From 12 to 23 April 2010 RACVIAC - CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION successfully conducted its traditional and highly regarded English Arms Control Terminology Course.

19 participants, 5 faculty and 3 staff

Course participants

There is always a reason to bring people together and if it is a good one, our job becomes even easier. The EACTC is one of RACVIAC’s most desirable event and extremely well excepted among regional countries. Taking in consideration the number of countries in SEE and their readiness to accede to different kinds of treaties or agreements stress out the importance of a common understanding of those documents. The course therefore promotes a common understanding of the Arms Control Treaties by civilians and military personnel who deal with Arms Control in the Southeast European region. The course also provides an excellent opportunity for establishing good relationships, sharing experience, expertise and lessons learned. In that regard, three social events held during the course assisted all participants in creating and maintaining a very valuable network for their future duties.

Networking = Establishing and Maintaining Contacts

In two weeks of the course 19 students from 7 Southeast European countries improved their
command of English using Arms Control Terminology as a tool. The students represented not only arms control agencies but also ministries, general staff, military academies as well as other organizations and institutions involved in this field.

The Faculty consisted of the following instructors: three English teachers - Ms Natalija TISANIĆ (from Croatia), Ms Katarina TERZIĆ and Ms Mirjana KORICA (from Serbia), two Arms Control Instructors – SSgt Sara Plant from JACIG (UK) and 1st Lt Elvir Spahić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and three RACVIAC staff – LtCol Stefan Miene, LtCol Zoltan Volgyi and Cpt Jože Čebular.

Based on the results of the written examination and the oral performance during the introductory session all the participants of the course were appointed to three different ability groups.

**Working methodology**

These three ability groups were established for the morning sessions, which were divided into two parts. The first part consisted of grammar related tasks, while the second part was focused on reading and conversation on topics closely related to Arms Control.

**English grammar and military topics**

The purpose of the first part was to refresh the knowledge of grammar, which included Present Simple, Present Continuous, Future, Past Simple and Past Continuous, Present Perfect and Past Perfect, Conditionals and Passive Voice, Reported Speech, Modal Verbs and Articles and Prepositions. The second part focused on military life, learning through reading a specific topic followed by an open discussion, focusing on the most common words used in daily military life.

**Arms Control Treaties**

For the afternoon sessions the participants were divided into two groups, according to their professional experience in Arms Control. The afternoon sessions concentrated more on understanding of actual Arms Control Treaties e.g. VD 99, Dayton Article IV, CFE etc. The instructors first explained the main objectives of a chosen topic, followed by reading and conversation in the spirit of achieving a common understanding. Overall, the course focused mainly on communication skills, but it also comprised reading, listening and some writing.

As the finale of the afternoon sessions on Arms Control topics, the participants conducted a practical inspection, through which they were able to put into practice the theoretical knowledge gathered during the two weeks. This gave the participants a clear picture of an inspection through learning how to execute it step-by-step. It also provided participants with an excellent opportunity to see how they could use the acquired terminology and theoretical knowledge in “real life” situations.

**Executing an inspection**

SSgt Sara Plant and 1st Lt Elvir Spahić put considerable effort in organizing the practical part of the course. Unfortunately SSgt Sara Plant left the course three days earlier, because of the eruption of the volcano in Iceland. Nevertheless, 1st Lt Elvir Spahić comprehensively executed the practical part
and the participants expressed great appreciation for this endeavor.

**Checking the objects of verification**

During the weekend we prepared a short social program for the participants. On Saturday we visited downtown of Zagreb and had a dinner in a nearby restaurant where the participants enjoyed in a more informal relaxed atmosphere.

**Participants’ & faculties suggestions**

Since the knowledge of English language is essential for common understanding and cooperation between SEE countries and the international community, the participants sincerely believe that these kind of courses need to be organized in the future. Furthermore, they are convinced that they should not be organized only on Arms Control issues, but on other topics as well.

**Summary**

The participants showed strong willingness to improve their English language skills and also high interest in increasing arms control discussion capabilities. An increase in individual progress was noted and one could say that this English Arms Control Terminology Course significantly contributed to achieving a standardized approach to the Agreements.

Since the knowledge of the English language is essential for common understanding and cooperation among the countries, participants from the SEE countries expressed their strong interest in continuation of such courses in the future.

The important feature of the Language Training Course is the opportunity to host the participants and lecturers from all the countries interested and observe a unique cooperative and friendly spirit among them. The period of two weeks was long enough to establish good friendly relationships, hence setting up the foundations for strong professional networking in the future with the aim of enhancing CSBMs in the SEE region.

Compiled by: Captain MSc Joze Cebular, SME, RACVIAC - Centre For Security Cooperation.