14th MAG Meeting in RACVIAC

Forty-three representatives from 18 MAG countries met at the 14th MAG Meeting, which took place in Belgrade, S&I, from 03rd to 04th April 2006. Also present at the meeting were Ambassador Janez PREMOŽE, Chairman of the SP WT III, Mr. Pieter VERBEEK, Director of SP WT III and Mr Jiri KALASNIKOV from the SP WT III, LtC Emil SCHREIBER from OSCE, as well as Mr. Diman DIMOV from SEESAC.

Representatives from Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, Switzerland and Ukraine also attended our meeting, as observer countries or the countries, which expressed their interest in RACVIAC.

Major topics on the Agenda were the following:

- Director’s Report on RACVIAC Activities
- Approval of RACVIAC’s Strategy Paper
- RACVIAC Programme 2006
- Evaluation of the Questionnaire – Discussion on RACVIAC’s future role
- Financial issues
- Discussion on RACVIAC Personnel/Manpower, Personnel Policy
- Observer Countries/Status of MAG nations
- Nomination and Selection of the new RACVIAC Director

During the Director’s activity report, the Director of RACVIAC, BrigGen PAPOTIS highlighted the most important points and activities during last six months.

Director then proposed a new RACVIAC Strategy Paper and after the inputs from different MAG nations and organizations, amended version of RACVIAC Strategy Paper has been approved by the MAG. This Strategy Paper has just incorporated the new RACVIAC task, regarding Defence Conversion, into a Medium Term Strategy Paper, dated from 23 June 2003. Minor changes in the RACVIAC Programme 2006 have been explained by the Director and approved by the MAG.

The next issue was a discussion on replays of the Questionnaire regarding the future role of RACVIAC, which was prepared by the MAG Chair, MajGen PONOŠ and sent to all MAG nations. MAG Chair stressed that the future role of RACVIAC must be regional forum for dialog and that EU and NATO involvement is required. It was emphasized that the three main questions are: the future status of RACVIAC, finance issues and cooperation with NATO and EU.

Director of RACVIAC was also tasked by the MAG to visit Brussels and have a meeting with relevant bodies in order to improve/establish contacts with aforementioned bodies.

After a short report about the budget execution for 2005 and the contribution of the countries in 2005 the Budget plan for 2006 was presented and discussed in context with the contribution situation up to now in 2006. After a short discussion it was decided by the MAG that the Budget plan has to be reduced down to the realistic money inflow in 2006. The Audit report for the year 2005 has also been presented by Mr. Frorath, g.f. inter consult, Audit Company. MAG countries took notes on the audit report, which found only minor irregularities, but the general impression showed a huge improvement of the RACVIAC’s work.

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Concerning the status of MAG nations, Canada, Ukraine, Spain, Poland, and the USA will maintain their observer status in the MAG. Regarding the status of Denmark in RACVIAC, it is expected Denmark to send a letter to get full Member status in RACVIAC once again, after its contributions for the year 2006 budget. Director of RACVIAC is also going to ask the Czech Republic officially about its interest, after their financial contribution to RACVIAC. And for the first time, Swiss representative participate at MAG Meeting as the representative of interested country.

At the very end of the Meeting, the Nominations for the post of Director of RACVIAC were discussed. As no nominations were received, and with regards to the letter received from the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, the tour of duty for Brig Gen Papotis was prolonged by MAG for one more year.

**RACVIAC hosted OSCE Meetings**

The **34. Subregional Consultative Commission Meeting (SRCC)**, sponsored by OSCE, was held in RACVIAC from 9th till 10th March 2006, hosted by HR MFA. The program included the formal signing of the amendments to the DAYTON IV Agreement and a very accurate and professional analysis and assessment of the Information Exchange, presented in an exemplary way by LTC KRUSE (OSCE VIENNA). The last discussion on rescheduling of the Dayton IV Inspection regime took more time to be finalized, but an agreement was eventually reached. The presented facts, data etc. gave up-to-date and very useful information to RACVIAC that helped to put useful info into the DAYTON IV Course (C-4).

