Activities Featured:

Seminar on Defence Resources Management:
“Transition of Military Education Systems in SEE“

Open Skies Aerial Observation Course

Interview with Mr Mark Albon - OPCW
RACVIAC Delegation Meets with Slovenian Minister of Defence

A RACVIAC delegation led by Director Ambassador Branimir Mandic and consisting of Deputy Director Zdravko Jakop and Programme Manager for International and Regional Cooperation, Marija Zuzek, met with Slovenian Minister of Defence, Roman Jakic in Ljubljana on Friday, January 10th.

Discussion included a review of the overall work RACVIAC has done and the success of last year’s Comprehensive Defence Ministerial hosted by Slovenia for the first time at Brdo near Kranj.

Director Mandic informed the Minister about the current work being done at RACVIAC and the new dynamics in the Centre’s activities in regards to a project-oriented approach to activities. He thanked the Slovenian partners for their ongoing support and invited them to consider a broadening of mutual cooperation, which the Slovenian side said they would review. Furthermore, Director Mandic praised Slovenia for the successful Comprehensive Defence Ministerial held in Brdo near Kranj last year.

Minister Jakic expressed satisfaction that the RACVIAC agreement has formally gone into effect and that the Host Nation Agreement with Croatia has been implemented, adding that this will undoubtedly provide a new dimension in the evolution of the organization. Minister Jakic also said that the Slovenian Ministry of Defence holds RACVIAC to be a proven organization in the field of security and defence cooperation with great potential. He added that Slovenia will continue to support RACVIAC by seconding a Programme Manager for the Security Sector Reform pillar and provide professional and expert speakers for courses and seminars being organized by the Centre. On a final note, Minister Jakic thanked the RACVIAC delegation for attending the Comprehensive Defence Ministerial and noted that Slovenia will explore the possibility of signing and ratifying the agreement on RACVIAC.

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Visits to/outside RACVIAC

Technical Agreement Signed Between RACVIAC and Croatian Ministry of Defence

On Tuesday January 14th, RACVIAC director Ambassador Branimir Madic and Croatian Minister of Defence Ante Kotromanovic signed a technical agreement on cooperation between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia and the RACVIAC Centre for Security Cooperation.

The agreement regulates the logistic support the Croatian Ministry of Defence provides for the work of RACVIAC. It is based on the RACVIAC Agreement and the Host Nation Agreement, that was signed last year between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and RACVIAC.

In discussion prior to the signing ceremony, RACVIAC Director Mandic thanked the Croatian MoD for their open cooperation and support provided so far. He noted that the Technical Agreement is the final piece of legal framework regarding RACVIAC that had to be updated. Ambassador Mandic informed the Minister of state of affairs in RACVIAC emphasizing that RACVIAC now has a stable budget, is turning toward a project-oriented approach toward activities and will be working on raising the visibility of the organization.

Minister Kotromanovic said that he was satisfied with the momentum RACVIAC has achieved in its work and that the Croatian Ministry of Defence will continue to support the organization. He noted that the increased engagement can be felt in terms of regional cooperation, to which his Ministry is paying special attention.

RACVIAC Delegation Meets with Minister of Defence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

On Tuesday, January 28th a RACVIAC delegation headed by Director Ambassador Branimir Mandic met in Zagreb with Mr. Talat Xhaferi, the Minister of Defence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*.

Opening the meeting Director Mandic thanked the delegation from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* for taking the time to meet with RACVIAC’s representatives and invited them to visit RACVIAC in the near future. Director Mandic thanked the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* for supporting RACVIAC and for seconding Mr Iljmi Selami as a Subject Matter Expert, noting that RACVIAC had gained a very capable member for its staff.

Discussing RACVIAC’s programme for 2014, Director Mandic pointed out the importance of RACVIAC member countries hosting activities and noted that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* provided an excellent example of such cooperation, hosting several activities last year and two this year: an event on Building Integrity and Anti-Corruption, as well as a seminar on Cyber Crime.

The RACVIAC delegation provided details regarding the Cyber Security Project being conducted in cooperation with NATO within the International and Regional Cooperation Pillar. It was noted that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* could be the country responsible for project documentation. In this light, a visit by a RACVIAC delegation to Minister Xhaferi in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* was agreed upon for late February, to be followed by a meeting with representatives from their Military Academy to discuss further cooperation. The RACVIAC delegation also elaborated on the event regarding Building

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Visits to/outside RACVIAC

Integrity and Anti-corruption noting that it is a topic of interest to all countries in the region and that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* invests significant efforts in the fight against corruption.

Minister Xhaferi thanked the RACVIAC delegation for taking the time to meet with him and his delegation and noted that the secondee the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* has sent to RACVIAC is an indication of their dedication to the organization. He added that his country will continue to host activities in accordance with the RACVIAC programme approved by the MAG and that they will provide support in order to fulfill our mutual goals, emphasizing that RACVIAC belonged to the region.

