CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

NEWSLETTER

Conference on the 20th Anniversary of the Ottawa Convention

WORKSHOP ON FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS
Third NSDA Workshop
Conference on Security Challenges for Europe
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On Wednesday 11 October 2017, H.E. Mr M. Babür Hızlan, the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to the Republic of Croatia visited RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

His Excellency Mr Hızlan was welcomed by RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Haydar Berk, Deputy Director, Brigadier General Gordana Garašić and RACVIAC senior staff members. After the presentation on the history, mission, annual programme of activities, and accomplishments of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Centre’s programme during the forthcoming period and further cooperation were discussed.
RACVIAC participated in the SEDM Ministerial Meeting in Batumi

Planning and Liaison Officer for SEE Ms Kloalda Kamberi represented RACVIAC in the SEDM Ministerial Meeting held under the chairmanship of Greece in Batumi, Georgia, on 10-11 October 2017.

Ministers and representatives of SEDM Nations in their Joint Statement stated:

“We appreciate the efforts of RACVIAC - Center for Security Cooperation as an important international organization in SEE dealing with security issues, playing a leading role in the areas of confidence and security building measures, security cooperation, C-WMD, Counter-Terrorism including Foreign Terrorist Fighters and, contributing to the Euro-Atlantic integration processes. We will further promote and support the activities organized by RACVIAC with the aim to enhance the security dialogue and cooperation in SEE.”
On Thursday, 19 October 2017, the representatives of the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, led by Captain (N) Henning Faltin, visited RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation. They were accompanied by MS Stanko Zubčić, Assistant to the German Defence Attaché to Croatia.

The guests were welcomed by RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Haydar Berk, Deputy Director Brigadier General Gordana Garašić and RACVIAC staff members.

Following the presentation covering the history, mission, annual Programme, and accomplishments of the Centre, Ambassador Berk provided an explanation related to the development of the Programme of activities emphasizing that they reflect the Members’ needs and requests. He said that most of RACVIAC activities are interconnected, dealing with emerging security challenges such as cyber security, countering terrorism and violent extremism, and foreign terrorist fighters. Ambassador Berk said that the Centre, apart from the training and education that it provides, serves as an excellent platform for networking and capacity building. Building security and confidence among the countries in the region is another important aspect of RACVIAC due to the fact that the work of the Centre is aimed at strengthening security cooperation in the region and responding to the needs of SEE countries vis-a-vis the contemporary challenges, he added.

Ambassador also took the opportunity to express his appreciation on behalf of the Organization for the constant contribution and support that Germany is providing to RACVIAC Programme of activities.

In a discussion that followed questions related to the Programme development, cooperation, partnering, and the role of the Members were raised.

The KAVA delegation included Mr Seung Hyuk Baik, Director, LtCol Sung Yiel Kim, Chemical Weapons Verification Manager and 2ndLt Jae Hong Shin, Translator. The guests were welcomed by RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Haydar Berk, Deputy Director Brigadier General Gordana Garašić and RACVIAC staff members.

Following a brief introduction to the staff and presentation on the history, mission, and RACVIAC annual Programme of activities, Ambassador Berk took the opportunity to describe the process of Programme development within the Centre, a process that takes into account the needs of the countries in the region and is being constantly refined in accordance with the NATO and EU agendas. He emphasized that most of RACVIAC activities are interconnected, dealing with emerging security challenges such as cyber security, countering terrorism and violent extremism, and foreign terrorist fighters. Ambassador Berk said that the Centre serves as an excellent platform for networking and building trust and confidence. The work of the Centre is also aimed at strengthening security cooperation and harmonising procedures, rules and response plans among the countries in the region, thus preparing them to better respond to the contemporary challenges, he added.

In continuation the KAVA delegation presented their Organization’s mission and activities. During the discussion that followed matters of common interest related to the Arms Control and C-WMD Programme of activities as well as cooperation were addressed.
H.E. Mr Gëzim Kasapolli, newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kosovo* to the Republic of Croatia visited RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on Tuesday, 24 October 2017.

RACVIAC Director Ambassador Haydar Berk and Deputy Director Brigadier General Gordana Garašić welcomed the guest beginning with an introduction of the staff present and a short briefing on the history, mission and Programme of activities of the Centre.

After the briefing Ambassador Berk provided an explanation on RACVIAC Programme development saying that it is based on the current NATO and EU agendas, primarily taking into account the inputs given by RACVIAC Members. The Director pointed out that RACVIAC has been recognized as a platform for security dialogue and cooperation that establishes trust, confidence, and networking in the region.

