RACVIAC HAS EXPANDED THE CONTENT AND SCOPE OF THE CURRENT PROGRAMME: ROUND TABLE ON SSR AND GENDER CONDUCTED

First Course on the updated Vienna Document 2011

Good Governance Concept Seminar

First inspection photos taken during OSC
H.E. Valdet Sadiku visited RACVIAC

The Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Mr Valdet Sadiku, visited RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on 24 January 2012. The occasion of the visit to RACVIAC was the desire expressed by H.E. to make personal acquaintance with RACVIAC’s mission, aims and organization. The guest was welcomed by the Director of RACVIAC Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, RACVIAC Deputy Director Colonel Zeljko Cepanec and senior RACVIAC staff members. They provided the distinguished guest with a brief overview of RACVIAC’s history, mission, annual programme of activities, the completed process of transformation, the new Agreement on RACVIAC, which has been ratified recently, and the plans for the forthcoming period. Mr Sadiku praised the role of RACVIAC in the process of security cooperation and stabilization of the South East European region.

Working meeting with SEESAC representatives in Belgrade

On 27 January 2012, RACVIAC Director Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, accompanied by LtCol Stefan Miene, RACVIAC Programme Manager for the Cooperative Security Environment Pillar, met with representatives of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) in Belgrade. RACVIAC delegation was hosted by Mr Ivan Zvezhanovski, SEESAC Team Leader a.i., Ms Bojana Balon, Women Police Officers Network (WPON) Project Manager, and Ms Iva Savic, SEESAC Communications Officer. The purpose of the meeting, agreed upon during bilateral talks initiated by RACVIAC, was to discuss the annual programme of activities developed by the two Centres respectively, as well as the possibilities of continued cooperation. The delegations consider the meeting to be a traditional and beneficial one, which should represent a platform for regular data exchange and harmonization of planned activities in the region. It is the shared intention of SEESAC and RACVIAC to coordinate their efforts within the framework of the tasks established by their respective steering bodies in order to make a significant impact on countering the uncontrolled use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and on the issues of improving stockpiling ammunition and weapons. The interlocutors declared their willingness to open new areas of cooperation within the national programmes of the South East European countries for security sector reform and pursue the objective of developing a regional approach to strengthening security and stability in the region.
Visits to/outside RACVIAC

Germany and RACVIAC signed Financial Agreement

On 14 February 2012, H.E. Mr Bernd Fischer, German Ambassador to Croatia, and the Director of RACVIAC, Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, signed the Financial Agreement between RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Federal Republic of Germany for the year 2012. With this Agreement, the Federal Republic of Germany provided 72,000.00 Euro which will be used to support seminars, courses and workshops included in the RACVIAC “Programme of Activities 2012” mainly within RACVIAC’s Cooperative Security Environment (CSE) with focus on Arms Control Pillar.

It is worth mentioning that in addition to the financial contribution, the Federal Republic of Germany supports RACVIAC with one staff officer seconded to the Centre as well as with a number of highly competitive experts in a wide range of security issues. RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Todorcevski, acknowledged the cooperation with Germany as a mainstay of progress and security of the South East European region for over a decade. He pointed out that “RACVIAC very much appreciates the German contribution, provided to the Centre not only in its establishment phase in 2000 and later, but also in the latest phase of its transformation and consolidation as a Centre for Security Cooperation in South East Europe.” Therewith, RACVIAC and Germany have significantly contributed to enhancing trust and cooperation on security issues among the countries in the region.

RACVIAC Director visited Croatian Minister of Defence

RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, paid an inaugural visit to the Defence Minister of the Republic of Croatia on 21 February 2012. Ambassador Todorcevski congratulated Minister Ante Kotromanovic on his appointment pointing out that RACVIAC owes a particular debt of gratitude to the Republic of Croatia for its initial efforts and uninterrupted assistance as well as commitment to fulfilling the Centre’s mission over the past eleven years. He took this opportunity to express his genuine appreciation to the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia in particular for the outstanding and considerable ongoing support to RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, not only in terms of finances, but also in terms of the secondment of personnel.