In conclusion Director Mandic highlighted the positive spirit in the region and noted that RACVIAC’s work will reflect and contribute to it. Once again he invited Minister Xhaferi to visit RACVIAC and thanked him for the support of his country, expressing confidence that it will continue.

Meeting of Points of Contact from the Multinational Advisory Group Held in RACVIAC

A meeting of MAG POCs was held in RACVIAC on Thursday, January 30th. Opening the meeting RACVIAC Director Ambassador Branimir Mandic welcomed the representatives from 13 countries present and noted that the organization greatly appreciates their support in making 2014 a successful year.

Director Mandic briefly reviewed the state of affairs in RACVIAC pointing out the positive events that had taken place in the recent past regarding a completion of the legal framework with the Host Nation Agreement being signed, Turkey and Romania ratifying the Agreement on RACVIAC and the Technical Agreement being signed with host nation Croatia. He noted that although the RACVIAC budget is stable, challenges still remain in terms of personnel and the programme. Director Mandic stressed that RACVIAC is moving toward a project-oriented approach to activities and that this will require longer preparations.

Following the introductory address by Director Mandic, Programme Managers Col Zafer Kilic (TR), Mr Branko Kromar M.Sc. (SI) and Ms Marija Zuzek (RS) presented the programme for 2014 within their respected Pillars. Deputy Director Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop acquainted the representatives present with RACVIAC’s manpower situation, noting that the Centre could use more support in this field and Chief of Administration and Finance, Capt Vlatka Jakupec (HR) presented the budget. An initiative for cooperation with the Proliferation Security Initiative was also set forth.

The greater part of the afternoon was reserved for fruitful discussion between the members present at which constructive and helpful suggestions were obtained.

Closing the event Director Mandic said that RACVIAC will take into account all suggestions received and inform the members on steps forward prior to the next MAG meeting.

Defence Attaches Visit RACVIAC and IMOTC


The purpose of the visit was to familiarize the attaches with the work of the two organizations that share the „Vitez Damir Martic“ barracks in Rakitje, Croatia.

The director of RACVIAC, Ambassador Branimir Mandic, welcomed the distinguished guests noting that some of them have

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Already been to RACVIAC while others are welcome newcomers.

A presentation on RACVIAC was given by the Public Affairs Officer, Capt. Branko Lozancic, followed by a discussion in which Director Mandic informed the guests of current activities at the organization. He noted that RACVIAC is adopting a project oriented approach to activities in order to better match the needs of its members. He also pointed out that RACVIAC is fortunate to have a stable budget situation and is looking forward to a possible signing of the Agreement on RACVIAC by Slovenia and Bulgaria.

Following a short break for a group photo, a presentation on the IMOTC was given by its commander, LtCol Ivica Plejic, who informed the guests about the IMOTC’s history and current activities. He provided details on the various courses the Centre conducts in order to prepare members of the armed forces from Croatia and abroad for duties in international missions.

The visit was concluded with a tour of the „Vitez Damir Martic“ barracks, hosted by LtCol Plejic, followed by lunch with staff members from RACVIAC and the IMOTC.

Delegation of Croatian Parliamentary Committees Visits RACVIAC

A delegation of three committees from the Croatian Parliament visited the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on February 20th, 2014. The delegation was led by Mr Miroslav Tudjman, the head of the Domestic Policy and National Security Committee and Mr Tomislav Ivic, the head of the Defence Committee. Mr Maroje Katalinic represented Mr Boris Blazekovic, the head of the Croatian Parliament’s Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO.

RACVIAC’s Director, Ambassador Branimir Mandic and Deputy Director, Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop, welcomed the guests noting that it was a pleasure to host such a distinguished delegation from the Host Nation.

The members of the parliamentary committees were given a presentation on the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation by Brigadier General Jakop who informed them of the Centre’s history, its organization and activities it conducts. Following the presentation Director Mandic gave a further elaboration, providing details regarding the adaptation of RACVIAC to the needs of the region. He pointed out that there are numerous organizations in the region dealing with security issues and that RACVIAC strives to avoid duplication, adding that nine memorandums of understanding have been signed with regional and sub-regional organizations, including the OSCE, UN and NATO School Oberammergau, just to name a few. He also noted that RACVIAC is broadening its cooperation with NATO and the EU and in that regard the Republic of Croatia has assumed the role of a contact nation for NATO while the Republic of Austria is the contact nation for the EU.
Visits to/outside RACVIAC

Touching upon recent events, Director Mandic noted that Romania and Turkey ratified the Agreement on RACVIAC last year and that he is looking forward to Bulgaria and Slovenia possibly signing the agreement. He added that a new RACVIAC Strategy will be prepared soon to coincide with RACVIAC’s 15 year anniversary next year that will reduce the number of activities conducted and raise their quality. He pointed out that the future RACVIAC programme will focus on 12 areas in a project-oriented sense, in order to better match the needs of the region.

A fruitful discussion followed where members of the parliamentary committees gained further insight into the working of the only international organization based on the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

In conclusion, the delegation was given a tour of the RACVIAC facilities by Brigadier General Jakop, which was followed by a lunch with members of the RACVIAC staff.