H.E. Kasapolli underlined that RACVIAC serves as a good example of a regional initiative that is focused on enhancing the security dialogue in South East Europe and expressed his assurances regarding continued cooperation between Kosovo* and RACVIAC.

* 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.)
Representatives of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina visit RACVIAC

Dr William Langan, Head of the Security Cooperation Unit of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mr Samir Bašić, the Unit's Project Officer, visited RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation on Friday, 3 November 2017. They were welcomed by RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Haydar Berk, and RACVIAC staff members.

After a presentation on RACVIAC history, mission, annual Programme, and accomplishments of the Centre Ambassador Berk provided further explanation related to the development of the Programme of activities and RACVIAC Members' role. Ambassador Berk emphasized that activities of the Centre reflect primarily the Members' needs and requirements, keeping at the same time track of the contemporary security agenda of the EU and NATO.

He said that most RACVIAC activities are interconnected and deal with the emerging security challenges such as cyber security, countering terrorism and violent extremism, foreign terrorist fighters and border management and security.

Ambassador Berk also mentioned that the Centre serves as an important regional platform for networking and building of security and confidence. Partnerships with other organizations and institutions that are also supporting and contributing to security dialogue and cooperation are not only cost-effective but send a strong message and enable building of capacities of the SEE countries in the fields of cyber security, countering weapons of mass destruction, etc., underlined Ambassador Berk.

In a discussion that followed many common areas of interest were detected and both parties are looking forward to further strengthening their cooperation.

At the end a Letter of Intent was signed concerning the activity entitled “Prosecution, Detention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters”. The activity is organized jointly by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and will be held on RACVIAC premises on 27-29 November 2017.

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The 38th MAG Meeting, the semi-annual summit of RACVIAC steering body the Multinational Advisory Group (MAG), took place in Rakitje from 04 to 05 October 2017. The meeting, which gathers MAG Members, invited Associate Members, Observers and other participants, as well as the representatives of the Regional Cooperation Council and SEDM, was organized by the MAG Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Meeting was officially opened by the MAG Chairperson Ambassador Branimir Mandić from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The meeting Agenda consisted of a brief presentation of the Director’s Interim Report by the Director of RACVIAC,
Ambassador Haydar Berk, who highlighted the most significant achievements of RACVIAC work in the first eight months of 2017.

Ambassador Berk pointed out that RACVIAC will continue developing projects that are contributing to regional stability, transparency and security abiding by RACVIAC main areas of interest: arms control, C-WMD Network project, countering terrorism and violent extremism, foreign terrorist fighters, border and security management, democratic oversight and accountability, human rights and gender equality, cyber security, building integrity and fighting corruption and energy security.

He drew attention to the fact that RACVIAC is opening new avenues in its Programme by participating in the two pillars of Integrative Internal Security Governance initiative: Western Balkans Counter Terrorism Initiative and Border and Security Management Initiative, under lead role of DCAF Ljubljana.

Furthermore, Director took the opportunity to thank all Members, Associate Members, Observers, international organizations and partners for their continuous support of the Centre.

Pursuant to the Agenda Brigadier General Gordana Garašić, RACVIAC Deputy Director, informed the MAG representatives about the current personnel situation in the Centre, which presents the challenge that Centre is facing currently. She pointed out that the lack of personnel directly impacts RACVIAC Programme execution and Centre’s capabilities.

Deputy Director’s presentation was followed by the presentations of RACVIAC Programme Managers and Leaders, LtCol Servet Aya, Ms Ivana Barbara Blažević, Ms Ana Ezhova Krzhaloska, and Mr Ivan Hostnik, MSc; with regard to the respective Programme achievements and activities conducted in 2017 and plans for 2018.

In addition, MAG participants were briefed on the RACVIAC Budget for 2017 and projections for the future period.

At the end of the meeting the MAG adopted the Programme and budget for 2018 and elected Ambassador Amir Muharemi, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, as the new MAG Chairperson.

Additionally, RACVIAC Director Ambassador Haydar Berk expressed special gratitude for the excellent job done by Ambassador Branimir Mandić during his Chairmanship of the MAG.

Ambassador Amir Muharemi, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, was elected as the new MAG Chairperson for the period from October 2017 to October 2018.

