



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION



NATO - PASP/DSED

**NATO - RACVIAC Conference On Resettling Redundant Military Personnel
- Lessons Learned from Transition Economies
In Cooperation with the NATO PASP/DSED**

**S-15
15th to 17th December 2008
Rakitje, Republic of Croatia**

Activity Background

NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division / Defence and Security Economics Directorate (PASP/DSED) has a long history of significant contribution considering the development of the resettlement programmes in the countries of the SEE region, Russian Federation and Ukraine, where it is still directly involved in the execution of the existing programmes. All of these countries at some point faced the same issue of force downsizing and the question how to systematically take care about great numbers of redundant military personnel and not to disturb the stability of national economies and corresponding security systems? This issue was especially critical in the cases where the economies were weak and the security systems were already disturbed with uncontrolled transition processes. It was completely new and "uncharted territory" for majority of the countries being part of the Conference and first to provide certain level of expertise and support was actually the NATO Defence and Security Economics Directorate through its Expert Teams.

Despite this common history and beside the RACVIAC DCC WG1 efforts limited to SEE region, up to now there were no

other occasions for the subject matter experts from these countries to meet together in one place as a well established and identified expert community, and to discuss the same points of interest.

For this reason, it can be said that the initiative to hold this Conference created for the first time a unique opportunity to bring them all together to stress the same issues but from their own experiences - to identify common problems and analyse individual solutions accumulated during the last decade, which makes a highly respectable subject knowledge base.

Well Established
Expert Community

Common
Resettlement History



NATO - RACVIAC Conference Participants - Group Photo, Rakitje

Additionally, the emphasis was to be put on the lessons learned in the context of transition of national economies, which

makes another significant and unique connecting point for all of the countries involved in this event.

Thus, the main purpose for the Conference was defined as the establishment of a common platform for mutual exchange of views and experiences on major aspects in the area of retraining and resettlement of redundant military personnel (separated military personnel career transition), primarily between RACVIAC DCC Working Group 1 as the subject proponent in South-East Europe, and NATO Division of Political Affairs and Security Policy (PASP/DSED)

considering the same field of interest in Russian Federation and Republic of Ukraine.

Lessons Learned in
Transition
Economies

The Conference was intended to provide the cross section of long-term accumulated experience on similar issues from existing resettlement programmes in SEE, Russian Federation and Republic of Ukraine; to indicate NATO contribution to these programmes; to provide overviews of existing solutions on some highly specific issues within the most successful programmes; to introduce information on latest resettlement programme developments; and what is the most important - to initiate informal expert communication and to provide common ground for future formal cooperation between RACVIAC DCC WG1 member countries, Russian Federation and Ukraine. These were the starting points for the creation of the corresponding conference agenda, which was done together by NATO PASP/DSED and RACVIAC DCC WG1.

Activity Facilitators

The Conference activity was planned, organized and executed as the joint event between RACVIAC and the NATO PASP/DSED, who respectfully shared

corresponding financial responsibilities, while RACVIAC fully provided organizational and logistical support as the host organization.

Both organizations equally contributed in development of the Conference Agenda, which was developed primarily to support joint, in advance defined objectives.

Activity Venue, Duration and Participation

The Conference was held from the 15th - 17th December 2008 in RACVIAC facilities, in Rakitje, Croatia. It was organized as the three-day event, out of which two were full working days.

During the working day sessions, held at the RACVIAC facilities, participants had the opportunity to hear presentations and engage in discussions on the corresponding subject matter. Besides opening welcome gathering in Rakitje, second conference day included informal dinner at downtown Zagreb.



Welcome Reception Hosted by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Restaurant "Rakitje"
Col Tomislav Vibovec, Deputy Director and Chief of Staff of RACVIAC - welcoming the participants as the reception host

Workshop included total of 43 participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Moldova, the Kingdom of Norway, Russian Federation Ukraine, the United States of America and Serbia, including

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

representatives from IOM, NATO, RACVIAC staff and NATO interpreters.