Working visit of RACVIAC delegation to Skopje

On Monday, February 24th 2014, as part of a working visit to the institutions of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, a RACVIAC delegation headed by Director Ambassador Branimir Mandic met in Skopje with the Minister of Defence Mr. Talat Xhaferi, and representatives from the “General Mihailo Apostolski” Military Academy.

During the meeting, Ambassador Mandic informed the Minister about the activities being conducted under the RACVIAC programme for 2014, underlining that the main purpose of the working visit was to explore possibilities for the realization of two project-oriented activities in the field of building integrity and preventing corruption, as well as the development of a cyber-security project with the support of the Military Academy.

Minister Xhaferi welcomed this initiative and noted that the Ministry of Defence will support RACVIAC for the suggested projects, stressing that they present a great value for the region.

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RACVIAC Delegation visited MARRI RC

A RACVIAC delegation led by Director Ambassador Branimir Mandic and consisting of Programme Manager for International and Regional Cooperation, Ms. Marija Zuzek, and Subject Matter Experts Mr. Iljmi Selami and LtC Josip Mlakic, visited the MARRI RC (The Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative - Regional Centre) in Skopje on Tuesday, February 25th. The meeting was a good opportunity for members of the RACVIAC delegation and the MARRI RC representatives to exchange information about current affairs and plans for the future, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two organizations.

Discussion included joint activities between RACVIAC and the MARRI RC in organizing seminars and workshops in 2014, as well as planning of activities for 2015.

RACVIAC Delegation visits Ministry of Justice in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

On February 25th 2014, the Director of RACVIAC, Ambassador Branimir Mandic, during his visit to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, met the Minister of Justice Mr Blerim Bexheti. Topics of discussion included the establishment of regional cooperation and promotion of opportunities for joint activities between the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*.

Director Mandic informed the Minister about the activities within RACVIAC’s programme for 2014, emphasizing possibilities for the realization of events in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in the field of building integrity and prevention of corruption. He underlined the intention to organize a conference in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in this field, which is expected to provide an initial framework for development of further steps in the activity. The event should precede a ministerial conference, planned to be held in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in the first half of 2015.

Minister Bexheti informed Director Mandic about activities that the Ministry has undertaken in the field of eradication of corruption and stressed the importance of regional and wider cooperation in prevention of corruption, which is an important precondition for well being and economic development.

Efforts to reinforce and further advance cooperation within the framework of activities proposed by the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation were also discussed. Minister Bexheti added that regional connectivity, through initiatives such as RACVIAC, are a particularly important element for creating a climate of trust, respect, friendship and support among countries in the region.

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Visits to/outside RACVIAC

RACVIAC participates in the Conference on Counterterrorism in the Region of SE Europe

The RACVIAC - Center for Security Cooperation officially participated in the sixth international regional conference 'Counterterrorism Challenges in the Region of South-Eastern Europe' held from 04 to 06 March 2014 in Maribor, Slovenia.

The sixth international regional conference was a continuation of previous conferences and proved to be very successful, highlighting the importance of cooperation between counter-terrorism experts from various countries and international organizations.

The conference was jointly organized by the Intelligence and Security Service of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, the US Embassy to Slovenia Defense Cooperation Office, the US Center for Civil-Military Relations and the Institute for Corporate Security Studies Ljubljana.

In this light, the RACVIAC - Center for Security Cooperation presented its line of work in the area of Counterterrorism, highlighting the role of RACVIAC as a platform for regional dialogue in the development of regional responses (measures) to terrorist threats.

Financial Agreement for 2014 Signed with Federal Republic of Germany


With this Agreement, the Federal Republic of Germany allocated funds which will be used to support RACVIAC activities covering the costs of seminars, courses and workshops, especially within the RACVIAC programme pillar “Cooperative Security Environment (CSE), with focus on Arms Control”.

RACVIAC representatives, Ambassador Branimir Mandic and Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop, acknowledged the cooperation with Germany as a mainstay of the SEE region's progress and security for over a decade. Owing to continual German contributions, RACVIAC focused primarily on the training of verification experts in order to lay the groundwork for implementing arms control agreements such as the Dayton Agreement, Vienna Document, Open Skies Treaty, Chemical Weapons Convention and the Oslo Convention. In this way, RACVIAC and Germany significantly contributed to enhancing trust and cooperation among security forces in the region and beyond.

RACVIAC delegation attends SEDM meeting in Bucharest, Romania

A delegation from the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation led by director Ambassador Branimir Mandic, visited Bucharest, Romania from March 18th to 21st where they participated in a meeting of the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM) process and the meetings related to Romania’s support to the work of the Centre.

In addition to participation in the SEDM meeting, meetings with the new State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of Romania, Mr Valeriu Nikuta and the adviser of the Prime Minister of Romania in charge of energy issues, Ambassador Miheana Constantinescu, also took place.

