



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Security Sector Reform Pillar

“Annual Meeting of the Representatives from Defence and Security Committees from SEE Parliaments”

5th – 7th June 2017

Sarajevo, BA

In cooperation with the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and DCAF – Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

Supported by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the NATO Headquarters Sarajevo

Sponsored by the Federal Ministry of National Defence and Sports of the Republic of Austria

Introduction

On 5th-7th June the "Annual Meeting of the Representatives from Defense and Security Committees from SEE Parliaments" was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Conference took place in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The purpose of the Conference was to give a broad introduction on the mechanism and practices of the regional parliamentary defense and security committees, enabling a discussion about parliamentary procedures, challenges and oversight mechanisms in the field of defense and security. The Conference focused on the contemporary security challenges in the SEE region.

The Conference was attended by eighty one participants and speakers as well as RACVIAC staff. They came from the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Republic of Serbia, Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Turkey.



Group photo

International organizations and institutions included NATO HQ Sarajevo, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, COM EUFOR, DCAF Geneva and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Participants also came from the national ministries of defense, parliamentary assemblies, embassies, border police, ministry of the interior and the Service for Foreigners' Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Execution

The Conference was opened on 6th June 2017 with the Welcome addresses by:

- Ambassador Haydar Berk, RACVIAC Director;
- Ms. Borjana Krišto, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Mr. Martin Pammer, Austrian Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Mr. Sifet Podžić, Chairman of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Conference room in the Parliament Building in Sarajevo

Ambassador Haydar Berk welcomed all speakers together with the lecturers and showed his appreciation to the co-organizers of this Conference.

He stressed the importance of the subject discussed and underlined the importance of all relevant bodies working together to cope with the security threats that we are facing today.

Ms. Borjana Krišto in her speech emphasized that such regional conferences are a good opportunity for the exchange of good practices and experiences in the parliamentary oversight of the committees for security and defence.

She also pointed out that the participants will have an opportunity to exchange their experiences about numerous questions,

particularly about how parliamentary committees and the executive branch of power could in cooperation make a bigger impact in challenging the current security threats and pointing out the questions such as the fight against terrorism, radicalization and extremism and the fight against corruption.

She ended her remarks by saying that the region of SEE wasn't facing the kind of terrorist activities that some other parts of Europe are facing and that according to her this could be one of the reasons for a good approach of the regional countries to such issues.

She finished by stressing that countries need stronger cooperation and to invest bigger efforts in the improvement of new strategies and decisions as a response to the current security threats.



Mr. Sifet Podžić, Chairman of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Sifet Podžić, Chairman of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, gave a short overview of the institutions and bodies in the security and defence sector of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He expressed satisfaction on the part of the Committee of Security and Defence of BA and stressed the necessity for a stronger stance and coordination between the police, army, the border forces, etc. in the process of carrying out domestic laws.

He said that the security policies should be upgraded. Like the speakers before him he concluded by stressing stronger cooperation on security matters in the region of SEE.



Ms. Borjana Krišto, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

"Parliamentary Oversight of the Defense and Security Sector, Good Practices" was the topic of the first panel. Mr. Marc Remillard from DCAF – Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) talked about the experiences and good practices in the area of SEE, whereas Ms. Sanja Čatibović from the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina explained how parliaments and parliamentary bodies contribute in the preparation of annual reviews of the Code of Conduct on Politico – Military Aspects of Cooperation.

The topic of the second panel was "The Current Security Challenges in the Region of Southeast Europe". The Minister of Interior of Montenegro, Mr. Mevludin Nuhodžić, talked about the current security challenges in his country and the region of SEE. A presentation by Mr. Dragan Mektić, Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed.

He explained the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and emphasized the risks and opportunities of each threat that Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing.

After the presentations the representatives of each Committee gave a short overview about their countries in terms of challenging the current security instabilities. They all called for greater cooperation in dealing with the security issues in the region.

The second day of the Conference was marked by a third panel on the topic of "Migration - The Security Challenges for the Countries of South-Eastern Europe".

This panel was moderated by Mr. Borislav Bojić, Member of the Joint Committee, BA Parliamentary Assembly, while Mr. Peter Van

der Auweraert, Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Western Balkans, IOM, delivered a Keynote speech. He stressed the importance of critical collaboration between the Balkan countries on the "Balkan Migrant Route".

"By making contributions and cooperating together the political issues could be avoided between the countries in the region", he said. He pointed out that the data on the registration of people and relevant information should be exchanged and that collaboration on a higher level between the ministries should be stronger. He advocated for more people to come to Europe and to become legal citizens of the countries with a right to work.

Mr. Predrag Radojičić from the Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed out that the border infrastructure is not adequate and the need to use IPA funds for the development of modern capacities.



Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC, gave an interview for the local media

Mr. Slobodan Ujić, Director of the Service for Foreigners' Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, talked about the migration routes and how his country was affected by the latest crises. He explained the importance of coordination of all relevant bodies in a time of threat and cooperation with the regional countries sharing similar approaches. He also said that Bosnia and Herzegovina didn't have sufficient capacities to accommodate a huge number of migrants.

The Conference ended with the Closing remarks of H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.



Second panel of the Conference

Conclusions

According to the Conference Closing Session this high-level activity was quite successful and gathered a number of participants, lecturers and speakers.

All participants of the Conference agreed that that this Conference should be organized in the future too in order to achieve stronger cooperation within SEE countries themselves.

On the whole this event was a great achievement on the part of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina also thanks to its coordinators, Ms. Ljiljana Milićević and Mr. Željko Grubešić.

Compiled by RACVIAC SSR Pillar