Taking into account RACVIAC’s mission and role in the region, the Defence Minister Kotromanovic availed himself of the opportunity to emphasize and praise the role of RACVIAC in the process of stabilization and development of the Southeast European region, as well as to reassure RACVIAC of the Ministry’s intention for an ongoing partnership. Both officials share the opinion that it is necessary to continue with the efforts to foster dialogue and cooperation on security matters and to accelerate the Euro-Atlantic integration processes in the countries of Southeast Europe.
Norwegian Ambassador visited RACVIAC

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Republic of Croatia H.E. Mr Henrik Ofstad visited RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on 1 March 2012 in order to make personal acquaintance with the Centre. The distinguished guest was welcomed by the Director of RACVIAC Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski and senior RACVIAC staff members. The guest was provided with a brief presentation on RACVIAC’s history, mission, annual programme of activities, the completed process of transformation and plans for the forthcoming period.

Ambassador Ofstad engaged in a very interesting discussion with RACVIAC Programme Managers on RACVIAC’s activities and plans for the enhanced future cooperation. Since the Kingdom of Norway has been providing support to RACVIAC for years, allocating funds for the activities related to security sector reform and international and regional cooperation, the Norwegian Ambassador availed himself of the opportunity to assure RACVIAC of Norway’s intention for an ongoing partnership, praising the role of RACVIAC in the process of stabilization and development of the South East European region.

RACVIAC delegation paid visit to NATO

On 1 and 2 March 2012, the RACVIAC delegation consisting of the Deputy Director, Colonel Zeljko Cepanec, and Planning and Liaison Officers, Colonel Ferdinand Klinser and Major Sasa Konjevic, visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels. The delegation met with the representatives of NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Division, namely Head of Cyber Defence Section Mr Suleyman Anil, Senior Advisors Dr Deniz Yuksel-Beten and Mr Michael Gaul, and Ms Gabriela Horosanu, working in the Science for Peace and Security Programme. Possibilities of cooperation and partnership in organizing and carrying out cyber security related education and training activities were discussed. The Science for Peace and Security Programme was identified as a tool that could be used by NATO to provide support to RACVIAC in organizing high-level, policy-oriented cyber security related activities. The first of these activities might be organized in June 2012, with two follow-up activities organized in late 2012.

The RACVIAC delegation also had meetings with the missions of the Republic of Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina to NATO, as well as with the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Croatia to NATO, during which the RACVIAC delegation was honoured to meet H.E. Branimir Jukic, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to NATO, Ms Betty Bernardica Pavelich Sirois, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to NATO, and Mr Markus Weidinger, Counselor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Austria to NATO. At the meetings, the RACVIAC delegation presented the ideas about RACVIAC’s role in the cyber security realm in the future, explained what kind of cooperation and partnership with NATO RACVIAC was striving to establish and how the delegation and missions could assist RACVIAC in this regard. Finally, it was concluded that RACVIAC’s ideas were positive, future-oriented and had the potential to be developed further, and that the delegation and the missions would support the ideas within their capacities.
Visits to/outside RACVIAC

USAF Air War College at RACVIAC

On the 14 of March 2012, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation hosted 19 senior students from the USAF Air War College, accompanied by the US Air Attaché to the Republic of Croatia, Lieutenant Colonel Sean J. Cantrell. The guests from the United States paid a visit to RACVIAC in the framework of their current study trip to Southeast Europe. Air War College students were welcomed by the Director of RACVIAC Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, RACVIAC Deputy Director Colonel Zeljko Cepanec and senior RACVIAC staff members. The guests were provided with a brief presentation on RACVIAC’s history, mission, annual programme of activities, the completed process of transformation, new Agreement on RACVIAC and plans for the forthcoming period. Later on, all participants demonstrated a great deal of understanding through their to-the-point questions and comments during a lively Q&A session and a subsequent open discussion.