During the meeting, the new State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of Romania, Mr Valeriu Nikut expressed strong interest in
RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation activities and once again reaffirmed Romania’s support for further strategic directions in the work RACVIAC does. In this regard, special interest was expressed in the RACVIAC “2020” Strategy. On the occasion, Mr Nikut also announced his official visit to the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in the forthcoming period.

During the working visit to Romania the management of the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation met with the adviser of the Prime Minister of Romania for energy issues, Ambassador Mihaela Constantinescu. The aim of the meeting was a continuation of harmonization of details pertaining to Romania’s leading role in the realization of the energy security project within the Centre’s programme of activities. In this sense, the adviser to the Prime Minister of Romania in charge of energy issues, Ambassador Mihaela Constantinescu informed those present of the importance that the project in the field of energy security within the RACVIAC programme has for Romania and stressed the importance of safety aspects in this regard for the wider region of South East Europe.

A delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia visits RACVIAC

A delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia visited the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on Thursday, March 27th. Lieutenant General Naser Sejdini, the Deputy Chief of General Staff lead the delegation consisting of Mr Ilir Selmani, Chief of the Minister’s Cabinet and Mr Spasoja Damjanoski, Head of MoD Finances.

RACVIAC deputy director Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop greeted the delegation thanking them for the continued support that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has provided for RACVIAC.

Lieutenant General Sejdini thanked the RACVIAC staff present for receiving the delegation and conveyed greetings from both the Minister of Defence and the Chief of General Staff. He noted that his country looks on regional cooperation with great interest and expressed hope that organizations such as RACVIAC will help the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in its efforts to join Euro-Atlantic integrations.

General Sejdini commended RACVIAC for the work that it does and said that his country will continue to fully support its activities not just in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia but other locations as well. He added once again that his country considers regional cooperation important for stability in South East Europe.

Mr Spasoja Damjanoski pointed out that he was glad to visit the RACVIAC Centre for Security Cooperation and see first hand what his department supports on so many occasions, indicating that he will be a good representative in advocating the RACVIAC idea in the future.

Following a brief presentation on the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, a fruitful discussion was held where Lieutenant General Sejdini stressed, among other things, that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will consider sending an additional member to the RACVIAC staff in the time to come.

In conclusion Brigadier General Jakop thanked the delegation for their visit and praised the idea of sending an additional member to the RACVIAC staff. He referred to the fact that in 2015 RACVIAC will be celebrating its 15th anniversary and that, since its establishment, more than ten thousand people have attended RACVIAC events. He added that this is significant and shows that RACVIAC uses funds placed at its disposal efficiently and effectively to provide the region with the best product possible.

Prior to departure Brigadier General Jakop lead the delegation on a tour of the RACVIAC facilities and hosted a lunch for the guests.

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From February 4th to 6th 2014, a seminar titled Defence Resources Management: Transition of Military Education Systems in SEE was held in RACVIAC and at the Petar Zrinski - Croatian Military Academy. The seminar was conducted in cooperation with the Croatian Military Academy and was the first in a series of RACVIAC’s activities designed to assist countries of the SEE region in their efforts to actively address and implement reforms of the military and civilian education systems in the post-Cold War period.

Transition of Military Education Systems in SEE is one of the priority issues within the Security Sector Reform process due to the simple fact that most SEE countries are on the formal path towards EU and/or NATO membership. The seminar “Transition of Military Education Systems in SEE” tackled this highly important element in the management of national resources and also referred to the changes in civil-military relations in the last two decades in the light of Euro-Atlantic integration processes, current economic and financial circumstances and the role and position of the military education systems.

During two working days, 33 participants from 8 countries conducted or attended national presentations on transition of military education systems in their respective countries and offered unique insights into the role of military education in SEE today. They also exchanged views on best practices and further actions required in the context of pooling and sharing of defence capabilities as a primary model of future military cooperation. Presentations and speeches were given by presenters from the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, the University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Social Sciences), Albanian Military Education and Social Care Directory, the University of Zagreb, the Croatian Military Academy, Macedonian Military Academy, (University of Stip), University of Defence, Cooperation and International relations in Belgrade, the Council for Geopolitics (HU), the College of Bionics at the School Centre in Ptuj (SI) and several other regional higher education institutions.

It was agreed that while discussing national issues to the benefit of all, the participants were able to enhance mutual understanding and collaboration in the field of military education and through candid and open sharing of experience, take part in building of security in their countries and development of related issues.

One of the main intentions of the Seminar was to increase the visibility of the military education system per se not only in the security sector but to stress the need for the integration of these systems into civilian education systems.

Small nations that operate with limited resources within an extremely difficult post-conflict, financial and economic crisis environment, which is a problem affecting not just SEE countries, were able to utilize this Seminar as an excellent opportunity to identify future areas of cooperation where the Pooling & Sharing / Smart Defence concept could be implemented.
Cooperative Security Environment

Physical Security and Stockpile Management Course

In cooperation with the Verification Centre of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence and Sport and the Bundeswehr Verification Centre.

