Abstract  This annual WG2 event was co-organized by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia as the 12th workshop on military base conversion in SEE. During two working days, 23 participants from 7 countries, including representatives of the NATO HQ Sarajevo, the Government of the Federation of BiH and a Member of Municipal Council, President of the Commission for Allocation of Business Premises, Municipality Old Town, Sarajevo, were given a chance to both understand the project of the dual-use conversion of the military base Cerklje, and to gain some insight into the broader scientific elaboration of the concept of military base conversion system from economic, social and historical points of view.

Activity Background

With kind support by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia in the co-organisation of this Workshop, RACVIAC was able to continue supporting the regional ownership approaches to the military base conversion in SEE. The general purpose of Working Group 2 (WG2) activities is to enable the information sharing with regard to countries’ military base conversion experiences. The initial objective of this
12\textsuperscript{th} WG2 Workshop in Cerklje, SL, was to get familiarised with Slovenian experience in converting Cerklje military base from a pure military to a dual-use facility. Besides the Slovenian experience, the Workshop saw five national presentations on the current status of military base conversion activities in the respective countries. In addition, during the Workshop it was announced that the project on Defence Conversion Modalities in SEE, as already approved by MAG earlier this year, would be launched at the beginning of 2011.

**Activity Facilitators**

The Workshop was planned, organised and executed jointly by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, who shared corresponding organizational and financial responsibilities. The Slovenian MoD fully provided organizational on-site support at Cerklje air-base, while RACVIAC took full care of the participants’ transportation and accommodation. The Workshop agenda was jointly defined by the Slovenian MoD and RACVIAC.

**Activity Venue, Duration and Participation**

Presentation on the Cerklje Air-base project

The Workshop was held from 06 to 08 December 2010 in the Slovenian air-base Cerklje. It was organized as a three-day event, two of which were working days. During the working day sessions, held at the pilots’ preparation conference room, the participants had an opportunity to see presentations and engage in discussions regarding the Slovenian experience in completing the conversion project of the air-base Cerklje. They were also familiarised with the launching of the regional project on military base conversion in SEE set for early 2011, and they presented current national status of MBC in their respective countries. The welcome gathering and dinner were organised at RACVIAC and hosted by Col Zeljko Cepanec, Deputy Director of RACVIAC, while the field trip to Kostanjevica na Krki galleries and the dinner at the Kmecki hram were organised by the Slovenian MoD and hosted by Mr Branko Kromar, Head of Multilateral Section at the International Relations Department, Slovenian MoD. The workshop saw the total of 31 participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\textsuperscript{1}, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Serbia, including the representatives of the NATO HQ Sarajevo, the Government of the Federation of BiH, the President of the Commission for Allocation of Business Premises, Municipality Old Town, Sarajevo, as well as Slovenian lecturers/presenters and RACVIAC’s staff.

\textsuperscript{1} Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name
Welcome Dinner hosted by RACVIAC’s Deputy Director

**Activity Description and Contents**

The Workshop was comprised of individual presentations regarding the conversion of Cerklje air-base and the national experience in conversion matters given by the Slovenian part, and of countries’ presentations on current activities in MBC process, given by the national representatives of the participating countries.

The first day of the Workshop included the participants’ arrivals, administrative processing, final coordination of activities in the air-base Cerklje, and the initial welcome gathering and dinner hosted by Col Zeljko Cepanec, RACVIAC’s Deputy Director.

The first working day started with the opening session chaired by WG2 2010 Chairperson, Mr Josip Mandic, Croatian MoD, who was given the floor following Mr Branko Kromar’s opening remarks.

H.E. Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, Director of RACVIAC, Mr Igor Nered, Director General, Logistics Directorate, MoD, Republic of Slovenia, and Mr Ivan Molnar, Mayor, Municipality of Brezice, also addressed the participants at the opening of the workshop.

First presentations on the air-base Cerklje were given by Lt Col Jani Topolovec, Air Defence Brigade Cmdr, Lt Col Josip Bostic, Air-base Cerklje Cmdr and Capt Smiljan Babic, Air-base HQ.

The floor was subsequently taken by Mr Velimir Preblic, Ph.D., Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana University, who presented the concept of military conversion as an opportunity for strengthening civil-military co-operation.

Mr Joze Lacko, Investment Manager of Military Aerodrome Cerklje, provided a case study on the dual use of the military air-base Cerklje from the perspective of EUROCONTROL and NATO eligibility.

Ms Irena Dokic, M.Sc., Research Assistant, The Institute of Economy, Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, offered a thorough insight into the national experience in military base conversion subject matter.

The last session of the working part was reserved for the visit to the air control tower.

The second working day commenced with presentations on the MAG approved research project on Defence Conversion Modalities in SEE, given by Lt Col Neven Bajic, SSR Pillar SME, RACVIAC, and Lt Col Sergiu Railean, SSR Pillar SME, RACVIAC.

This project deals with two areas, Project Area 1 – Transition of Military Personnel and Project Area 2 – Military Base Conversion.

Following the presentations which covered recent developments in defence conversion in the participating countries, the floor was taken by Mr Erik Kopac, Ph.D, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, who provided a general overview of the MBC process.

In their closing remarks, all participating countries expressed support to the project of Defence Conversion Modalities in SEE, as was best captured by Mrs Lejla Mulic, NATO HQ Sarajevo, who said that the mentioned RACVIAC’s project could, and hopefully would get MBC processes in the region off the ground.

The display of helicopters concluded the 12th WG2 Workshop on MBC.
Workshop in session

Conclusions and Recommendations

WG2 on MBC reconfirmed the vitality of the military facilities conversion programme area because across the SEE region there is still a number of military sites which should/could be converted. Unfortunately, given the complexity and the cost of such projects, the progress is relatively slow. Nevertheless, countries’ presentations revealed the continuation of specific projects in different countries, both new projects (the conversion of a military into a public site to house 20,000 citizens, Belgrade, Serbia) or the ongoing ones (the University campus in Rijeka, Croatia).

Considering the successful, long-term Slovenian project of the conversion of Cerklije air-base, it can be stated that the main objectives of the workshop were fully achieved.

The presented RACVIAC’s research project on transition of military personnel and the conversion of military facilities, and its execution, were once again supported as a joint, regionally owned product. It is here to be pointed out that RACVIAC is sincerely pleased with the expressed Slovenian willingness to join this project, which could be finalised with the nomination of Slovenian experts to the project working group.

WG2 Workshop on MBC held in Cerklije air-base came out with the following highlights:

- to continue the co-operation with Slovenian partners in the field of MBC through the approved research project “Defence Conversion Modalities in SEE”;
- to strengthen efforts in all countries and at all levels in order to facilitate the achieving of conversion goals;
- to provide expert’s conclusions and guidelines with concrete proposals for further action;
- to give more attention to countries’ presentations in the future.

In conclusion, we may say that WG2 on MBC can continue its activity through information sharing and common projects facilitated and funded through RACVIAC and/or its partners, in accordance with RACVIAC’s 2011-2014 programme strategy.

LtCol Neven Bajic
SSR Pillar, SME