MAG POCs Meeting

In order to discuss some current issues and to make the necessary preparations for the forthcoming 27th MAG Meeting, which is taking place in April 2011 in Albania, the MAG Point of Contacts (POCs) Meeting took place on 25 February 2012 in RACVIAC. The Meeting gathered 17 participants representing relevant ministries from 14 MAG countries, namely from: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey, as well as RACVIAC’s Management and staff. During the Meeting, the participants were provided with the updates on the 2012 Programme and projections for the period 2013 - 2015, current financial and personnel situation, recommendations of the Internal Multinational Working Group on cost-savings measures, audit procedures and measures for stable financing. Special attention was given to the lack of seconded personnel and fulfilment of the Member Countries’ obligations in that regard. The participants agreed that such working meetings of the MAG POCs could ease the way to better and more comprehensive discussions during the annual assemblies.

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Interview with Col Joerg Kunze, Section Chief, Bundeswehr Arms Control Verification Centre, on the occasion of the Vienna Document 2011 - Verification and Compliance Course.

Col Kunze, could you tell us what are the new features of the Vienna Document (VD) 2011, the main novelties, in comparison with the VD 1999?

There are no significant changes in the VD 2011, not necessarily in the text itself. I think the main development, the main progress concerns the fact that the decision was reached on how to proceed in the future: so all the proposals that have been made within the five-year time frame will be reviewed and the document will be reissued. This might include some significant changes in the future as well. For the time being, the changes are of a minor nature, not so significant in terms of implementation.

RACVIAC has been dealing with the Arms Control issues from the very beginning. There are some opinions or statements that the Arms Control as a topic is “used up”, exhausted so to speak. What is your opinion on the future of Conventional Arms Control?

In fact, what we sometimes observe, individually in one nation or the other, as well as on a wider scale, is the approach that our Swiss colleague, Mr Fabian Grass, from the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre describes as “killing me softly”, by neglecting things or just doing nothing or leaving things as they are. However, if one imagines that there are at least three dormant conflicts within the OSCE participating nations, I do believe that the future of arms control in conjunction with confidence building is still very important. We should really do our best to retain it, but in order to continue, we have to adapt to the changing context.

Germany is very active in the field of Arms Control. RACVIAC itself was established as the arms control training centre in 2000, based on the bilateral agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Croatia.

How would you assess the German contribution to the Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) in the South-East European (SEE) region and beyond?

Well, first of all we are on the supporting side of your Centre. Therefore, I think it is quite a significant contribution, not only in terms of personnel but also in terms of financial resources and knowledge that is made available for the benefit of further development of RACVIAC. I remain optimistic that in the future this contribution will continue, although all the nations are affected by the financial crisis, having limited resources at their disposal. I think that we view RACVIAC quite in the same way as we view our own verification centre; For example, our commander is aiming for the Bundeswehr Verification Centre to become a centre of competence in Middle Europe, which means that we could quite easily invite other nations to share their views and to participate in common implementation, maybe to do the daily business all together from one location, such as Geilenkirchen. This could become the future for RACVIAC as well, to be the centre for the South-East European region if the participating states show the will for that kind of common initiative.

A very important issue for the Federal Republic of Germany is that we would, of course, like to contribute to the success of RACVIAC, but most of the work, the hard work of financing and staff work, has to come from the nations in the region. And to support these regions, these nations in doing this, in starting to contribute on their part is even more important than simply giving contributions or just planning the activities by yourselves.
**INTERVIEW**

We are always proud to emphasize that RACVIAC was and still is a very unique organization in the region, the only one dealing with the arms control issues.

What is the German perception of RACVIAC’s role in the security processes in SEE? Could we do more, or what else could we do?

Well, it’s hard to make any proposals if you don’t have a good insight into what has been done so far. For me, being here for the first time, discussing in more detail what has already been done or what could be done in the future, I learned that there are lots of plans that have been developed already, lots of detailed proposals for the work you intend to do in the future. I think RACVIAC is already on a good way to follow that path which I already laid out. Nevertheless, I have come to realise that more support from the participating countries from SEE would be beneficial for RACVIAC’s activities. I think we should do our best to remind these nations that it is their core task to get involved.

You are a verification expert with great experience. Can you please give us your expert evaluation of this particular Course?