A Physical Security and Stockpile Management workshop was held in RACVIAC from February 18th to 20th. The workshop focused on training executive managers to assess national stockpiles, operational procedures and infrastructure and provide ways for potential improvements to security and management, as well as to introduce best international practices in Physical Security and Stockpile Management.

RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Branimir Mandic, opened the workshop noting that Stockpiling of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), Conventional Armaments (CA) and explosives continue to be burning issues. The safe storage and disposal of surplus and aging weapons and munitions is a matter of serious concern for the South East European region. Countries and international organizations have addressed this issue several times, making sincere efforts to decrease the threat. Director Mandic underlined that only a continuous effort, especially in terms of providing appropriate education and training, can ease the situation and contribute to finding a successful solution to this challenge. This is the main reason why RACVIAC organizes these types of workshops and courses on a regular basis.

The workshop objectives were:

• To train experts in executing their professional duties;
• To analyze main challenges in stockpile management and find ways for improvement;
• To specify necessary requirements for a possible course on SALW/CA matters in the second half of the year with the same participants;
• To increase participants’ capabilities in organizing, planning and conducting PSSM workshops, courses;
• To raise awareness of a complex regional issue in its entirety and to enhance regional/national ownership;
• To evaluate the real needs of the countries in the region regarding PSSM;
• To strengthen the commitment of relevant political and military decision makers and experts.

The workshop was conducted with the assistance of seven lecturers: Mr Eric Berman (SAS, Geneva) - Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites (UEMS): understanding and countering the threat; Dr Edward Harriman (Brook Lapping Productions Ltd, UK) - Western Perceptions of Physical Security and Stockpile Management in South-Eastern Europe, Mr John Martin (OSCE, Sarajevo) - PSSM in BiH: OSCE perspectives, successes and future challenges, Mr Blaž Mihelič (ITF, MoD SI) - Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites (UEMS) Lessons learned - Case studies, Col Richard Monsberger (MoD AT, Verification Centre) - Introduction to the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG) and the Austrian/MoDS engagement in SALW projects, Mr Jasmin Porobić (UNDP, Sarajevo) - UEMS or Proliferation - Safety or Security of Storage Depots, Mr Thomas Taylor (MSIAC) - Supporting the Munitions Safety Community; In-Service Surveillance Program; Training to NATO Standards.

It was concluded that Countries of the region must get acquainted with the translated manuals and relevant policies of NATO. Training and going to exercises, performed together with the countries in the region, is important, as well as to make an implementation plan. As far as risk management goes, it is necessary to envisage other countries’ databases. It was also agreed that a future event about PSSM, envisaged to be held in the next year, is to be organized.
In cooperation with Verification Centre of the Ministry of Defence of Croatia, the Arms Control Unit of the Ministry of Defence of Hungary, the Defence Forces of Hungary, the Arms Control Verification of the National Defence of Canada and the Bundeswehr Verification Centre of Germany.

The Open Skies Aerial Observation course, one of RACVIAC’s most recognizable events, was carried out from 24 February - 06 March 2014, in RACVIAC, Rakitje and the 91st Airbase (Pleso), Croatia.

The purpose of the course was to train personnel from SEE countries to plan, organize and execute an Aerial Observation Mission based on the provisions of the Open Skies Treaty (OST), thus increasing the administrative capacity in the field of security cooperation.

The objectives of the course were:

- to overview the specified elements of the OST, highlighting the most comprehensive and commonly followed rules and procedures of its execution;
- to provide the participants with information about the current situation in the development and implementation of the OST;
- to carry out a training Aerial Observation Mission, thus providing practical experience;
- to deepen contacts between representatives of national organizations and agencies engaged in the accomplishment of arms control and/or security- and confidence-building measures;
- to set an example of security cooperation on national, regional and international levels.

In his opening address Deputy Director, Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop said that the Open Skies Treaty is one of the most important tools in confidence building worldwide. Our region is also part of this and most of the countries are members of the Open Skies Treaty and benefit from it. He thanked lecturers from the verification centres of Canada, Croatia, Germany and Hungary who arrived to share their experience and knowledge with the participants.

The course was conducted in two phases: a theoretical phase, which took place at the RACVIAC facilities in Rakitje, and a practical phase at the 91st Airbase in Zagreb, including a training flight with the Hungarian AN-26 aircraft.

The first phase (25 - 28 February) was conducted as a combination of presentations and a classroom exercise on a mission plan as a preparation for the accomplishment of the training observation flight. The presentations covered the provisions of the Treaty on Open Skies, the OSCE Decisions and Chairman’s Statements augmenting the original text of the Treaty, notifications and the used formats, OS platforms and sensor suits used by the Member States, certification procedures, pre-flight inspection, film processing, duplication and procedures of access to information, mission planning, mission rundown and tasks related to receiving an OS mission, mission plan negotiation and preparation of the mission report.

In the second week (3 - 5 March), activities were carried out in compliance with the OST and with close similarity to the time schedule of a real OS mission. This phase included the training in point of entry (POE) procedure, real life meteorological and ATC briefings, pre-flight inspection, mission plan negotiation and mission plan review, preparation for the observation flight, observation flight, development of the aerial photographs, preparation and signature of the mission report.