The final conclusion of the MAG meeting was that in 2017 RACVIAC has continued to be a widely recognized brand in the field of security cooperation in the region of South-Eastern Europe (SEE).
"Landmines affect not only the South East European countries but the whole world as well. According to open resources, every 22 minutes one person dies or gets injured, in other words, every month around 2000 people lose their lives because of landmines. The Ottawa Convention is not only the international community's comprehensive response to the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines but also the first multilateral Arms Control/humanitarian disarmament instrument to include provisions to assist the victims of the weapons in question. Therefore, we considered that while celebrating its 20th anniversary, it would be meaningful to go back and assess the progress made", said Ambassador Berk.

A two-day international Conference on the 20th Anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, titled "From the Ottawa Process towards a Mine Free World", was conducted on 17-18 October 2017. The Conference was organized by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in cooperation with the Office for Mine Action of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Embassy of Canada in the Republic of Croatia with the financial support of the Federal Republic of Germany. The aim of this Conference was to mark the 20th anniversary of the Ottawa Convention by providing a forum for discussion on the status and progress made since the Convention's entry into force and its historical impact on the global humanitarian and security architecture. Also, it aimed to examine the role and importance of cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations in the development of an effective implementation of the Victim Assistance System and to discuss and evaluate the opportunities and challenges that fall within the scope of political commitment and expressed aspiration to meet the goal of a “Land Mine-Free World by 2025”.

In the introductory part of the Conference the participants were addressed by Ms Terezija Gras, State Secretary at the Ministry of Interior and the Envoy of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Amir Muharemi, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, H.E. Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC, H.E. Daniel Maksymiuk, Ambassador of Canada to the Republic of Croatia and H.E. Thomas E. Schultz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of Croatia, and the Conference's special guest the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada and the Nobel Peace Prize Nominee for leadership on banning mines, Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, PhD.

The event was organized in two parts. The first day of the Conference was held in Zagreb and had three panels, and on the second day (October 18th), a field study trip was organized for participants to visit an actual demining work site in the Sisak-Moslavina County followed by a presentation about humanitarian demining.

The Conference panels addressed the past, present and the future of landmines and the Ottawa Convention. The Panel 'The Past' concentrated on the background and importance of the Ottawa Convention and its impact on the ground, both from the governmental and non-governmental point of view. Dr Axworthy presented the audience with the efforts invested, the atmosphere and reactions before the signing of the Convention and during its signing.

The Second Panel, 'The Present', focused on the status of progress since the Convention's Entry into force. One of the panellists, Mr Mirsad Tokić, a former deminer and mine survivor and Member of the Association “MineAid”, shared with the participants his personal story and explained the consequences that mine survivors experience in their daily life.
The Panel 'The Future' focused on the ways and possibilities of meeting the aspiration of a land mine free world by 2025. Emphasis was put on understanding the linkages between Mine Action and the Agenda 2030 and its sustainable development goals. The panellists were H.E. Stefano Toscano, Ambassador and Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Ms Sabina Beber Boštjančič, Acting Director, ITF Enhancing Human Security, and Mr Hans Risser, Head of Operations at the Department for Humanitarian Disarmament, Norwegian People's Aid.

On the second working day a field trip to Petrinja, Sisak and Mošćenica was organized for participants to see how work in the field looks like. The participants were welcomed by the Director of the Croatian Mine Action Center (CROMAC), Mr Zdravko Modrušan, after which the Assistant Director of CROMAC Mr Tomislav Ban presented the mine situation in the Republic of Croatia and Sisak-Moslavina County.

Mr Modrušan explained the demining process at the site itself and in the wider surroundings so that the guests could get a good insight into the context of the mine problem that Croatia is facing. He stressed that Croatia has withdrawn almost 60% of humanitarian demining funds from the European Union funds which puts the Croatian Mine Action System at the very top when it comes to successfullness of absorbing the European funds. The audience was also informed about the current situation regarding mine contamination in the Republic of Croatia. The study trip finished with a commemoration of 12 civilians in Mošćenica who were killed by mines.

More than 120 participants, representatives of a number of prominent international governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with mine action and armaments control in the wider sense attended the Conference.

The key takeaways of the Conference were: more information about improvised explosive devices and mine victim's assistance/care is needed; understanding the utility of the Ottawa Convention which has to be better explained; what the needs and necessities to be met to fulfill the '2025 goal' are; what the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are; more information about challenges in SEE (landmines, cluster bombs...) is needed.

RACVIA will continue to be a facilitator of expert discussions as well as a platform for meetings and exchange of ideas on this crucial topic for a safer world.
“IN ADDITION TO MILITARY AND PHYSICAL SECURITY, CYBER SECURITY HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR LIVES. IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE COUNTRIES’ STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES. CYBER SECURITY IS ALSO A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. IT IS GROWING RAPIDLY AND IT IS ON THE TOP OF THE COUNTRIES’ AGENDAS.”

