MAG POC's Meeting Held at RACVIAC

Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar Held at RACVIAC

RACVIAC Deputy Director Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop Appointed Croatian Assistant Minister of Defence

RACVIAC Celebrates International Women's Day
MAG POC Meeting held at RACVIAC

A meeting of MAG Points of Contact was held at the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on Wednesday January 20th, 2016. The aim of the gathering was to inform representatives of RACVIAC member and participant countries of current events taking place at RACVIAC and the state of affairs at the Centre.

The meeting began with presentations by Programme Managers regarding the RACVIAC programme for 2016 and a projection for 2017. The Programme Managers provided the MAG POCs with information regarding proposed changes to the programme within their respective pillars, while delegates were invited to inform RACVIAC on their readiness to host activities, finance them and contribute in kind.

The meeting continued with a presentation of the new Online Registration Procedure for RACVIAC activities.

Other presentations included an overview of the current RACVIAC personnel situation and changes in the RACVIAC Manpower Table as well as information regarding the current financial situation, realization of the 2015 budget and overview of the 2016 budget.
Austrian ambassador visits RACVIAC

On Thursday February 4th, 2015 the ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Croatia H.E. Dr Andreas Wiedenhoff visited the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation. The visit began with a tête-a-tête meeting with RACVIAC director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk. Followed by a meeting with members of the RACVIAC staff.

Following a presentation on RACVIAC, Ambassador Wiedenhoff noted that RACVIAC is going in the right direction as it adapts to the ever changing security environment. He noted that Austria being the host nation of the OSCE and others is very much interested in security cooperation. He added that dialogue and cooperation, found in the RACVIAC mission statement, are very important and that all can contribute to added value by cooperating.

During discussion with members of the RACVIAC staff ways in which to improve RACVIAC visibility within the EU were discussed.

The visit ended with a lunch hosted by RACVIAC Director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk.

Canadian ambassador visits RACVIAC

On Friday February 5th, 2015 the ambassador of Canada to the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Daniel Maksymiuk, visited the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

Ambassador Maksymiuk began his visit with an office call to RACVIAC Director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk. He then met with members of the RACVIAC staff where he was given a briefing on the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

Following the briefing, a discussion was held in which various aspects of the RACVIAC programme of activities were covered along with the various security challenges affecting the region and how RACVIAC’s programme adapts to these changes.

Ambassador Maksymiuk said that he was proud Canada was an observer country at RACVIAC adding that he will look for ways for Canada to be more active. In conclusion he wished the entire RACVIAC staff success in their work.
On Monday February 8th, 2016, the Norwegian defence attache in the Republic of Serbia visited the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in the company of the High Executive Officer Assistant to the Attache Ms Marit Skrugstad. The visit began with an office call with RACVIAC Director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk, followed by a meeting with the RACVIAC staff. Following a brief introduction to members of the staff the guests were given a short briefing on the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation. During the discussion the substantial contribution to Norway in the past was underlined while the various aspects of the RACVIAC programme for 2016 were explained.

The meeting ended with a lunch hosted by RACVIAC Director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk.

On Monday February 26th, 2016 the Serbian ambassador accredited to the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Mira Nikolić paid a visit to the RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation in the company of the Serbian Defence Attaché to the Republic of Croatia Colonel Ivan Vulić.

The visit began with a separate meeting with RACVIAC director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk followed by a meeting with members of the RACVIAC staff. During the meeting H.E. Berk and members of the staff informed the Serbian ambassador of activities being conducted within the RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation.

During discussion H.E. Nikolić informed the staff of Serbia’s status as an EU candidate country and various aspects of accession negotiations related to security. Development of the RACVIAC programme was also discussed in particular related to emerging security challenges such as natural catastrophes and the migrant crisis.

Following the meeting the delegation attended a lunch hosted by H.E. Haydar Berk.
Visits to/outside RACVIAC

RACVIAC director meets with Croatian Minister of Defence

The director of the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation Ambassador Haydar Berk met with the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Croatia Josip Buljević on Thursday March 10th, 2016.

During discussions the importance of RACVIAC as a strong security-policy platform in South East Europe was confirmed while at the same time mutual satisfaction with cooperation to date and the support of the Croatian Ministry of Defence for RACVIAC was expressed.

Minister Buljević emphasized that one of the priorities in his activities will be building a stable and secure region. Considering the fact that security problems faced by a series of European countries should be resolved at their sources and with close inter-state cooperation, RACVIAC, as place where such cooperation and exchange of experiences takes place, takes a prominent place. Thus, the minister announced further deepening of cooperation and full support for RACVIAC.

Ambassador Berk underlined the importance increasing RACVIAC’s connectivity and cooperation with NATO, the EU, OSCE and other relevant organizations and institutions. He emphasized that the organization is in a continuous process of adapting its activities according to the needs of the regional countries. Thus RACVIAC’s strategy covers regional and global security challenges through a wide spectrum of activities from CBMs, security sector reforms and gender equality to counter transnational security threats such as terrorism, proliferation of WMDs, organized crime, all forms of illicit trafficking and cyber security.
Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Croatia visits RACVIAC


The programme of Ambassador Khasiyev’s visit to RACVIAC comprised an office call with Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC, and continued with a meeting which also included RACVIAC staff.