From 29th till 30th March 2006 the governments of Germany, Norway and the Netherlands, together with the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE and in co-operation with the RACVIAC, convened a workshop for participating States from SEE and the Caucasus on **Control over Brokering Activities in SALW**. The organizers invited brokering specialists from OSCE participating States and experts and researchers from international organisations, think tanks and research institutes to provide insight into issues related to brokering legislation, administrative and other practical procedures, documentation and enforcement.

**First WG2 Meeting on “Military Bases and Facilities Conversion”**

First Working Group II Meeting on “Military Bases and Facilities Conversion” (MBC) was held in RACVIAC on 28th February – 01st March 2006. Twenty-five participants from the region and international organizations took an active role during the discussions on the following topics:

- Identification of the number of redundant Military Base (MB) and developing conversion projects (MBC)
- Exchange of information on certain MBC projects
- Developing a National Programme for MBC
- Discussing possibilities to establish contacts between municipalities and other participants
- Identify possibilities of attracting International Donors and Financial Institutions, interested in MBC Projects in the region

WG II was successfully inaugurated with majority countries assigning experts as permanent focal points and delivering, upon RACVIAC request, initial information on Military Base Conversion (MBC) process. Creation of a adequate National Legislation for MBC, Interagency Cooperation, Developing National MBC Programmes, Defining a fields for bilateral/ regional cooperation and assistance were some of the main topics of WG II special attention.

As a result of the first WG II discussions and in line with MAG’s tasking, the newly established Defence Conversion Cell has organized country visits by experts thus implementing the tasks laid out in the practical modalities for RACVIAC. Defence Conversion Cell is in a continuous process
of information collecting and building a database that will be of practical use to concerned nations and institutions. To fulfil MAG’s aims and match expectations in MBC, Defence Conversion Cell through its activities, solely relies upon effective cooperation and readiness of SEE Countries and institutions engaged in MBC.

The second WG II meeting, which is planned to be organized in Bulgaria and hosted by Bulgaria, will provide nations with working examples of good practice and MBC project implementation. Defence Conversion Cell is creating a full database for MBC funding schemes and institutions and is providing to interested National institutions effective assistance in project development and fundraising. NATO, SP, BICC, DCAF, OSCE, USA and others deliver full support and practical expert assistance.

The clearly defined interest by all SEE Countries in MBC capacity building and regional cooperation, proves that RACVIAC Defence Conversion Cell is on the right track and has the real opportunity to prove its role as a Regional Center for Defence Conversion for the benefit of all SEE countries and international institutions engaged in this process.

C-4 Dayton Article IV Training Course

The C-4 Training Course, on Dayton Article IV, was carried out in accordance with RACVIAC Programme for 2006 and was the 12th from the beginning of RACVIAC and the first after the amendments on the agreement that were confirmed during the 34th Meeting of the SRCC which took place in RACVIAC.

The Training Course was conducted from 20th to 31st of March 2006 in two phases: Theoretical phase (1st week) in Rakitje (Croatia) and Practical phase (2nd week) in Bihac and Banja Luka (Bosnia & Herzegovina).

The initial aim of the course was to prepare designated individuals to perform duties as inspectors and/or escorts regarding to Dayton Agreement, Article IV (Agreement on Sub-Regional AC) and to establish a common approach to the Agreement in order to ensure a mutual behaviour of confidence and transparency during the performance of their tasks.

Fourteen participants from the signatory parties attended the course (Croatia - 5; Serbia & Montenegro - 4; Bosnia & Herzegovina - 5), as well as four participants in the role of the assistant from Germany, OSCE/Sarajevo, Slovenia and DTRA/USA. RACVIAC hosted nine lecturers coming from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, France, EUMM/Austria, OSCE/Germany, Serbia & Montenegro, United Kingdom and USA/DTRA.

The 1st phase (20th to 25th of March) was a combination of lectures and syndicate work on the content of the DAYTON Art. IV and on the accomplishment of the mission planning. The 2nd phase (26th to 31st of March) was a training inspection on two declared sites, according to Protocol on Inspection of Dayton Article IV.

During this 2nd week of the Training Course the class was divided in two teams, which acted both as Inspection and Escort Team, into two different OOI (objects of inspection). They planned and organized the whole mission’s plan according to their duties (Inspectors/Escorts). Finally they accomplished the debriefing and the conclusion of the training inspections.