Activity Description and Contents

The Conference was conducted as a series of plenary sessions comprised of individual presentations provided by subject matter experts from the Russian Federation, SEE Countries - members of RACVIAC DCC WG1 and the Republic of Ukraine. First conference day included individual arrivals, administrative processing, final coordination activities and initial welcome gathering hosted by Deputy Director and Chief of Staff of RACVIAC, Colonel Tomislav Vibovec who welcomed all participants in Restaurant "Rakitje".

The event started with the opening session co-chaired by facilitating organizations' high representatives: Mr. Michael Gaul, Deputy Director of PASP/DSED and Col Tomislav Vibovec, Deputy Director and Chief of staff of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.



Conference Opening - RACVIAC Conference Room, Rakitje
From left to right:

Mr. Michael Gaul, Deputy Director of Defence and Security Economics Directorate, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division and the Conference co-chairperson

Col Tomislav Vibovec, Deputy Director and Chief of Staff of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation - opening the Conference as co-chairperson

Mr. Igor Jovičić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia and the Conference keynote speaker

Both high officials addressed the participants and confirmed the importance of the Conference - equally as the opportunity for sharing different expert points of view, and as the initiative for

future developments and cooperation in the field of separated military personnel career transition support programmes.



Conference Opening - RACVIAC Conference Room, Rakitje
From left to right:

Col Gen Leonid Sergeevich Mayorov, Director of NATO-Russia Resettlement Centre, Moscow

Mr. Michael Gaul, Deputy Director of Defence and Security Economics Directorate - Political Affairs and Security Policy Division - opening the Conference as co-chairperson

The opening session included keynote speech provided by Mr. Igor Jovičić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, which served as the starting point for the rest of the Conference Programme.

Resettlement as The Permanent Process

The main message delivered by his speech is based on the idea that the resettlement (military personnel transition) process should be considered as a permanent one - not being temporary limited just to requirements created by the force downsizing, but to serve as the incentive system in support of the ongoing defence system transformation.



Keynote Speech - RACVIAC Conference Room, Rakitje

Mr. Igor Jovičić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia

First working day of the Conference continued with the Plenary Session on the NATO - Russia Resettlement Centre experiences. First to open this session was Mr. Emilio Gasparini, project officer of the NATO-Russia Resettlement Centre in Moscow, who made presentation on NATO contribution to this project, speaking primarily about its scope, developments and results. He was followed by Colonel-General (Reserve) Leonid Sergeyeovich Mayorov, Director of NATO-Russia Resettlement Centre in Moscow. General Mayorov spoke about general problem of Social Protection of Discharged Military Personnel and how the NATO-Russia Resettlement Centre has been helping in this matter, especially through creation of small and medium enterprises.



Plenary Session, RACVIAC Conference Room, Rakitje
Colonel-General (Reserve) Leonid Sergeyeovich Mayorov,
Director of NATO-Russia Resettlement Centre, Moscow

His deputy, Lieutenant-General (Reserve) Nikolai Georgevich Antonenko provided his personal insight on another, more specific issue of how the Centre uses new information technologies in achieving its support role, while Ms. Elena Pozdnyakova, Head of the Job Placement Unit, shared the specific results regarding the former military personnel employment support efforts, with the special review of the methods being used for this purpose. Her presentation concluded the first plenary session, which was moderated by Mr. Michael Gaul, Deputy Director of PASP/DSED and co-chairman of the Conference. The Conference continued

with the Plenary Session Two, which was dedicated to lessons learned on some specific issues in the separated military personnel career transition support systems in the countries of SEE region and it was moderated by Col Mihajlo Mladenović, Chief of RACVIAC Defence Conversion Cell. First to present RACVIAC's WG1 member countries was LtC Gjorgji Mitrinovski, head of the Military Personnel Resettlement Section of the Macedonian MoD, who gave a full insight on the recently developed information support system for the Macedonian LEPEZA Programme, while Maj Zvonko Popović, his counterpart in the Croatian MoD, underlined the specificities of the Croatian system primarily regarding the Transition Workshops as the initial support activity of great importance for the final outcome of the individual transition process. Next to address participants was Mr. Gianluca Rocco as the representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Belgrade. Mr. Rocco talked about the experiences and lessons learned from the NATO PfP Trust Fund Project in Serbia. Conference. First working day finished with the joint presentation made by LtC Mirsad Ahmić and Mrs. Regiona Bocault, who shared similar information on international assistance experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. LtC Mirsad Ahmić spoke as the representative of the Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Mrs. Regina Bocault addressed participants as the Head of the IOM Mission to Sarajevo.