In the ensuing part, a presentation on RACVIAC was held and also a discussion on the various aspects of the organizational set up and framework of RACVIAC took part. The talks spanned the question of the influence of the current security situation on the RACVIAC Programme. Ambassador Khasiyev was interested to learn how the specific aspects of the Programme are being elaborated on and in RACVIAC activities.

“The fact that RACVIAC is able to adopt its Programme accordingly to the current security situation and the requirements of the region is one of its greatest strengths overall”, said Ambassador H.E. Haydar Berk in conclusion of the meeting.

RACVIAC Director visits Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

On 25 March 2016 Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC, payed courtesy calls on H.E. Zoran Djordjevic, Minister of Defense and Ambassador Branimir Filipović, Acting Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

During the meeting at the Ministry of Defense Minister Djordjevic highlighted the dedication of the Serbian MoD to regional cooperation and cooperation with RACVIAC of which Serbia is a permanent member as the best way of preserving stability and security in the region. He also indicated the importance of the principle of consensus on all decisions that are made at the Centre. Ambassador Berk expressed his thanks for the strong support that Serbia is providing to RACVIAC and for Serbia’s active participation in all meetings and workshops. He emphasized that RACVIAC, as a technical regional organization, is working for the benefit of the whole region and that there shouldn’t be any gaps in regional security cooperation. He expressed hope that the Serbian MOD will maintain its valuable support of RACVIAC and that in the forthcoming period this cooperation will be further enhanced.

During the visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ambassador Berk acquainted Ambassador Branimir Filipović and Ambassador Branka Latinović, Head of the Department of Arms Control, with the ongoing RACVIAC activities and projects. Ambassador Filipović expressed satisfaction for RACVIAC excellent work, particularly on the C-WMD Network, and confidence in more active participation of not only the MFA but also of the other Ministries in RACVIAC activities. Ambassador Berk underlined the importance of regional ownership and that RACVIAC will continue, through the implementation of its Programme, promoting cooperation and stability in the SEE region.
Financial Agreement for 2016 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 "Cooperative Security Environment (CSE), with focus on Arms Control" pillar. Namely, the activities focused on the training of verification experts, under treaties such as: the Dayton Agreement, the Vienna Document, the Arms Control Symposium and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

H.E. ambassador Haydar Berk praised the cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany for over a decade. As topics related to arms control and verification present one of the basic activities since the beginning of RACVIAC, this cooperation significantly contributed to enhancing trust and confidence in the region and beyond.

Centre for International Military Operations celebrates 15th anniversary

The Croatian Centre for International Military Operations which shares the "Vitez Damir Martić" barracks in Rakitje, Croatia, with the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation celebrated its 15th anniversary on Friday March 4th, 2016.

A ceremony was held in the Restaurant Rakitje where dignitaries attended including Croatian Armed Forces Chief of General Staff, General Mirko Šundov, the Commander of Croatian Land Forces General Mate Ostović, Deputy Minister of Defence Mr Tomislav Ivić and RACVIAC Director H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk.

The commander of the International Military Operations Centre, Lt Col Ivica Plejic addressed those gathered presenting a brief overview of the history of the Centre which was founded in 2001. An awards ceremony was then held where selected members of the centre's personnel and the centre itself were awarded for outstanding service.

Dignitaries were then given a tour of the "Vitez Damir Martić" barracks during which a portion of RACVIAC's facilities were also viewed. RACVIAC director H.E. Haydar berk took the opportunity to inform the guests about the activities of the RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

Celebrations ended with a lunch hosted by the Croatian Centre for International Military Operations.
RACVIAC celebrates International Women's Day

On March 8th, 2016 the world marked International Women's Day, which in 2016 was held under the theme "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality." With the theme the UN asked governments to make national commitments that will close the gender equality gap.

The RACVIAC - Centre for Security cooperation remains fully committed to the promotion of gender equality. In this regard RACVIAC continues to organize several activities each year addressing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women and peace and security. This year two activities have been planned: A conference on Gender Perspectives and Security in SEE in April and a Gender Training of the Trainers Course scheduled for the second half of May.

The RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation conveyed greetings to all women on the occasion of International Women's Day.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar

Organised in cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

15 - 18 February 2016, Rakitje, Croatia

Introduction

The Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar is part of a traditional project activity carried out by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The purpose of such Seminars is to discuss relevant issues related to the CWC and provide a broad overview of the CWC implementation procedures with a specific focus on legislative aspects, requirements as well as administrative and regulatory measures in implementing the Convention. Additionally, OPCW seeks to gain a clear understanding of the administrative measures that are currently in place in the different countries in the region and of the mechanisms deployed by them.