It has been very successful. First of all, it has enabled prospective experts or those who want to become experts, newcomers, to at least work together, to share their approach with other nations. More than 50% of the participants / experts are from outside the SEE region. We have enjoyed the hospitality and openness as well as transparency of the Croatian Armed Forces, which we could benefit a lot from. It would have not been possible to conduct this course if the Croatian Armed Forces had not agreed to support us. To conduct such a course, you also need the theoretical knowledge. Escort teams as well as the evaluation teams have to be prepared before the inspection and evaluation takes place. This means that you have to prepare the units, briefings, come to common understanding, be aware what the consequences for the evaluation team might result in. For the evaluation team, it is important to be fair towards the unit they are going to evaluate, to be prepared, to have the knowledge about the information exchange, to respond to the commander’s briefing, to the things they see, to ask questions and to engage in an open discussion. You always do need a practical part in the course in order to exercise and, after having done this in practice at least once, to be able to say: Now I know what they are talking about and what I am expected to do.

Colonel Jörg Kunze joined the German Air Force in 1977. After he underwent basic military training and completed the Officers Course at the Air Force Academy, he studied electronic communication technology at the Helmut-Schmidt-University in Hamburg and was conferred the academic degree of ‘Diplom-Ingenieur’ in 1982. From 1982 to 1990, after having been trained within the Air Defence Missile Systems HAWK and ROLAND subsequently, he served within the Luftwaffe in various assignments. After completing the General Staff Officer’s Course in 1992, various assignments as a staff officer followed between 1992 and 2003, such as general staff officer for exercises within the Air Staff of the German Ministry of Defence, senior German Officer at the 5th Allied Tactical Air Force/ Combined Air Operations Centre 5 in Italy and general staff officer for exercises at the Armed Forces Academy in Hamburg. From 2003 to 2008 he served as the German Defence Attaché in the Republic of Austria and in the Islamic Republic of Iran, before he was assigned to the Bundeswehr Verification Centre in Geilenkirchen as the Section Chief responsible for the implementation of the Vienna Document.

Col Kunze with the crew of Croatian 171sh before the inspection flight

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RACVIAC opened a new programme year with the Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar

The Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar, co-organized with the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), was conducted in RACVIAC Centre for Security Cooperation in the period of 21 - 23 February 2012. This Seminar, the ninth one on this topic, is a continuation of the fruitful cooperation between RACVIAC, the Federal Republic of Germany and the OPCW in promoting regional stability, transparency and trust. The purpose of this Seminar was to discuss relevant issues related to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC): its current tasks, activities and challenges, the OPCW activities in the field of assistance with and protection against chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals, capacity building through projects on national and regional levels, CWC assistance / protection centres and regional networking, the Technical Secretariat preparedness for assistance and protection and an update on the issues related to the OPCW verification activities, inspection activities and procedures.

The Seminar gathered more than 30 participants, civilian and military officials, from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia and Turkey, as well as lecturers from the OPCW. Once again, the Australian Ambassador to Croatia, H.E. Ms Beverly Mercer, made a contribution to this Seminar as a lecturer, introducing the Australian Group Initiative.

At this year’s Seminar, in addition to the overview on the CWC and the OPCW’s current status, tasks, activities and challenges, particular attention was given to Article X of the CWC related to the activities of assistance and protection against chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals. Special attention was also paid to the national protection programmes in the countries of the sub-region, problems and developments in this area, as well as to inspection and verification activities and procedures.

The Seminar is assessed as one of the most successful and fruitful activities organized by the RACVIAC Cooperative Security Environment (CSE) Pillar in the recent past. The capacity of the RACVIAC Centre to continue with the implementation of the adopted program of activities has also been strongly supported by the committed efforts of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Division for Conventional Disarmament and Arms Control, regional chemical weapons specialists, high-profiled experts from the OPCW and the RACVIAC CSE Pillar staff, which are very much appreciated. RACVIAC will continue promoting the CWC in all appropriate international and regional forums as part of the capacity-building process in the SEE countries we stand committed to.