According to experts and participants assessments provided at the end of the event, the Course proved to be successful and it achieved all of the objectives. Highly professional lectures and their personal experience attracted participants’ attention and generated open discussion on all aspects of the OST.
The Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar, which was conducted in RACVIAC from March 17th to 20th is part of a traditional project activity carried out by the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The purpose of this Seminar was to discuss relevant issues related to the CWC and to provide a broad overview of the Chemical Weapons Convention implementation procedures and a general outline of specific conditions in the region.

The Seminar’s objectives were:

- To provide an overview of the CWC, Article X in particular, including major achievements and challenges;
- To clarify any uncertainties in the fulfilment of Article X obligations of the CWC by the Member States of the OPCW;
- To inform the participants about the implementation of Article X of the CWC and the roles and capabilities of the OPCW under Article X of the CWC;
- To introduce a Chemical Incident Crisis Management exercise, in order for the participants to see and learn how to react in those conditions;
- To emphasize the importance of Capacity Building in the fight against Chemical Weapons Agents (CWA) and Toxic Industrial Chemicals (TIC), through national- and regional level projects;
- To update participants on Contingency Operations and to talk about regional support during operations in the field;
- To enhance participants’ knowledge about OPCW verification procedures and OPCW inspections;
- To provide information about assistance offered by the countries in the region under Article X of the CWC and about their preparedness, reaction time and provision of logistic support;
- To execute training via a Table Top Exercise for prototypical Chemical Incident Consequence Management.

Lectures were given by Ms Megan Thomas (OPCW) - The OPCW and the Chemical Weapons Convention, Implementation of Article X and Capacity Building; Mr Mark Albon (OPCW) - Recent Challenges: An Update on Syria; Mr Jerry Boland (OPCW) -
Consequence Management/Chemical Incident Response; Prof Zvonko Orehovec (University of Applied Sciences, Velika Gorica) - Military, technical and defence security standards in industrial facilities protection in case of terrorism and a military attack.

During the Seminar the participants engaged in a Table Top Exercise (TTX), forming three groups, whose members represented all participants in the Seminar. The participants were tasked with having to deal with the consequences of a series of explosions in the chemical terminal area of the harbour of Jakarta. The members of the three groups worked along the lines of the tasks (1-2-3) and questions posed in a distributed document. The speakers (all of them members of the TU delegation) in each group informed the audience about the results of their work, including a press release during a fictional press conference, which necessitated very good communication skills and professional expertise, since they were exposed to a crossfire of questions, mostly posed by the representatives of the OPCW.

Following an evaluation it was concluded that participants would like to hear more about the following topics and lectures: The legal aspects of chemical weapons; Consequence management; The possibilities of dialogue and the practical approach.

RACVIAC would like to express thanks to the OPCW and the high level of lecturers that took part, their professionalism and experience, as well as their presentations were highly appreciated by all participants.

Memorandum of Understanding signed between the RACVIAC and OPCW

During the Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) continuing the long cooperation between the two organizations. Deputy Director Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop signed for RACVIAC while Director of International Cooperation and Assistance, Mr Mark Albon, signed for the OPCW.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Workshop on „Promoting OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security“

26 28 March 2014
Belgrade, Serbia

A RACVIAC delegation led by Director Ambassador Branimir Mandic and consisting of Programme Manager for International and Regional Cooperation, Ms. Marija Zuzek, and Programme Manager for Security Sector Reform, Mr. Sc. Branko Kromar participated in the Workshop on „Promoting OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security“ in Belgrade, Serbia, from March 26th to 28th.

The Workshop was jointly organized by the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation as a partner, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and OSCE Mission in Serbia, with the support of the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, DCAF and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

At the Opening session on 26th of March, RACVIAC Director Branimir Mandic welcomed and thanked partners for the invitation to participate in this Workshop.

The purpose of the Workshop was to support the implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico Military Aspects of Security in South East Europe and beyond.
Interview with Mr Mark Albon, Director of OPCW International Cooperation and Assistance Division

The OPCW recently received the Nobel Peace prize for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons. Can you tell us how this was received in the OPCW? How has it affected the work of the OPCW and the work of your directorate?

Well the announcement that the OPCW had won the Nobel Peace prize was somewhat unexpected. I think at the time we were not even aware that we had been nominated for the Peace Prize in 2013. On the day that the announcement was made I think there was a great deal of very pleasant surprise in the organization, everybody was obviously feeling very happy about the honor that had been bestowed on the OPCW. I think that there was a sense that the hard work that we’d been doing over the last sixteen years had been recognised by the international community for the value that it has brought. The affect on the work really, I suppose has been that it has moved the OPCW closer to centre stage, in terms of the international community's response to issues related to weapons of mass destruction. I saw one article which described us as an obscure, small organization working in the Hague and I think we’re probably less obscure than we used to be. More people know about us, more people know about what it is that we do and of course if you combine that with our activities in Syria, which have also been highlighted in the international media, then the two things together I think have brought a renewed focus to the OPCW and a renewed appreciation by the international community for the work that we do.