During the practical phase, participants showed an exceptional professionalism performing their mission both as Inspectors and Escort and demonstrated a remarkable cooperation, by which they approached the standards of a real Inspection. Two lecturers, one from Serbia & Montenegro and one from Croatia, were present during the whole activity as observers. The preparation of the Declared Sites and the work of the local escorts, reaching a high level of organization, contributed positively to the success of the Course.

The execution of the whole Training Activity proved to be satisfactory and very well organised in order to achieve our goal. Professional lecturers, as well as site commanders, substantially contributed to achieve the objectives of the course; that was obtained thanks to the good and close cooperation between RACVIAC and the relevant MODs and Arms Control Agencies.
The first WG1 meeting on transition of military personnel took place in RACVIAC from 13th - 15th of February 2006. The Agenda of the meeting on transition of military personnel were as follows:

- Development of the BiH MILTAP (Bosnia and Herzegovina Military Transition Assistance Program) - presentation by BA and HR permanent WG1 members;
- Transitional Assistance to Demobilized Soldiers (TADS) - presentation Mrs Regina Boucault (Chief of IOM Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Vocational Training - presentation by Ph. D. Dragana Bečejski Vujaklija; Professor; Faculty of Organizational Sciences; Belgrade; S&M;
- Good and bad practice - the countries’ presentations (AL, BG, MK, S&M);
- Business incubator - presentation by M Sc. Marijan Ožanić; Director, Technology park, Zagreb, HR;

30 participants from the region and international organizations took an active role during the discussions on the abovementioned topics. The participants were permanent WGs members from the following countries: Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Moldova, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro; one representative from MAG countries (Sweden, Norway, USA) and representatives from international institutions, organizations and NGOs (SP, DCAF, IOM, OSCE).

First presentation and discussion was on Development of the BiH MILTAP. The MOD Croatia and the MOD Bosnia and Herzegovina have already worked on a draft program BiH MILTAP on a bilateral basis before this meeting. The BA representatives presented this draft BiH MILTAP program at this session. WG1 participants discussed the frame of this program and concluded that the approach and support programs are good structures for it, due to the similarity of the structures other transition programs in all other SEE countries. This was followed by a discussion on costs where different opinions were expressed, especially when small and medium enterprises and subsidies to known employers have been discussed. Countries in the region that work on this issue explained that the costs in the BiH MILTAP (support programs) are a minimum on what is required. In accordance with the expertise and experience from the Technology Park Zagreb, this figure in the BiH MILTAB for the support program is a minimum support for establishing its own business, in particular when taking into account the high unemployment rate in the region. Based on experience from other countries in the region, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) project in BA in the field of transition of military personnel is added value for existing countries programs, especially in the social way. Approaching to NATO, each country needs to have its own transition program and the involvement of international institutions is very welcomed in the region.

The IOM work on Transitional Assistance to Demobilized Soldiers (TADS) with DDR standards can help the MODs in SEE to execute transition programs as added value in social programs. Representatives of countries in the region noticed that given support for establishing small and medium enterprise is good, but not sustainable.

The approach for S&M vocational training is adopted in accordance with their need due to the unique background of their military personnel. This approach is very good for creating new projects and knowledge on the business market. Establishing business projects is a good way. However, a second step is also needed. This kind of retraining gave good results (34% self employed people). The conclusion is that retraining is a core business for transition programs and we will continue with this topic at the next meeting.

After that countries presented their good and bad practice and lessons learned. Some countries in the region need help in establishing
or updating their programs, especially their support programs (to restore the transition program, to support the establishing of self-employment and database, to establish vocational training and info campaigns).

Problems and misunderstandings arise when distinguishing between downsizing and transition. Downsizing happened because of the political-economic will. In the downsizing-planning phase, regional authorities are satisfied with the efficient downsizing processes because they are executed through good programs. In the same time, governments are not educated or informed enough on the necessity of establishing transition in the professional army as a life cycle.

In some countries, the business incubators, where military personnel in the transition process could incubate, do not exist. Croatia’s example SPECTRA is very good; military personnel can receive start-ups in education on small and medium enterprises for establishing businesses and also can incubate in military business incubator. The lecture about business incubators helped the participants to understand the importance of education and guidance in establishing a business and in understanding about enterprises as well. New businesses in the region need a long-term support from public institutions, especially financial support. Consulting and expertise are crucial.

* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Lessons/presentations were provided by:
- Ms Natalija TISANIĆ, Translator/Croatian Verification Agency
- Ms Katarina TERZIĆ, Interpreter for English Language/Ministry of Defence, S&M
- Col Slaven ARAMBASIJ, Officer for NATO and PfP/Ministry of Defense, B&H
- Sgt. Ian MEGENNIS, Inspector/Interpreter/JACIG AFLT, UK
- Ms Cvjetanka BOŽANIĆ, Gymnasium for Foreign languages, Zagreb

Participants were divided into two/three separate groups in accordance with their respective results at the Grammar Test, which was conducted on the first day of the Course. In the daily programme, each group had one lesson of English Grammar refreshment followed by FIVE hours of conversation on Arms Control Agreements Terminology (VD, Dayton IV, CFE) and some General Military topics about work of related international organizations - as OSCE, UN, SOFA, NGO’s, NATO and many others.

All participants showed strong willingness to improve their English language abilities and, in particular, high interest in increasing arms control discussion capabilities. An increase in individual progress has been noted and it can be said that this English Arms Control Terminology Course contributed significantly to achieve a standardized approach to the Agreements. The course provided an opportunity for participants to meet with their international colleagues from the SEE region, who are dealing with Arms Control issues.

With the Arms Control Terminology Courses, we are trying to improve the current situation in SEE countries and, through such courses, to ensure a more active involvement in other activities organized by RACVIAC. Representatives from all countries present agreed on the necessity of stronger co-operation on the national and international level in exchanging different views and opinions and sharing information. An important feature of the Language Training Course is the opportunity to host participants and lecturers from all interested countries and to observe a unique cooperative and friendly spirit among them. The period of two weeks is long enough to establish good friendship, which is the base for professional network in the future and in this way improvement of CSBM in the region of SEE.

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RACVIAC, in co-operation with SIPRI and co-sponsored by Republic of Austria, organized the seminar: “Dual-use/Export control”, from 20th to 22nd February 2006. H.E. Helga Konrad, Austrian Ambassador to Croatia, opened the seminar by giving an interesting point of view concerning this topic focusing on the role of the EU in Dual-Use, as follows:

“It is a special pleasure and honor as the Austrian Ambassador to Croatia and representative of the Presidency of the European Union to open this seminar. I would like to thank General Papotis, his team in RACVIAC and the SIPRI representatives for organizing this important meeting, which should lead to new avenues of cooperation in the field of export control.

At first, let me present in a few words the Austrian Presidency of EU. Peace, stability, security and justice in the Western Balkan region is a priority for Austria. The European perspective for these countries is of utmost importance. With reference to this seminar let me confirm that it is another priority of the Austrian Presidency to combat the spread of weapons and materials in order to avoid the production and use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

In December 2003 the European Council adopted a European Security Strategy entitled “A Secure Europe in a Better World”. This Strategy identifies a number of threats for the next decade, for instance the spread of missile technology, which adds a further element of instability and could put Europe at increasing risk. Besides, the European Union is fully committed to the implementation of the UN-Security Council resolution 1540 on non-proliferation, which recognizes the need to enhance coordination of efforts on national, sub-regional, regional and international level.

Let me finish by emphasizing the high responsibility of this control function for the security of the European citizens and our European institutions!

Best wishes for a successful course of this seminar!”

(extract from the opening speech)
The Director of RACVIAC, Brigadier General PAPOTIS Stergios, was invited to the Verification Coordination Committee Conventional Implementation Seminar with CFE Partners, being conducted at NATO Headquarters in Brussels from 22nd to 24th March this year where he gave a presentation to the session for the 30 CFE Signatories and to non-CFE EAPC Member States. The presentation focused on the annual programme of activities and the new role of RACVIAC. Brigadier General PAPOTIS highlighted the redefined concept of RACVIAC’s future role in view of the fact that the political and security situation in the region has changed significantly in the last years. He underlined successful role of RACVIAC in the region on Arms Control issues and RACVIAC movement forward in a new area of SSR – developing a regional support networks and to concentrate know – how on Defence Conversion.

During the seminar, Director of RACVIAC, Brig Gen PAPOTIS, proposed a meeting for Heads/Directors of Verification Centers of MAG countries in order to discuss the future activities of RACVIAC on Arms Control issues.