This Course was a continuation of a series of events dedicated to the topic of cyber threats and critical information protection in which various national institutions are acting as a key instrument in providing security services for their respective governments.

The aim of the event was to promote and increase cooperation by using dialogue and exchange of information, transfer of knowledge and ideas, as well as to disseminate international standards by bringing together the representatives of the relevant national institutions dealing with cyber security issues from the SEE region.

Opening the Course Ms Ana Ezhova Krzhaloska, Programme Manager in RACVIAC IRC Pillar, expressed RACVIAC high appreciation to the Director General of Communications, Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, Mr Ensar Kilic, whose invaluable support enabled this event to come about. She continued by saying that “in accordance with RACVIAC mission to foster dialogue and cooperation on security matters in SEE region we see this Course as an excellent opportunity for the further development of regional cooperation on Cyber Security and to promote enhancement of the existing national structures through the exchange of information and sharing of available training opportunities. The close regional and wider cooperation among the SEE countries through dialogue and various forms of coordination is a strong response to today’s challenges to defence policy,
Mr Gündüz Şengül, Deputy Director General of Communications, Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, TR:

“Human resource planning is of greatest importance in order to meet the needs of the cyber area. It is estimated that by 2020 1.5 million cyber security experts will be lacking worldwide.”

leading to building of confidence and security among the countries and development of synergy among the activity participants”, added Ms Krzhaloska.

Speaking on behalf of Director General of Communications, Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, Mr Gündüz Şengül, Deputy Director, said that “security is a very broad concept. In addition to military and physical security, cyber security has been an important part of our lives. It is considered to be one of the strategic objectives of the countries. Cyber security is also a very important part of international relations and is growing rapidly and it is on the top of the countries’ agendas.” Later on Mr Şengül reminded the participants about the most important cyber attacks in the world and their consequences, emphasizing that cyber attacks have been occurring globally and therefore counter-measures taken should be on an international level. He also underlined the importance of cyber security human resources by saying that “it is estimated that by 2020 some 1.5 million cyber security experts will be lacking worldwide. For this reason all countries, including our country, have to make human resource planning to meet the needs of this area.”

This two-day Course gathered more than 70 participants, and included a series of speeches, lectures and working sessions about the recent cyber security developments, emerging cyber security threats and challenges for regional stakeholders involved in this field. Lecturers included a mixed group of high level experts ranging from experienced professors and international IT experts from the military, academic and governmental institutions to security specialists in charge of cyber-attack protection and system engineers from various cyber-attack protection and system engineers from various academic institutions, the business/technology environment and the private sector.

During the event participants had an opportunity to learn about the current cyber environment and the technologies related to Security Standards and Frameworks, Security Operations Center and Cyber Threat Intelligence.
For the past seven years RACVIAC has been promoting the Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) of arms, ammunitions and explosives in the South East European region since the Surplus of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Conventional Ammunition (CA) that has exceeded its shelf life presents a continued threat.

"The Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) Seminar", organized by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation with Federal Republic of Germany’s financial support, was conducted on 07-09 November 2017.

The purpose of the Seminar was to further elaborate the possibilities regarding a comprehensive capacity building programme aiming to raise national capacities as well as national ownership. The event provided a forum for the countries of the region in which to discuss problematic issues and possible solutions in capacity building as well as to reveal further possible areas of enhancement. The focus was on the best practices and examples were given on some of the less appropriate ones. A discussion on the best practices was reinforced by a site visit to one of the most advanced, model-like facilities of the region, the Potkop Ammunition Storage Site in Trbounje.

It consisted of two parts: one-and-a-half day was devoted to the theoretical discussion, and one day to a site visit.

The Seminar was opened with a Welcome address by RACVIAC Director Ambassador Haydar Berk who pointed out that the safe storage and disposal of surplus, ageing weapons and munitions is a matter of serious concern for the South East European (SEE) region as well as for the whole world. He went on to say that RACVIAC is devoted to assist in recognizing the capacities as well as the shortcomings that each country possesses in this field, and to facilitate the sharing of experiences, thus contributing to the enhancement of regional cooperation and assistance for the benefit of the SEE region as a whole. The Ambassador said that this year's topic was designed to take the participants back to the 'field', to the storage places, in order to be better able to elaborate on the capacity building issues related to them. Special gratitude was extended to the Federal Republic of Germany for its sponsorship.
Mr Andrei Sarban, OSCE Mission to BA: 
“A lot has been achieved from 2006 to 2016, but there are still 10 000 tons of ammunition to be disposed of in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

The Welcome address was followed by a very comprehensive introductory presentation by the moderator of the event, Mr Blaž Mihelič (ITF Enhancing Human Security), on PSSM in general, including the safety and security principles, systems, and standards. He also pointed out that stockpiles in the region are at a reasonable level but that there are still problems with special types of ammunition surpluses. Therefore, physical stockpile management still presents an issue. Mr Mihelič highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach.