Next working day brought the continuation of the Plenary Session Two, which was comprised of the presentations made by WG1 member countries' representatives that are at the same time members of NATO. Mr. Jakob Heradstveit, Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Defence of The kingdom of Norway, who is at the same time senior member of RACVIAC WG1, presented his personal view on conceptual similarities and differences between

various programmes existing in the region. Plenary session was concluded by presentations from two regular member countries of the RACVIAC WG1: the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Bulgaria, as two recent members of European Union and NATO. Colonel Nicolae Anghelescu, Chief of Professional Reconversion, Veterans and Retired Military Personnel Service in the ministry of Defence of the Republic of Romania, briefly introduced participants with the past, present and the future of the corresponding Romanian system in the context of modernization and profesionalization of the armed forces. Mr. Peter Pashov, PhD, state expert of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria and the WG1 chairman in 2008, applied the same approach regarding the latest developments in the Bulgarian system of social adaptation.

Plenary Session Three was dedicated to NATO Resettlement Programmes in Ukraine. Col Tomislav Vibovec, Deputy Director and Chief of Staff of RACVIAC moderated this Plenary Session.



Plenary Session - RACVIAC Conference Room, Rakitie

First to open it was again Mr. Emilio Gasparini, who replaced Mr. Gerard Malet, project officer of the NATO-Ukraine resettlement programmes. Mr. Igor Vitaliyovich Kholosha, Director of the State Department for Adaptation of Military Servicemen provided general information on the Ukrainian system, while Mr. Christopher Staud, NATO-Ukraine Programme Manager presented

more details, just like Mr. Mukhailo Petrovich Voinarenko, Director of Kmelnitsky Retraining and Resettlement Centre who talked about 4 years of experience of the NATO PfP Trust Fund supported Resettlement and Restraining Centre in Khmelnitsky, Ukraine.

Each speech was followed by short, but intensive and fruitful discussion, providing participants with the opportunity to point out the most interesting issues identified during the corresponding session.

Conclusions and Recommendations

NATO-RACVIAC Conference on Resettling Redundant Military Personnel confirmed again the importance of this issue not just because the past challenges created by turbulences in early 90's and omnipresent armed force downsizing, but also for the future of the individual national defence systems developments, primarily due to ongoing processes of their modernization and creation of dominantly all-volunteer forces. We can conclude that the Conference was highly successful in identifying mutual programme similarities and what is more important, some primarily doctrinal differences and the existence of areas that still require some improvements.



Final Plenary - Regional Cooperation Possibilities and Obstacles, RACVIAC Conference Room, Rakitie

It must be again recognized that the final decision made by NATO and RACVIAC to hold this kind of the event for the first

time at this scale, and at one place, enabled a truly unique opportunity for all participants to have direct access to a respectful display of expertise in the field of separated military personnel career transition support, accumulated during the last decade in the countries of SEE, Russian Federation and Ukraine.



Conference Closure - Individual Presentation of RACVIAC Memorabilia

From left to right:

Mr. Igor Vitaliyovich Kholosha, Director of State Department for Adaptation of Military Servicemen of the Republic of Ukraine
Col Tomislav Vibovec (presenting), Deputy Director and Chief of Staff of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation

It is especially important that participants also marked the Conference as a success,

what can be confirmed by highly visible interaction among participants, established personal connections and obvious enthusiasm for continuation of cooperation and exchange of ideas on bilateral level. This is one of the main tasks for RACVIAC and in this case we can confirm its full achievement.

Thus, we can conclude that the immediate conference outcome was clearly displayed through stated readiness for the future cooperation between two subject matter expert communities. NATO PASP/DSED enhanced the created momentum by using this conference to announce the next similar event to be held in Kazakhstan this March, and invited all present conference participants to take part in it.

In this way the initiative has been expanded to Central Asia, and the SEE countries, as the members of RACVIAC DCC WG1 are invited to contribute to this effort. This is a major breakthrough, and RACVIAC is willing to support this initiative in accordance with its capacities.