From 20th till 23rd March this year, Ltc Frank ODENDAHL, RACVIAC’s Planning and Liaison Officer and Cpt Maja HORVATIĆ, RACVIAC’s Course Director, attended the South Eastern European Disaster Preparedness Conference, hosted by George C. Marshal Center (GCMC) and co-hosted by DPPI in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The aims of the meeting were:
- to provide national perspectives on the current status of Disaster Preparedness in SEE
- to identify Disaster Preparedness / Emergency Response roles and responsibilities and improve interagency cooperation.
- to discuss the need for civil-military cooperation.
- to ascertain further Crisis Response / Consequence Management challenges

Participants came from very numerous countries and organizations from central and southeast Europe. The program included very professional presentations from numerous organizations and institutions and the results from working groups were briefed at the end of the event. Through this Conference, RACVIAC saw the opportunity to enhance the cooperation with GCMC and DPPI for some future events.

On 15th January this year, the fifth generation of the Croatian Military-Diplomatic School visited RACVIAC within its annual school programme. The purpose of the visit was to receive more information about RACVIAC and its future role in the region. In that respect, the Deputy Director of RACVIAC and Chief of Staff, Col Rajko DUMANČIĆ, gave a lecture to the students stressing the importance of raising the visibility of RACVIAC in Croatia.

On 2nd February RACVIAC also hosted another visit of the delegation of the German Verification Center, with its present Deputy Director, Col Hans J. HUGENSCSCHMIDT and future Deputy Director, Col Hans J. BUCHHOLZ. After a very fruitful discussion they acknowledged the important role that RACVIAC is having in promoting peace and stability and building confidence among the countries of the region. They also stressed the big challenge RACVIAC is facing by expanding it’s role into the field of Defence Conversion. At the end they reaffirmed that Germany will continue to give financial support to RACVIAC in the future.
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<tr>
<td>Information Sharing Meeting on Regional Peace, Stability and Security</td>
<td>24 April - 28 April</td>
<td>● To discuss and evaluate projects on stability and security in SEE</td>
<td>Parliamentarians and Parliamentarian staff from relevant institutions of SEE</td>
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<tr>
<td>WG3 Meeting (1) - Restructuring Redundant Military Industries (WS-3)</td>
<td>02 May - 05 May</td>
<td>● To identify the redundant defence industrial factories; possibilities for civilian production, sales of property; privatization, regional cooperation, retraining and reintegration of military factory personnel, environmental problems related to military production facilities.</td>
<td>Mayors, developers, privatization agencies, potential investors, ministries and other governmental institutions, parliamentarians, military (incl. Defence academies and research institutions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WG1 Meeting (2)-on Retraining and Resettlement of Military Personnel (WS-4)</td>
<td>22 May - 26 May</td>
<td>● To exchange the expertise and lessons learned and to underline the necessity of the info campaign and vocational training as the key elements in the transition program of the transition of military personnel.</td>
<td>Permanent WG1 members (countries, DCAF, OSCE...), IOM, US AID, lecturers, Business incubators</td>
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<td>Human, drug, weapon traffic/trade effects on domestic/regional security</td>
<td>29 May - 02 June</td>
<td>● To share experience</td>
<td>Staff coming from MODs, MOIs, MFAs and NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>WG2 Meeting (2)-on Military Site Conversion (WS-5)</td>
<td>05 June - 09 June</td>
<td>● Visit MBC sites that are in the practical progress; analyze the possibilities of Regional financial support for MBC Projects; exchange information on legislative changes responding to MBC, discuss and adopt a regionally acceptable concept/ matrix for MBC, develop twining projects, exchange of views</td>
<td>National institutions related to MBC, municipalities developing MBC projects, international donors, financial institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendship Meeting of Political Studies/Science Students (S-5)</td>
<td>05 June - 09 June</td>
<td>● View and information exchange concerning security and stability issues in SEE, involving new generations</td>
<td>University Students from SEE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation Course on CFE/Adapted CFE (C-6)</td>
<td>12 June - 16 June</td>
<td>● To inform site commanders about their perspective duties and responsibilities under the requirements of the relevant documents</td>
<td>Site Commanders, inspector/escort personnel</td>
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