



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION
DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION DIVISION

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“Seminar on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector”

12 - 14 November 2008

Rakitje, Zagreb

The Seminar on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector was held in RACVIAC during the period of the 12th – 14th November 2008.



The purpose of this seminar was to provide regional forum for comprehensive discussions as to develop a common understanding of Parliamentary oversight of the security sector in regional countries by discussing principles, mechanisms and practices as well as analysing

for external use
parameters, which are common in Parliamentary oversight in Southeast European (SEE) countries and can serve as a basis for even low level standardization in this field.

The seminar gathered participants with knowledge and experience in the field of security in SEE region, representing relevant ministries, institutions, as well as parliamentary commissions directly involved in this subject.



The seminar was conducted as a combination of lecturers and a panel

discussion. The participants and lecturers were representatives from nine countries and four organizations, namely as follows: Albania (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (6), Croatia (4), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ (3), Moldova (1), Serbia (2), NATO HQ in Sarajevo (1), OSCE mission in BiH (2), DCAF (1), GCSP (1), Netherlands (1) and Slovenia (1) Royal Dutch Embassy to the Republic of Croatia (3), Turkish Embassy to the Republic of Croatia (1).

Seminar Opening

In his opening speech Ambassador Nedžad HADŽIMUSIĆ, Director of RACVIAC expressed his warm welcome



to all participants. Ambassador pointed out the major role of the democratic and civilian oversight of the armed and paramilitary forces as well as other security-related structures as one of crucial instruments in preventing conflicts, promoting peace and

democracy as well as ensuring sustainable economic development.

Plenary Session

During a two-day seminar, members of parliament from different countries and a multinational team of experts provided an insight into the parliamentary oversight of the security sector and subsequently discussed the status of their implementation in each country.

The experts underlined the significance of promoting even greater parliamentary role in drawing up national security strategies and in exercising civil control over the military, the police and other relevant structures as one of the most important element in a sustainable development of a democratic community.

The seminar covered a wide range of topics such as: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices for the Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector; the Role of Parliament in the National Security Policy; Changing Nature of Civil-military Relations in the Region as well as lively discussion on the achievements, challenges, problems, lesson learned and experience in the SEE region in terms of parliamentary oversight of the security sector aimed at seeking the possible ways of further

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

improvement, displaying the way in which established democracies oversee defence spending.

Both, lectures and panel discussion were successfully conducted. Participants had the opportunity to discuss topics and generate fresh ideas on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in SEE.

The keynote speaker Mr. Peter VANHOUTTE from DCAF provided



an interesting presentation analyzing the main principles of parliamentary oversight such as control, consultation, transparency and accountability. He emphasised that the most important principle for effective parliamentary oversight of the security sector is the Budget Accountability and he pointed out that the lessons learned and recommendations should serve as a key to improve the situation and avoid problems happening again.

Dr. Willem Frederic Van EEKELEN, Member of Netherlands Advisory Commission on European Integration delivered two presentations on the role



of Parliament in Developing National Security Policy and the Civil –Military relations in Democratic Countries. He

First Golden Rule of Democratic Governance is THE PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW

pointed out the need for the presence of expert professional

staff in national parliaments in order to keep the members fully informed on key security issues and related data as well as the necessity of ensuring proper constitutional and legislative structures with clearly defined responsibility for

Second Golden Rule of Democratic Governance is REVEAL, EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY

the executive and legislative branches and a system of

check and balances.

The following presentations were also given in this seminar:

Achievements and Problems in the Parliamentary Oversight of Security Sector by Mr. Branko ZRNO, Member of Parliament of Bosnia & Herzegovina;
Challenges in Parliamentary Oversight

of the Security Sector in SEE by PhD Vladimir PREBILIČ, Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana; *Parliamentary Committees on Defence and Security – Good Practices and examples of Albania* by Mr. Ferdinand XHAFERAJ, Member of Parliament in Albania;



Parliamentary Committees on Defence and Security – Good Practices and examples of Croatia by Prof. Vlatko CVRTILA, Dean in Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb; *Security Sector Governance and European Integration* by Dr. Graeme HERD, Faculty Member in GCSP.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The seminar provided a successful platform to discuss challenges and generate fresh ideas about Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector.

The contribution of members of parliament and parliamentary experts from regional countries proved to be

outstanding in the sense that they created healthy discussion climate.

Following a two-day seminar and a panel discussion on “*How to Strengthen the Role of Parliament in Security and Defence Budgeting and Procurement*”

***To establish an effective
parliamentarian role over the security
sector,
three elements are very important:
RESOURCES, KNOWLEDGE and
GOOD WILL***

moderated by Mr. Peter VANHOUTTE from DCAF, all the participants agreed that the main problems on “Defence Budget and Planning Process” are: lack of transparency, inadequate communication, lack of knowledge by population, lack of expertise, lack of the ground in procurement, conflict of interest, difference on the request of MoD and supply from Parliament and ignoring other agencies.

For the aforementioned problems they came up with solutions, such as balance between Demand-Supply, more public discussion, coordination-Public debate, increased civil-military cooperation, PoC in institutions, more staff for education, declaration of personal assets, links on procurement on websites of MoD and chief of staff, define goals of national security and economic development in the region.

The lecturers and participants expressed their content with the significant progress countries had already achieved. These efforts were welcomed, but there was still a strong need for a better coordination and cooperation. They all agreed on the need to hold such seminars in the future.

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