy, the military organization must have sufficient resources in order to be competitive on the labor market. The career transition support mechanisms actually represent an added value, which often serves as the decisive point in choosing future career among young people who are just starting their working life.

Comprehensive
and Purposefully
Welfare System



Visit to Regional Vocational Advancement Service Koblenz - Group Photo