The following topics were singled out as interesting for future seminars:

- Advanced training on Electronic Declaration Tool for National Authorities (EDNA) and the request for assistance by the OPCW in case of a CW attack;
- Discussion on control/proliferation of trade in chemical substances with the participation of the appropriate personnel apart from the State Parties’ representatives (i.e. customs personnel);
- Updated information about terrorism issues related to chemical, biological or radiological (CBR) substances and security measures;
- Report on the activities of the OPCW and State Parties thereto during 2012, with a special focus on the South East European (SEE) region, as well as the exchange of experiences and information.

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The Security Sector Reform - Good Governance Concept Seminar was conducted at RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in the period of 28 - 29 February 2012. This was the second seminar to introduce one of the specific aspects of the basics of Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The SSR concept, along with its most challenging as well as rewarding aspect of good governance, is not a disposable, one-off matter. On the contrary, its proper implementation permanently improves the overall security status of societies, as well as the countries' effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. Therefore, this Seminar aimed to provide fundamental concepts as well as concrete cases of the good governance principle being applied by military, parliamentary and governmental staff who deal with, or are engaged in, the activities aimed at improving overall output of a given country or its governmental structure through the implementation of the good governance principle.

The Seminar gathered more than 30 participants, parliament members and parliament committee staff, military officers and civilian equivalents from the ministries of defence and armed forces as well as personnel from the ministries of foreign affairs and the interior from the South East European countries. Highly competent speakers came from the following organisations: Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) centre from Geneva; Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb; Institute for International Relations, Zagreb; Institute for Democracy and Mediation, Tirana; Centre for Democracy, Good Governance and Local Development, Institute of Social Sciences “Ivo Pilar”, Zagreb; Belgrade Centre for Security Policy and Security and Defence Committee, Parliament of Montenegro.

Opening the Seminar, RACVIAC Director Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski emphasized that “the Good Governance concept is a driving force for democratic changes in South East Europe, while this concept is closely related to the concept of human security and the two make perfect tools for achieving both external and internal security.”

This Seminar provided necessary knowledge and focus on the Good Governance concept, as well as the means of its implementation, to the officials engaged at various levels and in different forms in governing national resources, including drafting and passing laws, planning and executing defence budgets, managing human resources, managing agencies, encouraging civil society actions, leading public sector actors and alike. The Seminar participants engaged in very comprehensive discussions on several topics, such as: Good Governance Concept implications for the Security Sector and for Security Sector Reform; Implementation of the Good Governance principle in the environment of transition; Good Governance as an organisational or system issue; Effects of the implementation of the Good Governance principle on improved security of the society by way of law making procedures etc.

As the plenary session demonstrated, good governance is definitely not a novel idea in the region. However, abiding by and implementing its basic concepts and different aspects tends to be somewhat remote from the core decision-taking processes. Political will and raising awareness of the decision makers have proved to be basic obstacles on the path of implementation of the good governance principle.

Finally, as already mentioned, this was the second RACVIAC activity addressing the basics of the Security Sector Reform Pillar. This time it was the concept of good governance seemingly familiar idea, but still rather remote from the core decision-making processes.
RACVIAC HELD VIENNA DOCUMENT 2011 COMPLIANCE AND VERIFICATION COURSE

Co-organized with the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Croatia and the OSCE

From 13 to 15 March 2012, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation held the “Vienna Document 2011: Efforts to Revitalise Confidence and Security Building, Compliance and Verification Course”, co-organized with the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Croatia and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). RACVIAC has been organizing intense VD 1999 courses for the countries of the South East European region since 2001, but this particular course is the very first to be held after the new Vienna Document entered into force in December last year, with the updates made after twelve years.

Seventeen military and civilian experts, representatives of the Ministry of Defence and Verification Agencies dealing with Vienna Document took part in the Course, coming from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro, Poland, Slovenia and Serbia. Lecturers included representatives from Austria, Croatia, Germany and the OSCE.

The aim of the Vienna Document 2011 Compliance and Verification Course was to introduce the participants to the new content of the Vienna Document 2011 in general, with a special focus on Article IX (Compliance and Verification), Inspection and Evaluation, giving a comprehensive, theoretical and practical analysis of the implementation of these activities.

