Introduction

In accordance with the RACVIAC 2013 programme, the Cooperative Security Environment Pillar (CSE) organized and carried out the “Vienna Document 2011 Formation/Unit Commanders’ Course” in the period of 03 – 08 March 2013.

The Course was carried out on the territory of Hungary in two parts. The theoretical part was held at the facilities of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence in Budapest, while the practical part took place at the 86th Helicopter Base in Szolnok. The working language of the Course was English.

The purpose of this Course was to provide Formation/Unit Commanders with an overview of the VD ’11, give a comprehensive theoretical analysis, and provide guidance for the practical implementation of activities. It was organized in the spirit and the letter of the VD ’11, focusing on the duties and responsibilities of Formation/Unit Commanders engaged in the implementation of the aforementioned document. The Course objectives were:

- To give an overview of the specified elements of the VD ’11, highlighting the most comprehensive and commonly followed rules and procedures of its implementation;
- To inform the participants about the changes introduced to the Vienna Document in 2011 and the implementation of inspections and evaluation visits according to the VD ’11;
- To train Formation/Unit Commanders in the subjects related to the planning and conducting of such activities based on the best practices;
- To deepen contacts between the representatives of national armed forces engaged in the accomplishment of arms control and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures;
- To provide participants with an opportunity to exercise an evaluation visit to a military unit, especially during the practical part of the Course, thus demonstrating to the representatives of the SEE region the operations that should constitute a platform for future cooperation on the national, regional and international levels.
Participation

Twenty-two participants from ten countries participated in the Course, namely from Albania (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Croatia (2), Hungary (8), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*) (2), Montenegro (2), Poland (1), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1), Spain (1).

In the classroom

Lecturers represented national arms control agencies and verification centres of Austria (1), Germany (1), Hungary (1), Serbia (1), the Mission of Hungary to the OSCE (1) the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (1), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1) and the Hungarian Ministry of Defence (1).

In the margins of the Course, the Director of RACVIAC, Ambassador Branimir Mandic met with Mr Peter Siklosi, Deputy State Secretary for Defence Policy and Planning and had a working lunch with Dr Laszlo Deak, Deputy Director General, Department for Security Policy and Non-Proliferation, Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Tas Kelemen, Head of Defence Policy Department, Ministry of Defence.

Ambassador Mandic assured the Hungarian officials of his personal readiness to strengthen the Centre’s role and capacities in addressing new security challenges and responding to the changing security needs of the region while broadening the scope of activities and links with other international and regional organizations. Ambassador Mandic took this opportunity to invite the MoD officials to visit RACVIAC.

The hosts expressed their intention to continue supporting RACVIAC with personnel, lecturers and contribution in kind.

Overview of the Course

This Course, organised for the fourth time in Hungary, was designed for military personnel of Southeast European region. The four-day Course provided the participants with the opportunity to meet their colleagues from the SEE region, as well as to meet representatives/experts from OSCE countries, organizations and agencies, all dealing with the execution of the VD ’11 and/or other arms control regimes.

During the theoretical part, the lecturers delivered presentations on the following topics:

- Introduction to RACVIAC;
- Hungarian Foreign and Security Policy;
- The New National Military Strategy – Challenges and Priorities of the Hungarian Defence Policy;
- From Arms Control to Force Control - The Future Scope of Cooperative Military Policy;
- OSCE and the Hungarian Mission to OSCE;
- Background of CSBM’s in Europe and their Contribution to the International Stability and Peace;
- VD ’11 Contents, Main Parts of the Document, Basic Definitions;
- Information Exchange Provisions and Notification Formats;
- Inspection and Evaluation Visit;
- National Experience on the Implementation of the VD ’11: Inspection and Evaluation Visit;
- Prior Notification & Observation of Certain Military Activities;

(*) Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name
• Annual Calendars, Constraining Provisions, Regional Measures.

During the practical part of the Course, the participants carried out a training evaluation visit at the 86th Helicopter Base in Szolnok. The programme of the training evaluation visit included:

• Base Commander’s Presentation;
• Tour of the Base facilities;
• Static display of major weapon and equipment systems.

Conclusion

Majority of the participants had an intimate knowledge of the VD ’11 and/or other arms control regimes and CSBMs, but there were newcomers amongst them as well. All of them were satisfied with the topics chosen and were impressed by the high level of knowledge of the lecturers.

Both, the theoretical and practical part of the Course were well-organized thanks to the professionalism and preparedness of the Hungarian hosts, as well as the close cooperation between RACVIAC and the Hungarian national authorities.

This Course provided participants with the opportunity to gain both theoretical and practical knowledge of the Vienna Document 2011, to exercise an evaluation visit, thus adding a special value to the Course.

According to the participants’ assessments, the Course proved to be successful and well organized. They regard it as valuable for their future work and they all agreed on the necessity of conducting such courses in the future, with the aim to contribute to the CSBMs in the region.

By financing and hosting this Course, one of the major activities in RACVIAC programme, the Federal Republic of Germany and Hungary, RACVIAC Associate members, demonstrated their commitment and continuous support to our Centre and the security of the SEE region.

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At the 86th Helicopter Base