OTTAWA CONVENTION SEMINAR

23-26 October 2012, Croatia

Introduction

In accordance with the RACVIAC 2012 Programme, the Cooperative Security Environment Pillar (CSE) organized and carried out the Ottawa Convention Seminar, CSE-06-S in the period of 23 – 26 October 2012.

Group photo

The Symposium was carried out on the territory of the Republic of Croatia in two parts. The theoretical part was held at the RACVIAC facilities. The practical part of the course was hosted by Croatia in Sisak-Moslavina County, near the town of Petrinja and at the CROMAC headquarters in Sisak.

The purpose of the seminar was to provide assistance with the implementation of the Ottawa Convention on the regional level in accordance with Article 6 of the Treaty - International Cooperation and Assistance, particularly with regard to the mine victim assistance, as well to highlight scientific and technological information concerning the implementation of the Convention. The seminar objectives were:

- To highlight the specified elements of the Ottawa Convention, underlining specific rules and procedures followed in its execution;
- To allow the countries from the region to share their experiences in mine victim assistance, care, rehabilitation, social and economic reintegration;
- To present a podium for the mine affected persons;
- To set an example of the effectiveness of national efforts with regard to the mine clearance and the acquisition of financial, technological and human resources required for the implementation of the programme;
- To outline the important role of the national mine action centres;
- To deepen contacts between representatives of various national and international organizations dealing with the implementation of the Ottawa Convention;
- To provide the forum for discussion on open issues and future prospects.

Thirty participants from twelve countries and international organisations participated in the Seminar, namely from Albania (3), Kingdom of Belgium (2) Bosnia and Herzegovina (3), Croatia (10), Germany (1), the former Yugoslav Republic of

On the second day a field visit and practical demonstration at a demining worksite was combined with theoretical presentations.

Overview of the Seminar

The Seminar was attended by personnel from the Ministries of Defence, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Verification Agencies, International Organisations and National Mine Action Centres.

The main issues covered during the seminar were:

- The significance of humanitarian and security conventions;
- Understanding the importance of the Ottawa Convention;
- International cooperation and assistance, including the donor experience;
- Needs of survivors;
- Psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration;
- Survivor experience and peer support;
- The importance of reporting in the Ottawa Convention - transition from an obligation to an opportunity and a tool;
- Challenges of national implementation of victim assistance programmes;
- Cooperation between GO and NGO sectors in the development of an effective victim assistance system;
- Mine clearance process.

On the first day, during the theoretical part of the seminar, the speakers delivered several presentations on the topics related to the Ottawa Convention.

Conclusion

The seminar met all of its planned objectives.

All lecturers acted as highly profiled experts. They shared with the auditorium their competent experiences and practical skills.

Both the theoretical and practical part of the seminar were professionally organised due to the close cooperation between RACVIAC, Croatian Office for Mine Action and Croatian Mine Action Centre.

All participants were actively involved in the discussions.

According to the participants’ assessments, the Course proved to be successful and efficiently organized.

Compiled by: Major Sulo MUSTAFARAJ, Course Coordinator,
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at
www.racviac.org

(*) Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name