I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with RACVIAC 2010 Programme, the Cooperative Security Environment Pillar (CSE) organized the CSE-07-S seminar from 26-29 October 2010. The purpose of this seminar was to present the implementation of the Ottawa Convention in accordance with the article 6 of the Treaty - International Cooperation and Assistance - and to initiate a vigorous discussion on how to further develop the two key aspects of this Convention – its primary humanitarian aspect, and the obligation of international cooperation and assistance for the countries of SEE.

The CSE-07-S seminar was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) for the 4th time, and it involved members of National Mine Action Centers in SEE, representatives of diplomatic missions and countries engaged in humanitarian demining issues, civilian and military personnel as well as members of international organizations dealing with the Ottawa Convention. Apart from one lecturer who addressed the participants in Croatian, the Seminar was carried out in English language, and it consisted of lectures/presentations and a visit to DOK-ING, a Zagreb-based company specialized in the domain of demining machines and technology.

II. PROGRAM/METHODOLOGY

a. Course Objectives

- To inform the participants about Article 6 of the Ottawa Convention, the first explicitly humanitarian security convention in the world;
- To further examine and highlight the humanitarian aspect of the
Convention and the obligation of international cooperation and assistance;

- To examine the present situation, deepen contacts between representatives of various national and international organizations and provide a forum for discussion on future humanitarian prospects;
- To overview the specified elements of the Ottawa Convention, highlighting the most comprehensive and commonly followed rules and procedures of its execution;
- To examine the present situation and inform the participants about the current implementation of the Ottawa Convention in SEE;
- To set an example of security cooperation on national, regional and international level.

b. Participation
Thirty-three participants attended the seminar, namely members of foreign embassies in the Republic of Croatia (3 altogether, one from Australia, Romania, and the USA respectively), representatives of Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Croatia (1), Croatian MFAEI (2), Croatia (4), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (2), Italy (1), Serbian Mine Action Centre (1), Albania Mine Action Executive (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (2), International Trust Fund - Slovenia (3), CROMAC (3), Croatian Red Cross (1), Norwegian People’s Aid – NPA (1), UNDP (2), Mineaid (1), M.A.R.E - Model of Active Rehabilitation and Education (1), International Campaign to Ban Landmines - ICDL (1), Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (1) and Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (1).

Course Participants

The lecturers were representatives of CROMAC, Croatian MFAEI, three Mine Action Centres in SEE, and of all other above-mentioned international organizations. We also note the lecture by Ms Mina ZUNAC, a Cluster Munitions survivor, and a lecture by Mr Bernardo PAHOR, a Karlovac County consultant.

Welcome address

c. Overview of the Course

The three-day Seminar gave the participants an opportunity to meet their
colleagues from the SEE region and representatives/experts from diplomatic missions, Mine Action centres, organizations and agencies dealing with the Ottawa Convention and Humanitarian Demining issues.

During the 1st day of the seminar, ten (10) lectures were held on the following issues concerning the Ottawa Convention, Article 6: political and humanitarian aspects, understanding the importance/utility of the convention, rehabilitation and reintegration of mine victims and mine survivors, peer support and field work, survivors’ experiences, donors’ experiences and international cooperation and assistance.

Visit to DOK-ING Company

During the 2nd day, the participants visited DOK-ING, a Zagreb-based company which produces humanitarian demining machines and technology. The visit included the following activities:

- Presentation of the humanitarian demining machines produced by the company;
- Visit to the company facilities;
- Presentation and practical exercise of the distance manipulation of a demining machine by means of a remote control unit.

Two presentations by CROMAC, first related to international cooperation and assistance, and second related to the experience with international symposium on humanitarian demining and international assistance projects, concluded the day.

The 3rd day comprised the following lectures:

- Donors’ experiences, delivered by the EU Delegation to Croatia and Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Office to Croatia.
- International cooperation - practical experience on the county level (Karlovac County).
- Presentations by three Mine Action Centres in SEE (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia respectively).
- Evaluation - final conclusions of the seminar.

III. SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS

- The cooperation between RACVIAC, Croatian MFAEI and
CROMAC ensured the presence of high-level lecturers and experts.

- According to participants’ assessments given at the end of the event, the seminar proved to be extremely successful.
- Majority of participants, coming from national and international organizations or representing countries dealing with the Ottawa Convention, had an extensive knowledge about the Ottawa Convention and expressed their support for the further examination of Article 6 of the Ottawa Convention in relation to the Oslo Convention (Cluster Munitions).
- The invited lecturers efficiently covered all the topics and gave a concrete perspective on the humanitarian demining issues, as well as on the international cooperation in mine action and mine victims assistance that has been developed in SEE by various organizations in the frame of the Ottawa Convention.
- Generally, the participants were satisfied with the topics chosen. They suggested organizing similar seminars in the future and proposed some other possible topics, given their importance for the countries of the region.

* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.