Therefore, the Seminar's objectives were:

- To provide an overview of the CWC, Article X in particular, major achievements and challenges included;
- 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 clarify any uncertainties in the fulfilment of Article X obligations of the CWC by the States Parties to the OPCW;
- to provide all necessary information on Article X - Assistance and Protection against Chemical Weapons;
- to collect information on the adoption, implementation and enforcement measures deployed by the States Parties in the sub-region, and
- to identify follow-up procedures that are in place in the States Parties.

Seminar participants
The participants (17) came from the following countries: Republic of Albania (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Republic of Croatia (1), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (2), Montenegro (3), the Russian Federation (1), Republic of Serbia (1), Republic of Turkey (1) and Kosovo** (3). They were both senior and junior military officials and civilians, dealing with related issues.

The Seminar was conducted with the assistance of two (2) lecturers: Mr Guy Valente (Project Officer, OPCW) and Ms Katarina Gromulsova (Inspector Analytical Chemist, OPCW).

It was carried out as a combination of lectures and presentations followed by questions and answers. This Seminar was designed with the goal to share expertise, opinions and lessons learned, to identify problems and find possible solutions, as well as to explore the ways ahead. The Seminar also provided a favourable environment and atmosphere for valuable and focused discussions.

**Execution**

The Seminar began on 16 February 2016 with the welcome address of Director of RACVIAC, Ambassador Haydar Berk, followed by the opening remarks of Mr Guy Valente, Project Officer, on behalf of OPCW.

During the presentation that followed, Ms Katarina Gromulsova informed the participants about Chemical Forensics and the First Responder, under the subtitle "Thinking Ahead".

In the afternoon the work continued with a case study and discussion, entitled "A Strange Outbreak".

With the help of the moderators, Guy Valente and Katarina Gromulsova, the participants could actively participate in a scenario which explored a mysterious public health event. Participants were challenged to explore it and make decisions in a modified ‘table-top exercise’ format. The aim of this was to prompt participants into considering the event in the context of their home country and identify strengths and weaknesses within the framework of their type of response.

The second working day (Wednesday, 17 February 2016) was reserved exclusively for national presentations.

**Proposals**

According to the Questionnaire which was distributed to the participants at the end of the Seminar and then retrieved from them, in the future they would like to hear more about the following:

• More case studies regarding chemical incidents;
• new equipment;
• lessons learned about OPCW inspections during the missions in Syria;
• a table-top exercise regarding the admittance of an OPCW inspection team;
• 4-5 working days instead of 2;
• industry-critical infrastructure;
• chemical forensics and the First Responder;
• case study and discussion.

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* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

(In accordance with Arrangements regarding regional representation and cooperation.)
ACTIVITY REPORTS

Conclusion

Thanks to cooperation between RACVIAC and the OPCW, the lecturers’ professionalism and experience as well as their presentations were highly appreciated by all participants.

According to the participants evaluations, the Seminar was successful, very interesting and very well organized. Most of the participants were members of national authorities dealing with relevant issues in their countries and they considered it valuable for their future work.

The participants were highly motivated during the Seminar and they showed deep interest in the subject matter.

This event proved to be a good example of strong cooperation between RACVIAC and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. RACVIAC, in cooperation with its partner in this successful event, will continue to promote the issue of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Compiled by: Mr Pál Bódogh-Szabó
Activity Coordinator
RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation

GOODBYES

Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop

On Wednesday February 17th, 2016, the Croatian government cabinet appointed RACVIAC Deputy Director, Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop, assistant minister at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia.

A farewell party for General Jakop was held the following day. General Jakop held the position of RACVIAC Deputy Director for more than 3 years and will be remembered by the staff for his kind spirit and exemplary leadership.

HELLOS

SSG Predrag Markulinčić

SSG Predrag Markulinčić joined the RACVIAC staff as a driver/administrator in mid January.

He is married and has a daughter. His hobbies include orientational running in which he has represented the Croatian Armed Forces at 6 world championships. We are confident that with his 22 years of experience SSG Markulinčić will prove to be a valuable member of the RACVIAC staff.
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<th>No.</th>
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<td>Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) Seminar</td>
<td>16-19 May</td>
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<td>Gender Training of the Trainers Course (GToT)</td>
<td>18 – 27 May</td>
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<td>International Approach to Energy Security</td>
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<td>Annual Meeting of the Representatives of Defence and Security Committees from SEE Parliaments: Migrations</td>
<td>September (First week)</td>
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<td>Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) – Challenges for SEE</td>
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<td>Nuclear Security Detection Architecture Awareness</td>
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<td>C-WMD September Workshop: Interagency Cooperation</td>
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<td>Field Study Trip: Floods Prevention and Protection System in Lower Austria</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Search And Rescue (SAR): Cooperation in South Eastern Europe and Black Sea Region</td>
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<td>36th MAG Meeting</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Cyber Security - Continuation of the Cyber Security project Train the Trainers Course</td>
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<td>New Security Challenges for Europe</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>CMR: Seminar on P(M)SC IV: Regulating the Private Security Industry for the Public Good</td>
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Centre for Security Cooperation

„Fostering dialogue and cooperation in South East Europe“

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