The Course, focusing on constraints and obligations arising from the aforementioned parts of the document, was designed as a combination of theoretical and practical activities.

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

- RACVIAC’s contribution to the arms control process;
- Vienna Document 2011 in the light of the current arms control and confidence- and security-building measures;
- Vienna Document 2011, contents, main parts of the document, basic definitions;
- Inspection and evaluation visit;
- Local escort and logistic support;
- Safety measures and regulations during inspection and evaluation.

Thanks to the generous support of the Croatian Armed Forces, the participants had the opportunity to gain some hands-on experience and act as inspectors and escort team members during the evaluation visit to the Artillery Rocket Launcher Regiment in Bjelovar and inspection flight over the specified area provided by the 91st Air Base Pleso. All participants were actively engaged in the roles of evaluation/inspection team members and escort team members. This provided the participants, particularly those coming from smaller countries that were allocated minimum active and passive quotas, with the opportunity to get trained and to obtain information on the national, Croatian, data exchange.

Since the Course was aimed at filling the gap in national training capacities by providing the participants with the opportunity to plan and execute both evaluation and inspection on a foreign terrain, the continuation of the Course in 2013 was highly recommended.

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RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, conducted a Round Table entitled “SSR and Gender: Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820” in the period of 20 to 22 March in Maribor, at the Armed Forces Facilities Kadetnica.

This was the very first gender-related activity to be organized by RACVIAC, in support of RACVIAC’s Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme for the mid-term period, which is, among other things, aimed at covering gender issues and the protection of human rights in general.

The implementation of human rights protection on national levels continues to be an important political issue in security sector reform, not only in the Southeast European countries, but worldwide. The promotion of equal opportunities for women and men remains a big challenge for governmental and non-governmental institutions alike in their joint efforts to eliminate discrimination.

The purpose of the Round Table was twofold. Firstly, it was aimed to bring together the representatives from South Eastern Europe (SEE) to discuss relevant general information on standards guiding the Security Sector Reform and gender with a main focus on the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820, European standards and regional instruments in Europe. Secondly, the purpose was to encourage the participating representatives of the parliaments, ministries and NGOs from the SEE countries to share their experiences in implementing their Action Plans with the measures to strengthen the role of women in the area of security sector.

The Round Table gathered more than 40 participants, the representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Defence, Ministries of Interior and Ministries of Security from the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as the representatives from the public sector, experts from various national institutions and think-thanks.

Highly competent speakers included: Ms Zdenka Cebasek-Travnik, Slovenian Ombudsperson for Human Rights Protection; Ms Marina Pendes, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ms Ivis Nocka, Director, EU integration, Albanian Ministry of Defence; Ms Megan Bastick, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; as well as the representatives of the Slovenian Government Office for Equal Opportunities, UN Women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, University of Maribor and Slovenian and Croatian Armed Forces.

Opened by Mr Peter Stavanja, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, this Round Table addressed relevant information on history and standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms guiding Security Sector Reform and gender and highlighted the gender perspective in the UN programming and reporting, as well as in peace support operations. Special attention was given to the representation of women at different levels of the decision-making process, especially in the security sector institutions. Last session was dedicated to the presentations of National Action Plans for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions in the SEE countries.

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RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation conducted the Open Skies Treaty Aerial Observation Course, in the period of 27 March - 05 April 2012 at Rakitje. Since 2002 RACVIAC has been organizing courses on the Treaty on Open Skies (OST). These courses have become one of the most distinctive RACVIAC products, in which the synergy of several institutions comes into play.

This year’s two-week Course was organized in cooperation with Canada, Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany and Hungary. The purpose of the Course was to train personnel from the South East European countries in planning, organizing and executing an Aerial Observation Mission based on the provisions of the Treaty on Open Skies, thereby increasing the administrative capacity in the field of security cooperation.

The Course was mainly designed for military personnel, members of Verification Agencies, who are involved or planed to be involved in the execution of the OST Missions. It gathered five lecturers from Canada, Croatia, Germany and Hungary, as well as twelve participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The Course was designed as a combination of theoretical and practical activities.