Next to address the audience was Mr Andrew Grantham from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining who provided an overview of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). He explained the importance of IATG and the ways how it can be used to improve the sites. Furthermore, he emphasized the need to establish national standards.

In the afternoon the introductory presentations were followed by more concrete examples and case studies on how to meet the international standards and set up national ones. Also, further examples of good and poor practices were presented and elaborated on by Mr Arben Kotobelli (UNDP-SEESAC) who reviewed the process of disposal of excess weapons and surplus ammunition in the Republic of Albania, Ms Tamara Svircev (UNDP-SEESAC) who shared with the audience the practical experiences and the lessons learned by SEESAC in upgrading the Security of SALW and Ammunition Storage Infrastructure in SEE, Mr François Garraux (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH) who provided an overview of the Swiss Initiative on the Safe and Secure Management of Ammunition (SSMA), Mr Andrei Sarban (OSCE Mission to BA) who gave an insight into SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) and CA (Conventional Ammunition) Stockpile Management issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr François Garraux, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH:
„The ultimate aim is to achieve a common understanding of a comprehensive approach towards a sustainable management of ammunition in accordance with the international norms and standards. International standards should be transformed into national ones.“

On the second day, 08th November, a site visit to the Potkop Ammunition Storage Site (Trbounje) took place. This facility is the most advanced, model-like facility in the region. A detailed presentation on the safety and security measures as well as of the equipment was followed by a visit to one of the storages.

On the third working day the Seminar was closed with an evaluation session.
In 2016 RACVIAC launched a project for a series of five workshops promoting nuclear security detection architecture principles and concepts to raise awareness of and provide partner nations with the knowledge and tools to develop, implement, and sustain indigenous national-level detection capabilities.


This was the third NSDA Workshop organised in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and with the support of the United States European Command (USEUCOM), the United States Department of Homeland Security, Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DHS/DNDO), the Republic of Croatia and Republic of Albania.
The main purpose of this Workshop was to enable participants to apply NSDA concepts and nuclear security priorities to develop a national nuclear security strategy that establishes and documents the priorities, goals, roles and responsibilities, and a coordination mechanism.

The Workshop was opened by Ms Ivana Barbara Blažević, RACVIAC C-WMD Network Programme Leader, who said that the objectives of this event are “to build an understanding of the essential elements of a nuclear security detection strategy, to introduce an integrated planning process for NSDA development as well as to identify national capabilities, competent authority roles and domestic and international stakeholder outreach to promote strategy implementation.” She pointed out that with this project RACVIAC aims to create and maintain a secure, active, and constant network of people advocating and propagating the objectives of a nuclear security detection architecture awareness.

Greeting the participants on behalf of the host country Colonel Adi Ndoni, Director of the Strategic Policies Directorate of the Albanian Ministry of Defence, said that “Nuclear Security Detection is a process that requires involvement of many countries and agencies facing challenges that can be addressed together, and that this is a good opportunity to exchange and share best practices and further develop the experience. Security challenges caused by nuclear threats require a lot of effort expressed in capacities and capabilities”, underlined Colonel Ndoni.

The Workshop participants were members of national drafting teams of the SEE countries participating in the process of C-WMD Strategy Development, and senior-level decision-makers directly responsible for national policy, strategy, planning and implementation of nuclear security measures from nuclear regulatory authorities and diverse competent authorities, such as the national security council, customs and border security, law enforcement and security services, technical expert support, intelligence, infrastructure development and operation.

The Workshop lasted five days and consisted of lectures, table top exercises, and the use of various tools and templates to facilitate the practical application of the concepts discussed, such as the legal and regulatory framework, nuclear security risk assessment, NSDA Strategy, capability requirements and security design and communication.
The area of South East Europe is to a certain extent determined by political instability, insufficiently built state institutions, corruption, high unemployment rates, social, ethnic and inter-national tensions, intensified trends of intolerance, radicalism and extremism, that make the security situation extremely complex.

