Introduction

Pursuant to RACVIAC 2010 Programme, Cooperative and Security Environment with Focus on Arms Control Pillar organized and carried out the Seminar “Chemical Weapons Convention”, CSE-02-C from 16-18 February 2010. The Seminar was organized together with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the seventh time and it was the follow up of the last Seminar on CWC, which was held in RACVIAC in 2009. The seminar was carried out in English.

The purpose of this seminar was to discuss relevant issues related to CWC. Its objectives were:
- to clarify uncertainties in the submissions of Article X obligations of the CWC by the Member States to the OPCW;
- to inform the participants about OPCW’s contribution to global anti-terrorism efforts;
- to emphasize the importance of capacity building in the fight against Chemical Weapons Agents (CWA) and Toxical Industrial Chemicals (TIC), through projects on national and regional levels;
- to analyze updates on preparedness for Investigation of Alleged Use (IAU) and Delivery of Assistance (DA) operations;
- to talk about regional support during IAU and DA in the field; (ASSISTEX 3 exercise in Tunisia);
- to inform about the assistance offered by countries in the region under the Article X of CWC as well as their preparedness, reaction time, and provision of logistic support;
- to execute training with table exercises on Delivery of Assistance operations;

The participants who attended the Seminar came from the following countries: Albania (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Croatia (6), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1), Hungary (2), Moldova (2), Romania (1), and Serbia (1). They were senior and junior military and civilian recommendation makers dealing with CWC issues and being responsible for escorting inspections from the Secretariat of OPCW. The content of this seminar was of particular interest for members of National Authorities dealing with declarations.

The seminar was conducted with the assistance of four (4) lecturers from OPCW: Mr Željko JERKIC, Mr Alexander STUDENIKIN, Mr Marian RUZOVIC and Mr Ervin FARKAS.
It was carried out as a combination of lectures/presentations followed by discussions, and a tabletop exercise at the end. This seminar was designed with the aim to share expertise, opinions, lessons learned, identify problems and find possible solutions, as well as to explore the way ahead. The seminar also provided a valuable environment and atmosphere to encourage focused discussions.

The Execution

The CWC seminar was opened on 16 February 2009, with welcome addresses by RACVIAC Director Ambassador Nikola TODORČEVSKI, and Deputy Director Colonel Željko CEPANEC, followed by the keynote speech delivered by John Freeman, Deputy Director in TS OPCW.

During the 1st day (Tuesday, 16 February) the following topics were presented:

- **The History of Chemical Disarmament and the Steps that Led to the Signature of the CWC, Establishing the OPCW.**
- **The Structure of the Organization and its Activities** by Mr Željko JERKIC (OPCW). This presentation covered the history of chemical disarmament and the steps that led to the signature of the CWC, establishing the OPCW. It also covered the structure of the organization and its activities.
- **Implementation Program Against CBRNe Proliferation and Terrorism** by Ambassador Fuad ŠABETA, Head of the Department for Peace and Security, MFA of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presentation emphasized on the contribution of B&H to the implementation of the CWC.
- **OPCW Contribution to Global Anti-terrorism Efforts** by Mr Željko JERKIC (OPCW). This presentation portrayed OPCW as a member of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and that OPCW has played a significant role in the elaboration, development and implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- **Overview of Provisions of Article X. Implementation Challenges in the Region** by Mr Alexander STUDENIKIN (OPCW). The presentation provided the participants with details about OPCW’s efforts in increasing the transparency of national programmes related to protective uses. The Member States ought to both provide information to the Technical Secretariat on its national programmes annually (Article X, paragraph 4) and also provide assistance through the Organization by electing to take one or more of the three measures: voluntary fund, bilateral agreement or unilateral offers (Article X, paragraph 7).
- **Regional Support for Investigation of Alleged Use (IAU) and Delivery of Assistance (DA) Operations. Assistance Offered by Countries** by Mr Alexander STUDENIKIN (OPCW). The presentation provided information about the IAU and DA operations that OPCW executes throughout the world. It also referred to the various kinds of assistance that the Member States offered to the abovementioned operations.
- **Technical Secretariat Preparedness for Response in Case of a Request for Assistance** by Mr Ervin FARKAS
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(OPCW). The speaker analyzed the methodology of the relation between OPCW and donor states, in order to help the Member States to either establish or increase their capacity to protect themselves from CW attacks.