During the theoretical part of the Course, which took place at the RACVIAC facilities in Rakitje, the professional lectures, giving a comprehensive overview of the relevant parts of the Treaty, attracted the participants’ attention and generated open discussion on all the aspects of the OST. The participants got an overview of the Open Skies Treaty, the most commonly followed rules and procedures in the execution of observation flights as well as an update on the latest developments in the implementation of the Treaty.

Practical part, comprising the observation flight and all of the related tasks, was hosted by Croatia, the Pleso Airbase. As a significant contributor to the Course, Hungary made available the aircraft AN-26, certified for the purposes of the Open Skies Treaty (OST), for the observation flight training. An Arial Observation Mission was conducted over the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

It is worth mentioning that on the same day, in the light of the 20th Anniversary of the Open Skies Treaty, Open Skies Observation Flights were also conducted in the Czech Republic, Georgia and Russia.

The entire event was financially supported by Canada and Germany. All of the countries involved provided specialists who acted as lecturers during the Course.

The Course gave an opportunity for both state parties and non-state parties of the OST to familiarize themselves with the provisions and practical implementation of the OST as well as to establish good relations with representatives of national organizations and agencies engaged in the implementation of security and confidence building measures. This year’s Course proved to be the best one ever implemented at RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and therefore the Centre stands ready to continue organizing such courses in the years to come for the benefit of the South East European region.

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GOODBYES & HELLOS

After spending more than one year at our Centre, Ms Anita Polic left her post as a Language Specialist in January this year. It has been a pleasure to receive her expert help with all language-related issues: proofreading of official documentation and correspondence, translation and interpretation. In addition to that, she has significantly contributed to the creation of RACVIAC Newsletter and website content.

We would like to thank her for her dedicated work in the course of which she supported numerous RACVIAC activities. As a very good organizer and an excellent team player, she has never hesitated to give her best in all the tasks assigned to her. She successfully cooperated with all RACVIAC staff members and proved to be an excellent co-worker, able to carry out her duties for the benefit of our organization. Ms Polic continues her translator career at the European Commission in Brussels, and we hope that the experience she gained in RACVIAC's international environment will prove beneficial at her new post. We take this opportunity to wish her all the best in the future.

After three years of service as a RACVIAC driver, Private 1st Class Darijo Pavlic's tour of duty ended in February 2012. We would like to thank him for his remarkable contribution to the organisation and smooth running of RACVIAC activities. He has not only been a good staff member, but also a very helpful and courteous colleague to us all. We will remember him as a dear colleague and a friend. We will sure miss the filled doughnuts (krafne) he generously treated us to on a regular basis. Thanking him for his professional commitment and friendship, we wish him all the best in his future career and private life.

Our new Language Specialist, Ms Anita Boljevac, joined the RACVIAC team on 16 January 2012 and was awarded a temporary employment contract. Ms Boljevac was born in Koprivnica in 1980 and she holds a Masters in English and Croatian from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies in Zagreb and a Masters in Conference Interpreting from the University of Zagreb.

After graduation, she spent two years working as a Croatian and English sign language interpreter at the Croatian Association for Deafblind People. Prior to her post at RACVIAC, she worked for five years as a freelance interpreter, translator and proofreader, providing English language translation and interpretation services for a number of national and international institutions and organizations, such as the World Bank, Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the European Commission, European People's Party, Croatian Ministry of Justice, Judicial Academy, Ministry of the Interior, Croatian Accreditation Agency.

Corporal Zeljko Golec joined RACVIAC in March 2012 as a new driver. He started his military career in the Croatian Armed Forces as a demining operations executor in the engineering brigade. Later on he spent seven years in Special Operation Forces.