The “5th Annual RACVIAC/KAS Conference on Security Challenges for Europe” was held in Zagreb on 22nd-24th November 2017. The 2017 Conference was a continuation of the established series of activities aimed towards enabling open and comprehensive discussions on emerging security challenges for the European countries. It was the fifth annual activity conducted as a result of fruitful cooperation between RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Office in Croatia. In order to increase the quality of the content by strengthening the event’s academic dimension this year’s Conference was supported by the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb as the principal academic partner.

The purpose of the event was to continue to provide a platform for open expert and academic debates on common security challenges for Europe in general and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) in particular, to review the impact of geopolitical shifts on national security developments, to provide participants with an opportunity to share national considerations on the recognized challenges, potential risks and threats such as terrorism, cyber threats, the threat of mines and unexploded ordnance, natural and manmade disasters, radicalism and violent extremism, and - though not in the same category illegal migration, that make the security situation in the area rather complex.

In his Welcome address Head of the KAS Office in the Republic of Croatia Dr Michael A. Lange said that it is important to turn the attention again to the security concerns resulting from migration and future re-opening of the Balkan migration route, emphasizing that a new migration crisis could only be avoided via a more active and clear policy by the EU vis-à-vis all countries in the region. The Conference Keynote speech was delivered by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Croatia Mr Damir Krstičević. Elaborating on the area of South East Europe Minister Krstičević said that it still hasn’t been completely stabilized: “there are significant unresolved internal political issues in some of the regional countries, inter-ethnic tensions, growing national and religious extremism, economic and social difficulties, corruption, weak state institutions as well as a lack of consensus on the membership in Euro-Atlantic integrations. These concerns could represent, individually or jointly, the source of security deterioration”. He emphasized that „the most notable contemporary security threat in Europe is terrorism, motivated by religious radicalism”.

The Conference was opened with a Welcome address by RACVIAC Director Ambassador Haydar Berk who pointed out that over the past few years Europe and South-Eastern Europe have struggled with how to address the different
The Conference continued with the First Panel on the Contemporary Security challenges for SEE Europe. The aim of the panel was to present viewpoints on the contemporary challenges of individual countries in SEE and to improve ways and means of regional cooperation for prevention and suppression of the causes of risks and threats.

The panellists were Mr Sead Jusić, Deputy Minister of Defence, MoD BA, Mr Dragan Nikolić, State Secretary, MoD MK, Mr Petar Mihatov, PhD, Assistant Minister for Defence Policy, MoD HR, Mr Ivica Ivanović, MSc, Director General of the Directorate for Defence Policy, MoD ME, Mr Damir Črnčec, PhD, Political Adviser to the Chief of Defence, General Staff, MoD SI. The panel was moderated by Ambassador Haydar Berk, RACVIAC Director.

The most critical security threats and challenges in the SEE region were addressed by the panellists, including political and economic instability, corruption and organized crime, high level of (youth) unemployment, terrorism, violent extremism, mines, explosive devices and ordnances left behind from previous wars, natural and man-made disasters, cyber threats and migrations. Regional unsettlements, hybrid warfare and stagnation of the process of accession to Euro-Atlantic integrations in some of the countries in the region were also discussed.

The panellists concluded that Europe can't be stable without integrated and secure South-Eastern Europe. These interrelated conditions in the countries of the region imply how important it is to maintain dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation aimed at risks and threats prevention and increasing resilience. The Second Panel was dedicated to the topic 'Terrorism Challenge: Origins and Impacts'. The Panel focus was to provide insight into the root causes and contemporary policies for the prevention and suppression of terrorism, how to improve regional and inter-agency cooperation and exchange information.

The panellists were Dr Florian Qehaja, Executive Director of the Kosovo* Center for Security Studies, Mr Sebastian von Münchow, PhD, Professor at the European Center for Security Studies George C. Marshall, DE, Ms Olivera Injac, PhD, Professor at the University Donja Gorica, ME, and Mr Robert Mikac, PhD, Assistant Professor from the Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb University, HR, as moderator.

Research assessments on foreign fighters, violent extremism, changing forms of terrorism, challenges for counterterrorism, a rise of violent extremism and radicalization worldwide, etc. were presented and discussed from different points of view.

