Organised in cooperation with the OSCE Border Security and Management Unit, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department.

Introduction

This training course was a continuation of the border security and management event series jointly organized by RACVIAC and its partners, focusing on strengthening the capacity-building and EU integration processes in South-Eastern Europe. In addition to many years of fruitful cooperation with DCAF, resulting in a series of educational and training events promoting a regional approach and cooperation, the OSCE Border Security and Management Unit expressed its readiness to cooperate with RACVIAC on this extremely important element of national, regional and global security too. Thus, a joint framework was established, resulting in a training course aimed at addressing the challenges of border security and management, identifying current and future challenges and supporting the implementation of the Border Security and Management Concept of the OSCE Participating states in South-Eastern Europe.
The main objective of this 5-day (32 hour) training course was to ensure that participants get acquainted with topics such as Border Security and Management Concept, Border Authorities and Jurisdiction, Narcotics Trafficking, Narcotics Field Testing, Familiarization with Radioactive Materials and Their Detection, Examination of Passenger Vehicles, Buses, Commercial Trucks, Cargoes, People and Luggage, Risk Analysis for the Individual Officer and Integrity and Ethics: Living By A Code of Conduct.

22 participants attended the training course

The participants represented both the military and the civil sector and were mainly field experts from the Customs, Drug Control and Border Guard / Border Police or similar national services. In total, there were 22 representatives from the Republic of Albania (3), Republic of Austria (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Republic of Croatia (1), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (3), Montenegro (1), Romania (3), Republic of Serbia (3), Republic of Turkey (3) and Kosovo* (2).

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence. (In accordance with Arrangements regarding regional representation and cooperation.)

Activity Overview

The training course began on 9th February 2015 with the Deputy Director of RACVIAC, Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop’s welcome address, which was followed by the opening remarks that were given by Mr Branko Kromar, Security Sector Reform Pillar Programme Manager and Mr Jonathan Trumble, OSCE Transnational Threats Department Customs Advisor, who was also the course presenter.

Opening remarks

After the opening remarks, Mr Jonathan Trumble described the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, which served as a reference point for the weeks’ work ahead. After the morning session it was time for the first group exercise during which the participants were able to implement their knowledge about the current smuggling routes for narcotics and other illegal goods from Central Asia to Europe. The exercise turned out to be a good starting point for the discussion that followed and the lecture which addressed the problem of narcotics.

The next important topic that was addressed was linked to cars, passenger buses and commercial trucks. By describing the steps for a systematic vehicle examination and ways to recognize the concealment methods used in vehicles...
the first physical exercise took place. During the exercise the participants were divided into two groups, first one of which was in charge of hiding the illegal items, while the second one was responsible for car examination. During the exercise, the teams had to implement the knowledge they had obtained during the first two days of the course.

After both teams completed their tasks it was time for a debriefing, during which they evaluated their own work and listened to Mr Trumble’s comments which were of high importance for the upcoming activities.

The car examination exercise was followed by national presentations, where participants, experts in the field, were given a chance to present their work and some important achievements. The first one was Mr Goran Angelov from the Ministry of Interior from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia1, who gave a detailed report on his work in the field of narcotics. Shortly afterwards, Mr Pavković described the scope of his work as a customs officer in the Customs Administration of the Republic of Serbia and gave an interesting presentation about seizures in the Republic of Serbia.

One of the most important items on the agenda – Chemical, Biological and Radiological threats, discussed on day three, proved to be a very interesting topic, raising a number of questions among the participants. In conjunction with this an active discussion also developed when Mr Trumble opened the topic of officer security, which is very important for field experts attending the training course. Later on, all of this was again mentioned when real stories from across the globe were presented, from bioterrorism to radioactive material smuggling. The participants’ motivation and knowledge was later put to test, when the second physical search exercise was conducted. Again, the participants were divided into two groups, one hiding the illegal items and the second trying to find them. This time, the challenge was a bit more demanding, since illegal items were hidden in a passenger bus and a special approach was needed. The participants were encouraged to use the experience obtained through the car search exercise and team leaders had to organize the work of their team.

1Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name
Apart from all vehicle search methods, persons crossing the border were also taken into consideration. Therefore, the participants were acquainted with the methods of person examination, passenger selectivity, body carrier indicators, concealments, swallowers, etc.

The last physical exercise was again a chapter of its own. Similarly to the first two vehicle search exercises, participants were divided into two groups, one hiding the illegal items and the second one trying to search for them. This time around there was a cargo truck waiting for them in front of the main RACVIAC building. In accordance with the lessons learned, the team leaders showed a high level of knowledge which confirmed that both of the teams were highly motivated. This was also confirmed by Mr. Trumble, who was impressed by the energy and effort shown by the participants throughout the course.

After the cargo truck search, two more presentations that were carried out by the participants followed. The first one was given by Mr. Dragobratović from the Ministry of Interior, Republic of Croatia. As an expert, he briefly described how to track and recognize a potentially stolen car. His presentation was well supported by photo material of real cases, which he deals with on a daily basis. The second presentation was given by Mr. Ürkmez from the Turkish Ministry of Customs and Trade. He described the work of the ministry units and other units dealing with border security issues.

Since there was a strong desire among the participants to visit the city Zagreb, RACVIAC also organized a short bus trip to the city centre, just one day before their departure.

The last conducted exercise, entitled "What were you thinking" – An officer's Personal Risk Checklist, instructed participants on how to make a checklist that they believe every officer should mentally consider each time they process a movement of persons, cargo or vehicles into or out of the country.

Conclusion

Thanks to the cooperation between RACVIAC and the OSCE Transnational Threat Department, a great number of field experts took part in this training course. Their professionalism and experience as well as their presentations were highly appreciated by all participants.

According to the End Questionnaire results, the training course was successful, interesting and well organized. During the training course the participants were highly motivated and showed a deep interest in the subject matter.
As such, the event proved to be a good example of strong cooperation between RACVIAC and the OSCE Transnational Threats Department.

RACVIAC, Center for Security Cooperation in SEE, with the OSCE Border Security and Management Unit, as an excellent partner, will continue to promote supporting the implementation of the Border Security and Management Concept, issues related to border security, in the OSCE Participating states in South-Eastern Europe in the future, too.

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