**Attending the seminar**

During the 2nd day (Wednesday, 18 February) the following topics were presented:

- **Overview of Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxic Chemicals** by Mr Marian RUZOVIC. The presentation provided details about the use and the influence of the different kind of chemical weapons and toxic chemical means.

- **Analysis of Scenarios for IAU and DA Operations. OPCW Readiness for Delivery of Assistance. OPCW Exercises for Delivery of Assistance. (DA)-Assistex 3 Tunisia** by Mr Ervin FARKAS (OPCW). The lecturer pointed out the OPCW’s leading role among international actors for investigation of Alleged Use of CWs. This role may vary considerably, dependent on other major actors involved, the scenarios encountered and the region where assistance needs arise. The OPCW improves its reaction capability with annual exercises. The 2010 exercise Assistex 3 includes the threat and use of chemical weapons against a country (Tunisia).

- **Databank for Assistance and Protection** by Mr Alexander STUDENIKIN (OPCW). The presentation provided information on various databases available to National Authorities, in order to facilitate their work on identifying declarable activities and submitting declarations.

The end of the 2nd day was allocated to the National Representatives, in order to allow them to present their national point of view on practical issues regarding controlling and declaring chemicals.

The 3rd day included the execution of the aforementioned tabletop exercise Assistex 3 Tunisia. The aim of the exercise was to provide National Representatives with practical insight into the techniques of anticipation of a chemical weapons attack in their country. It also provided practice for relevant government representatives who might be involved in a request for assistance under Article X of CWC.

The final part of seminar was devoted to the evaluation of the seminar and the Closing Ceremony.

**Conclusion**

The cooperation between RACVIAC and OPCW ensured the presence of the high-level instructors. Their professionalism and experience were highly appreciated by the participants. The presentations provided the participants with useful information. The practical part proved to be particularly useful, not only for the participants, but also for the lecturers. Since this kind of training was conducted the first time outside OPCW-Netherlands, the lecturers gained feedback by running this exercise in “real” circumstances.

According to the participants’ assessments provided at the end of the event, the seminar was successful, very interesting and well organized. Most of the participants were members of the national authorities that are dealing with the chemical weapons in their countries and they considered it valuable for their continuing work.
The participants were interested and highly motivated during the Seminar. They expressed various opinions regarding the topics of the possible future activities, which may prove to be a valuable source of needs assessment. In particular, they supported the need to prolong the practical phase of the seminar and to shorten the theoretical part, which has already been covered during the past seminars. The following topics were considered as interesting for future seminars:

- Advanced training on Electronic Declaration tool for National Authorities (EDNA) and the request of assistance by the OPCW in a case of a CW attack. The participants asked for more exercises of this kind to be included in the next year activities, because they would provide them with the significant information, experience and “food for thought”.

- Discussion on control/proliferation of chemical substances’ trade with the participation of the appropriate personnel apart from the State Parties’ representatives, (i.e. customs personnel).

- Updated information about terrorism topics related to CBR substances and security measures.


Co-organizers will certainly take these recommendations into consideration when they start preparation for next year’s activity.

RACVIAC will continue promoting this Convention in all appropriate international and regional fora, as well as in its bilateral communications. It is the only multilateral treaty to ban an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), provide for international verification of their destruction and conversion of their production facilities to peaceful purposes, and actively involve the world chemical industry in treaty negotiations and ongoing verification.

In the end, CWC promotes the international cooperation and coordination in the peaceful uses of chemicals and in protection against chemical weapon attack or threat. It must also continually adapt to an evolving situation in which CW are part of the wider area of possible use of hazardous materials by criminal organizations or terrorists. The CWC is a universal, non-discriminatory, verifiable and enforceable model for multilateral undertakings to build global consensus on security through arms control, create confidence and deter treaty violations.

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* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name