



Co-organized by: RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia and Technical Assistance Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX), DG Enlargement, European Commission

Civil protection in the EU and in South-Eastern Europe

Date 17-19 May 2011

Venue RACVIAC, Rakitje, Stari hrast 53, 10437 Bestovje, Croatia

Background The loss of human lives and the economic damage that result from natural, technological and environmental disasters have dramatically increased over the last few decades. The increased losses call for a prominent and an active role of national civil protection systems, which bear the official responsibility for the prevention and reduction of such losses at the state level. The rising number of potential threats has led many countries to recognize the importance of civil protection capacity building and, consequently, to include it on the list of their top priorities. Community co-cooperation in the field of civil protection aims to better protect people, their environment, property and cultural heritage in the event of major natural or man-made disasters. The improvement of civil protection is a specific, continuous, long-term process which heavily relies on strong political and legal commitment, public understanding, scientific knowledge, careful development planning, accountable enforcement of policies and legislation, effective disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. The European Commission is responsible for supporting and supplementing efforts at regional, national and local level with regard to disaster prevention, the level of preparedness of those responsible for civil protection, and the intervention in the event of disaster. In South East Europe (SEE), civil protection is a security issue that requires very close regional cooperation, including a timely exchange of information, views and ideas. It involves constant improvement of national regulations and their alignment with EU standards. Therefore, the organizers have envisaged this event as a forum for presenting and explaining the EU acquis civil-protection related issues to national representatives coming from SEE countries.

Purpose & Objectives The purpose of this Seminar is to foster joint cooperation in the field of civil protection among SEE authorities, as a part of the overall security cooperation in SEE. Furthermore, the event aims to increase awareness of the importance of civil protection among SEE countries in order to ensure a higher level of preparedness for averting the prospective natural, technological or environmental disasters. This will eventually lead to reduced human and infrastructure losses.

The objectives are:

- to promote the increased awareness of the importance of civil protection against possible natural, technological and environmental disasters;
- to present EU standards in the field of civil protection and to harmonize the SEE countries' practical and operational solutions with EU standards and regulations;
- to lay the groundwork for establishing a common framework for effective and rapid cooperation of national civil protection services;
- to provide and exchange information, views, and experiences with regard to the established EU civil protection standards and systems;
- to gain and share knowledge of EU's civil protection strategies and regulations;
- to propose the way for future cooperation in the field of civil protection.

Participants Approximately 35 participants, from each of the signatory's countries of the new RACVIAC Agreement. The participants should be either civilian or military officials at a decision-making level and experts representing relevant institutions dealing with the activity's subject matter. Representatives of other MAG countries and relevant international organizations, NGOs and the media are also to be invited.

Methodology The seminar will last two working days and the official working language is English. The seminar will be conducted as a combination of presentations, speeches and open discussions. All materials presented or produced during the Seminar, will be distributed in electronic form on a CD.

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