OPCW received worldwide recognition for its efforts in Syria. Can you please tell us about the current situation there and in other hotspots where the OPCW is active?

The current situation is that the Syrian government has of course joined the Chemical Weapons Convention and has undertaken all obligations in accordance with its joining of the convention and there is an ongoing program to eliminate the chemical weapons stockpile in Syria. This program has been accelerated quite significantly, because of the situation in Syria, but the terms and the circumstances of the chemical weapons program destruction in Syria has been done with the agreement and acquiescence of the government of Syria, as well as of course with the rest of the States Parties working through the Executive Council of the Organization. The project is ongoing, so chemical weapons in Syria are being removed and will finally be destroyed outside of the country. All of the precursor chemicals are being removed. It’s our expectation that the agreement that Syria reached with the international community, with the rest of the States Parties, on how they will go about the process of eliminating their chemical weapons, will be met. Whether it gets met exactly as it was originally intended with the original timeframes, that is still open to consideration. We hope of course that they will meet those deadlines.

How do you see the OPCW developing in the future?
I think the OPCW is actually at a bit of a crossroads, in terms of its history. The program which is taking place in Syria, notwithstanding, the destruction of the declared chemical weapons around the world are getting towards the stage where the programs will be finalized. So the US and the Russian Federation, which are the two largest outstanding programs to be finalized, are getting close to the date of finalization. I think we’ll see over the next few years those programs will be finalized and then we will have reached the point where all the States Parties who have declared a possession of chemical weapons will have had them destroyed. Which will mean that we’ll have to change the strategic focus of the Organization from one which is focused on the destruction of chemical weapons stockpile, to one which is focused on ensuring that chemical weapons are not manufactured again in the future. It will be a more focused process of industrial verification and ensuring that chemistry being used around the world is indeed used for peaceful purposes.

**What obstacles are faced in the implementation of the Convention?**

I think the main obstacle is of course ensuring that there is sufficient understanding and capacity in the States Parties to implement the Convention. There is an ongoing need to ensure that States Parties understand their obligations fully and that they have all the tools and mechanisms available to them to be able to implement the Convention as it was intended. This is a very complex instrument, it’s not an easy process. It’s not a simple case of signing and you’ve completed your obligations, there are ongoing obligations over time which relate to declarations around industrial chemicals, receiving inspections and so on. So I think the complexity of the treaty is probably one of our biggest challenges. But, at the same time, I think there is a very healthy and robust willingness on the part of States Parties to ensure that they implement this convention, because I think it is a model for other similar treaties. So even though it is a very complex treaty to implement I think States Parties take on that complexity to demonstrate that it can actually be achieved.

**Two countries have not yet ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, while four countries have not signed it. Why do you think that is and do you think this will be resolved in the foreseeable future?**

Well I think the convention has a requirement that we work towards complete universality. All states in the world should join. The reality is that the Chemical Weapons Convention today with 190 states parties is already the most successful and the most widely implemented arms control and non-proliferation treaty in history. The outstanding six countries have a variety of different reasons why they haven’t joined the convention to date. I think we’re quite hopeful that countries like Angola, Myanmar and South Sudan will join in the relatively near future. It’s important to know that throughout the six countries that haven’t joined, there isn’t one of them that has a policy objection to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The remaining three, I’ve mentioned Angola, Myanmar and South Sudan who have no specific reasons not to join, but Egypt and Israel have a unique relationship given their history and there are some elements to their position on joining the Chemical Weapons Convention which relate to other issues around weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons and so on. So there are some complexities to that issue and until those complexities, which are unrelated to the Chemical Weapons Convention are resolved, getting them to join will be more of a challenge. Of course North Korea is a state with whom communication is challenging at the best of times. So we are working towards it, we are hopeful that we will achieve full universality over the next few years.

**How much of a threat to global security do chemical weapons still represent and what would the next steps be once all countries have ratified and succeeded to the Convention?**

Well again, I think chemical weapons in their classic form, the way we understand them from World War I, are a reducing threat. I don't think that there is a tremendous threat that you would see the development of a large scale chemical weapons program in the classic sense of the word. I think the threat that chemicals being used as weapons...
represent, are more assymetric. I think there is the possibility that non-state actors could use industrial toxic chemicals, chemicals which are available in the public market, in some kind of terrorist attack. I think that's probably the more likely scenario. Which again, makes it so terribly important that States Parties have the necessary tools available to them to be able to implement the Convention and apply the necessary controls in each of their States Parties to ensure that these chemicals are not easily available to people who would use them for criminal purposes. Then I think probably the next steps in terms of where to after the Chemical Weapons Convention, I think the Chemical Weapons Convention represents a model for other regimes. I think that there are more lessons to be learned from what we've done in this Convention that could apply to other areas. I think that the great success of the Chemical Weapons Convention has been that it's shown that the international community, with hard work and good will, can achieve the elimination of an entire category of weapons.