Corporal Golec successfully completed the advanced NCO school and several military training courses, such as executor of demining operations course, courses on the guide dogs for the explosives detection, counter EOD and IED protection. He is also highly skilled in skiing and climbing.
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<td>2</td>
<td>SSR-01-S</td>
<td>Basics of SSR, Introducing the “Good Governance” Principle</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>27-29 Feb</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CSE-05-C</td>
<td>Vienna Document – Compliance and Verification Course</td>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>12-16 Mar</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>SSR-08-RT</td>
<td>SSR and Gender: Implementation of the UN SCR 1325</td>
<td>DCAF</td>
<td>20-22 Mar</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>CSE-04-C</td>
<td>Open Skies Treaty (OST) Aerial Observation Course</td>
<td>HR, HU, DE</td>
<td>26 Mar-06 Apr</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>SSR-09-S</td>
<td>SSR and OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security</td>
<td>OSCE, Vienna</td>
<td>24-26 Apr</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>IRC-10-CF</td>
<td>Integration and Contribution of Countries of SEE to CSDP</td>
<td>TAIEX (EU Commission) (RS)</td>
<td>09-11 May</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>IRC-05-RT</td>
<td>Irregular Migration and its Effects on Security</td>
<td>MARRI</td>
<td>15-17 May</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>CSE-03-C</td>
<td>Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (Dayton Article IV) - Orientation Course</td>
<td>OSCE HR MOD</td>
<td>28 May-01 Jun</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>IRC-12-CF</td>
<td>Investigative Journalism and Data Protection</td>
<td>EBU, HRT, RCC</td>
<td>29-31 May</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>IRC-02-S</td>
<td>Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) – EU’s Contribution to the Security and Involvement of the SEE Countries</td>
<td>TAIEX (EU Commission) (MK)</td>
<td>11-13 Jun</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>SSR-04-S</td>
<td>Democratic Control of Armed Forces as Basic Principle for SSR: Regional Perspective</td>
<td>AT, DCAF</td>
<td>12-14 Jun</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>IRC-08-CF</td>
<td>Cyber Security</td>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>18-20 Jun</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>SSR-07-P</td>
<td>Defence Resources Management: Procurement &amp; Outsourcing</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>25-27 Sep</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>IRC-06-CF</td>
<td>The Open Door Policy and Smart Defence in the Context of the New NATO Strategic Concept</td>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>25-27 Sep</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>IRC-03-S</td>
<td>EU Civil Protection Mechanism</td>
<td>TAIEX (EU Commission) (BA)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>SSR-02-S</td>
<td>SSR in the Context of PSO</td>
<td>PSOTC</td>
<td>16-18 Oct</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>CSE-06-S</td>
<td>Ottawa Convention Seminar</td>
<td>CROMAC, ITF</td>
<td>23-26 Oct</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>CSE-08-C</td>
<td>Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) Course</td>
<td>AT, DE, DTRA</td>
<td>05-09 Nov</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>SSR-06-C</td>
<td>Financial Aspects of Economic Crisis and their Impact on Security Sector</td>
<td>TAIEX (EU Commission) (ME)</td>
<td>06-08 Nov</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Search and Rescue Course</td>
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<td>12-14 Nov</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>SSR-03-W</td>
<td>Private Security/Military Companies/PMSC vs National Security Sector</td>
<td>DCAF</td>
<td>27-29 Nov</td>
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<td>Arms Control Symposium</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>IRC-09-RT</td>
<td>Demographic Trends and Social Economical Challenges in SEE</td>
<td>TAIEX (EU Commission) (HR)</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>SSR-05-S</td>
<td>Security Sector Reform: Regional Experiences – Professionalization vs Conscript Systems in SEE</td>
<td>AT, HR, RS</td>
<td>10-12 Dec</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>IRC-07-CF</td>
<td>Promoting Security Strategies and Emerging Policy Priorities in SEE</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>03-05 Dec</td>
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<td>IRC-11-S</td>
<td>Climate Change and Security</td>
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Forthcoming events

27th MAG Meeting in Durres

SSR and OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military aspects of Security

Integration and Contribution of Countries of SEE to CSDP

Irregular Migration and its Effects on Security

Workshop on Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (Dayton Article IV) - Orientation Course

Investigative Journalism and Data Protection

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) EU’s Contribution to the Security and Involvement of the SEE Countries

Democratic Control of Armed Forces as Basic Principle for SSR: Regional Perspective

Cyber Defence Strategies and Policies
Centre for Security Cooperation

"fostering dialogue and cooperation on security matters in South East Europe"