The second day of the Conference was conceived as an Academic Forum on the topic “Lessons Learned from the Irregular/Uncontrolled Migration and Refugee Crisis 2015/2016”. The Forum panellists were Mr O. Can Unver, PhD, Associate Professor, Antalya AKEV University, TR, Mr Oliver Andonov, PhD, Assistant Professor, Military Academy “Gen. Mihailo Aposotolski” Skopje, MK, Mr Zoran Keković, PhD, Full Professor, Faculty of Security Studies, University of Belgrade, RS, Mr Sándor Gallai, PhD, Scientific Director, Migration Research Institute Hungary, HG, Ms Marta Zorko, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, HR, Col (GS) Andreas Jödecke, Director Operational Region North, Federal Office of Migration and Refugees, DE. The Panel was moderated by Mr Mišo Mudrić, PhD, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, HR. The panellists provided very comprehensive analyses of the political processes and decisions taken, and applied models of cooperation by SEE countries. The lessons learned, (un)used opportunities and outcomes were presented, based on the specific national experiences and response to the migration crisis. Most of the panellists underlined bad assessments of the outcomes of the recent Middle East crisis and unpreparedness of the countries on the migrants’ routes to deal with the humanitarian and security aspects of the refugee crisis.
Counter-narratives and positive messages, the need for media literacy training of youth, bigger focus on FTFs prisoners and their family members, and how better to address the gender perspective, especially the role of mothers, were some of the takeaways of this Workshop.

The Workshop “Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters” was organized by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 28 November 2017.

The purpose of this event was to evaluate the existing policies, programs, actors, as well as the challenges in relation to the role of the civil society organizations in the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning foreign terrorist fighters and members of their families, especially children, who followed them to and from the war zones.

The Workshop was opened by RACVIAC Director Ambassador Haydar Berk who said that RACVIAC has continued to focus on this issue within the framework of our overall counter-terrorism efforts, together with its partners the Regional Cooperation Council and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He added that this Conference is an excellent opportunity to further coordinate efforts in this field that will lead to stronger synergy and send a stronger message to the SEE region as a whole.

Speaking on behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council Mr Goran Svilanović, RCC Secretary General, said that the end of the terrorist para-state in Syria does not mean the end of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism in South East Europe. He emphasized that since many former foreign terrorist fighters have returned to their countries of origin, and more still will return, we have to deal with them, and ground responses in facts.

At the beginning Mr Rajko Kozmelj, Programme Manager &
ACTIVITY REPORTS

IISG Chair (DCAF Ljubljana) provided a comprehensive overview of DCAF’s support to the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in the Western Balkans.

In continuation Ms Selma Zeković, National Programme Officer on CVE, OSCE Mission to BA, presented the activities of the OSCE in BA in the context of a multi-sectoral approach with special emphasis on P/CVE at the local level.

The Workshop was divided into two sessions: ‘Rehabilitation and reintegration of returning FTFs’ and ‘The role of the gender perspective in the effective rehabilitation and reintegration process of returning FTFs’.

During the first session moderated by Mr Marinko Raos, Senior Advisor on Security Policy Issues at the RCC, the first panel speaker Professor Vlado Azinović, PhD (Faculty of Political Science, University of Sarajevo), provided an analysis of the origins, causes and consequences for the individuals from the Western Balkans who are active as FTFs in Syria and Iraq as well as returnees and their family members. He spoke also about the negative role of the media in creating a negative context related to FTFs. The next speaker, Mr Enri Hide, PhD, Professor at the European University of Tirana in Albania, presented the challenges when it comes to the reintegration of returning Albanian FTFs. In continuation Mr Rajko Kozmelj (DCAF Ljubljana) spoke about the so-called P-R-A Mechanism (Prevent-Refer-Address Mechanism) and approach in the Western Balkans while Mr Mario Janeček, Counter-terrorism Advisor at the Ministry of Security of BA in Sarajevo, spoke about the national strategies and measures regarding FTFs.

The second session was moderated by BG Gordana Garašić, Deputy Director of RACVIAC, and focused on the gender perspective and role of the family members in rehabilitation and reintegration of FTFs. The first panelist Ms Georgia Holmer, Senior Adviser on Anti-Terrorism issues (OSCE Department on Trans-National Threats) addressed the audience on the topic of the role of the OSCE in countering violent extremism and some good examples of how the role of women in countering radicalization can be systematically strengthened (with an emphasis on reintegration and rehabilitation efforts in regards to men and women FTFs). Later on Ms Dubravka Šimonović, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, spoke about the different forms of violence against women from a general point of view, its causes and consequences as well as measures applied by the UN in order to prevent, respond and stop the violence. The last panel speaker was Ms Vilma Petkovska, PhD, Assistant Director at the Directorate for Political and Security Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of MK, who presented some examples and lessons learned related to the influence of the family members, especially mothers, on FTFs and FTFs returnees.

