Date: 30 November - 02 December 2010

Venue: RACVIAC, Rakitje, Stari hrast 53, 10437 Bestovje, Croatia

Background: 2003 was a decisive year for relations between the EU and the countries of Southeastern Europe (SEE). In June of that year, Brussels started laying the groundwork for SEE countries to accede to the European Union with the drafting of the Thessaloniki Agenda. Six months later, the EU presented its first-ever European Security Strategy (ESS), which identified major threats to European stability, stressed the importance of Brussels' ability, with the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), to exert soft power (the use of non-coercive diplomatic techniques to resolve conflicts, e.g., dispatching peace-keepers, aid, etc.), and harness Europe's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The CSDP strengthens the EU's civilian and military capacity to act in conflict prevention and crisis management. As it stands now, South-eastern Europe lays claim to six countries seeking eventual, full-fledged membership in the European Union. Three are official candidates (of which one may very well become the EU's next member within the next year, and the other two are making very encouraging progress), while the other three potential countries are seeking candidate status. However, there are still challenges that lie ahead for these countries' path toward the EU. In spite of these hurdles, SEE’s EU hopefuls have the capacity to rise to the challenge of implementing reforms that would further future accession negotiations.

The aim of this seminar is to contribute to regional security cooperation in South-eastern Europe as an important tool to promote its European integration efforts. The seminar will offer a common emplacement of the implementation of the European Security Strategy and its evolving form under CFSP and CSDP in SEE. This seminar supports the capacity-building process among the countries of Southeastern Europe, that are either official or potential candidates for full EU membership. This event will help SEE countries to better understand the capacity-building process that includes accepting EU standards and values as well as preparing themselves for future accession to the EU.

Purpose & Objectives: The purpose of the Seminar is to support the capacity building process in the South-Eastern Europe's countries, that are either candidates or potential candidates for acquiring the full EU membership. The event will help the SEE countries to better understand the capacity building process that includes accepting the EU standards and values and preparing themselves for the future accession to the EU. Objectives are:

- present and discuss the achievements of the SEE countries on their way to EU integration
- analyze the level of alignment in foreign and security policy terms between the EU and the SEE
- learn from the candidate and potential member experiences in this field
- work towards reaching the possible synergies between civilian and military tools
- discuss the development of the regional infrastructure in SEE in key sectors such as energy, environment, human development, and social protection;
- analyze the main challenges on the path to the EU foster the EU integration of the SEE countries by enabling exchanges of opinions and lessons learned.

Participants: Approximately 35 participants, audience and speakers, three per each of the following countries: AL, BA, HR, ME, MK, RS and one participant from MD, both civilian and military officials at decision-making level and experts representing relevant ministries dealing with disaster management. Representatives of other MAG countries and relevant International Organizations, NGOs and media will also be invited.

Methodology: The seminar will last two working days and official working language will be English. The seminar will be conducted as a combination of individual presentations, main topic lectures and open discussions. All materials presented or produced during the Seminar, will be distributed in electronic form on a CD.

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