**In your opinion, what impact has the Chemical Weapons Convention had on South East Europe?**

You have one country in South East Europe which had a chemical weapons program and which went ahead and declared it and then destroyed that chemical weapons program and I think that that's a very positive thing. I think that it demostrates that the Convention is a force for peaceful progress in the region and I think that the cooperative nature of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the fact that it really emphasizes an underlying process of cooperation among States Parties to make it work effectively, has had a very positive effect on South East Europe. I think that the course we're having here this week and the fact that we have representatives from so many States in the region, demonstrates the sort of cooperative nature of the Convention and the requirement that it has on States Parties to work together on a positive common goal, that is of course the elimination of these weapons and ensuring that they are not used in the future. I think anything that contributes to that sense of positive cooperation is something which is to be encouraged.

**What is the main message you wish to convey during your lecture at RACVIAC?**

I think it follows on what I've arleady said, it's all about cooperation and working together, identifying the necessary goals that you have, and of course in terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention they are very clear, eliminating the weapons and making sure that they are not returned in the future. So I think that the key message is to continue to work together, to identify what the challenges are and to be creative about how to overcome those challenges. I think that each region has different challenges. Here you have a different industrial profile, you have a different political history and all of these things play into the challenges that you face and I think that those challenges can be overcome with good will and hard work and cooperation among the regional partners. I would encourage the cooperation that's already taking place and urge the participants here this week to use this as an opportunity to get to know each other, to build those networks and relationships, that will make this a successful endeavor in the future.

**RACVIAC has proven to be a successful platform for promoting dialogue in the south east european region and has facilitated numerous confidence and security building measures. Based on your previous experience do you think the RACVIAC model could be applied to other regions in the world?**

Absolutely, I think that the whole idea of a shared experience is what makes this kind of treaty, and particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention, successful. I think the success that we've achieved as a Convention is magnified by institutions like RACVIAC, where you have the opportunity to bring participants together and to share experiences, to explore challenges and to find unique and interesting ways to resolve them. So yes, I think that it could well be replicated, in fact, I think it is being replicated in other parts of the world, each with their own unique flavor to them. There are similar initiatives, not necessarily quite in the same model, but similar initiatives around that world that we are working with to facilitate this kind of cooperation between States Parties.
Ms Sanja Romic joined the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in January 2014, and currently works as the RACVIAC Language Expert and also assists in the Security Sector Reform Pillar. She holds an M.A. degree in English and Croatian and an M.A. in European Studies. Educated in the U.S.A. (Glasgow Middle School, Baton Rouge, LA.), Austria (Karl-Franzens-Universität, Graz, Universität Wien, Vienna) and Croatia (Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb), Ms. Romic has spent a substantial part of her journalistic career working as a Brussels-based EU-correspondent (from 2004-2008), mainly reporting on Croatia’s accession to the EU from the EC, the EP and other EU and international organizations, such as NATO.

Ms Katarina Vukić joined the RACVIAC team in March 2014 for a second time as a volunteer working in the Security Sector Reform Pillar. She was born on July 12th 1988 in Dubrovnik. She is currently studying at the University Of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science where she is preparing her graduate thesis on the Transformation of Political Systems in Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Taiwan, Thailand and South Korea. Through her studies she has developed an interest in international relations and has participated in producing a television programme for the Student TV. In her free time she enjoys reading, photography, running and travelling.

Ms Tanja Kozic began volunterring at RACVIAC in March 2014 for a second time in the Security Sector Reform Pillar. She was born on March 3rd, 1990 in Slavonski Brod, Croatia. She completed her secondary education at the Fra Marjan Lanosovic Secondary School and then obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Public Relations from the University of Political Science in Zagreb. She is currently completing her graduate studies. Through her studies she has developed an interest in international relations, national security and political communication. She is fluent in English and has basic knowledge of German and Spanish. In her free time she enjoys dancing and working with children.

Ms Lavinia Elena Ciurez arrived at RACVIAC from Romania on April 1st as an intern under the Erasmus programme of the EU. Ms Ciurez has a Master’s degree from the National School of Political Science and Administration in Bucharest, Romania as well as a Master’s degree in German, European and Global Policy from the Institute for Political Science and Sociology - Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universitaet in Bonn, Germany. In her previous experience she worked as an External Relations Coordinator for the Let’s do it World! - Let’s do it, Danube! Project and as a project assistant for the White Cross Foundation in Bucharest, Romania. Ms Ciurez will be working in RACVAC’s Security Sector Reform pillar.

Ms Anita Boljevac left RACVIAC in January this year, after 2 years of service as our Language Specialist. It has been a pleasure to receive her expert help with all language-related issues: proofreading of official documentation and correspondence, translation and interpretation. Furthermore she significantly contributed to the creation of the 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. We take this opportunity to wish her all the best in the future.

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1st Director - COL Nikola Nogolica (HR) & 1st Deputy Director - COL Burkhard Thomaschewski (DE)