Counter-narratives and positive messages, the need for media literacy training of youth, bigger focus on prisoners and their family members, how better to address the gender perspective, especially the role of mothers that could be very influential, were some of the takeaways of the Workshop.
After two years of service in RACVIAC Mr Ivan Hostnik, MSc, finished his tour of duty as Programme Manager in Security Sector Reform Pillar and took up a new assignment in the Slovenian Ministry of Defence. Thanks to his extensive professional knowledge and experience in the Security Sector Mr Hostnik made a great contribution to the planning and preparation of the Pillar’s activities. During the period spent in RACVIAC he demonstrated outstanding performance, professionalism and high level of expertise in raising the quality of the programme activities, especially taking into account the contemporary changes and challenges in the process of reform of the Security Sector. We wish him all the best in his future career and look forward to seeing him at our future activities where he will undoubtedly provide an incomparable level of contribution.

After one year of internship Mr Nikica Krstaš completed his tour of duty in Security Sector Reform Pillar. We would like to thank Nikica for all the efforts he invested in order to prepare and organize SSR Pillar’s activities and ensure their smooth execution. He was very professional, friendly and devoted in executing all of the tasks that were assigned to him. We sincerely hope that the experience he has gained in RACVIAC will help him complete his Masters’ studies in international relations at Dag Hammarskjöld University College of International Relations and Diplomacy as soon as possible. We are sure that each organization or institution that will welcome him onboard will benefit from Nikica’s enthusiasm, performance and professionalism. We wish him all the best in his future life and career.

Mr Boško Rotim has been seconded to RACVIAC as an Activity Manager in Security Sector Reform Pillar by the Croatian Ministry of Defence in October 2017. Prior to this he was the Head of the Multilateral Affairs and International Organizations Section in the Croatian Ministry of Defence. Before that he was the Head of the Bilateral Defence Cooperation Department in the International Defence Cooperation and Security Sector of the Croatian Ministry of Defence. During his career he has held various positions at the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces in the fields of defence policy and planning, human resources and common and operative affairs. Mr Rotim was involved in analysing and drafting various strategic documents such as the National Security Strategy, the Strategic Defence Review, the International Defence Cooperation Program and others. He completed a Program in Advanced Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies. In addition, he acquired a certificate in Security Policy at the International Training Course in Security Policy at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. He also attended various courses related to security and defence policy, defence planning, emergency management and EU CSDP. He has occasionally given presentations on the topics in his area of expertise (political-security situation in South-Eastern Europe, National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence Review) at the Croatian Military Academy and other events in the Croatian Ministry of Defence.
Lt Col Ivica Budimir has been seconded to RACVIAC as an Activity Manager in International and Regional Cooperation with focus on Euro Atlantic Integration Pillar by the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 2017. Prior to this he worked in the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a security officer. During his military career he has performed various duties in the Armed Forces in the fields of operations and intelligence. He has completed numerous different courses related to security and defence policy at his home country and abroad (USA and Croatia). He has a degree in political sciences from the University of Sarajevo.

Cooperative Security Environment
(with focus on Arms Control)

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<th>No.</th>
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<th>Host / Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chemical Weapons Convention Workshop</td>
<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>05-09 February</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (Dayton Article IV) - Orientation Course</td>
<td>RACVIAC &amp; BA</td>
<td>04-09 March</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Open Skies Treaty (OST) Aerial Observation Course</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>19-29 March (TBC)</td>
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C-WMD Network

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>C-WMD National Strategies – Current Threat Environment &amp; Cyber Elements of a C-WMD Strategy</td>
<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>22-26 January</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>CWMD National Strategies – PSI TTX</td>
<td>Split, HR</td>
<td>10-13 April</td>
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International and Regional Cooperation
(with focus on Euro Atlantic Integration and contemporary challenges)

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Aeronautical Search and Rescue (SAR) Basic Course</td>
<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>26-28 February</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Search and Rescue (SAR) / On Scene Coordinator Advanced Course</td>
<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>01-02 March</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Building Integrity and Preventing Corruption – Workshop follow-up activity</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>07-11 May</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Energy Security Workshop</td>
<td>RO</td>
<td>04-07 June</td>
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Security Sector Reform / Transformation

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Border Security and Management</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>12-16 March</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Gender Training of the Trainers Course (GTotT)</td>
<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>13-26 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Annual Meeting of the Representatives from Defense and Security Committees from SEE Parliaments</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>26-29 June</td>
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CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

„...fostering dialogue and cooperation on security matters in South East Europe...“

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