



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Security Sector Reform Pillar

“Conference on Security Challenges for Europe”

SSR-F2-CF-18

22nd-23rd November 2018

Zagreb, Republic of Croatia

Introduction

“Conference on Security Challenges for Europe” was held in Zagreb on 22nd-23rd November 2018. The 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 sixth 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 this event by strengthening its academic dimension this year’s Conference was supported by the Institute for Development and International Relations in 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 perceived challenges, to foster dialogue and cooperation and support a scientific approach in developing national security policies.



Conference hall in “The Westin Hotel” Zagreb

The two-day Conference was attended by 120 participants, speakers, VIP guests, the 21st class of students at the War School “Ban Josip Jelačić” of the Croatian Defence Academy “Dr. Franjo Tuđman”, and media representatives.

RACVIAC invitees that attended the event came from the following countries: Republic of Albania (AL) - 3, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA) - 4, Republic of Croatia (HR) - 3, Hellenic Republic (GR) - 1, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (MK) - 2, Montenegro (ME) - 1, Romania (RO) - 1 and the Republic of Serbia (RS) - 3.

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

Execution

The Conference was opened with a Welcome address by RACVIAC Director Major General (ret.) Jeronim Bazo who pointed out that over the past few years Europe and South-Eastern Europe have struggled with how to address the changing security paradigm. Challenges and threats such as terrorism, violent extremism, radicalism, illegal migration as well as unresolved political issues from the past make the security situation in the area complex.



Major General (ret.) Jeronim Bazo, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation

In his Welcome address the Head of KAS Office in the Republic of Croatia Dr Michael A. Lange said that the recent developments in the transatlantic relationship have obviously confirmed the urgent need for more intense security cooperation by EU Member States, in order to enable them to deal with changes in the security environment in Europe and surrounding areas. Many EU Member States realize today - now more than before - the need to develop more comprehensive common strategic objectives as well as enhanced military capabilities to respond to threats which have been intensifying considerably lately.

H.E. Dr Robert Richard Klink, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of Croatia, pointed out that this Conference is one of RACVIAC continued efforts aimed at fostering peace, security, democracy, confidence and prosperity in the SEE region. He continued by saying that contribution to regional security and

stability confirms RACVIAC relevance for almost two decades.



Welcome address by the Head of KAS Office in the Republic of Croatia Dr Michael A. Lange

Mr Zdravko Jakop, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, in his Opening remarks spoke about the changed security environment in and around Europe caused by rising nationalism, territorial claims, corruption, fragile institutions, political divisions, economic underdevelopment, violent extremism and radicalism, irregular migrations, etc. He emphasized that these challenges and threats can only be countered by joint actions.

The Conference Keynote speech was delivered by Mr Vlado Galić, Advisor for Defence and National Security to the President of the Republic of Croatia. Addressing the audience Mr Galić said: "Global security challenges such as terrorism and illegal migrations are common to many states. This is why each state, as a responsible member of the international community, must contribute to eradicate this phenomenon. The most effective way to deal with the complex and challenging issue of illegal migrations is a joint approach based on mutual cooperation among SEE states." He concluded by saying that RACVIAC represents one of those initiatives that have played a significant role in seeking solutions for crises and responses to various global challenges and threats to security and stability of South-Eastern Europe.

The first day of the Conference consisted of two Panels: “*Impact of Euro-Atlantic Integration Processes on Security and Stability of SEE*” and “*Comprehensive Approach to Migration Challenges*”.

In the first Panel senior level national security policy makers Mr Zoran Šajinović, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Mario Horvatić, Assistant Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Croatian Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs, Mr Dragan Nikolić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Mr Aleš Mišmaš, MSc, Director General of Directorate for Defence Policy of the Slovenian Ministry of Defence and Brigadier General (ret.) Rainer Meyer zum Felde, Senior Fellow, Institute for Security Policy Kiel, the Federal Republic of Germany, presented their national considerations on the impact of Euro-Atlantic integration processes on security and stability of SEE. The panellists highlighted the tectonic shifts in Europe and rising importance of geopolitics prompted by changes in transatlantic relations, strategic influence of China as well as of Russia, and the lack of cohesion within the European Union. They also mentioned terrorism, radicalism, illegal migrations and the hybrid threats as the most important security challenges today. The Euro-Atlantic integrations are still needed and represent an important tool for greater resilience and investment in security and stability of SEE which is still burdened by history and has considerable potential for crisis.



First Conference Panel - High representatives of national ministries of SEE countries

The Second Panel was titled “*Comprehensive Approach to Migration Challenges*”.

The panellists were Dr Senada Šelo Šabić, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb, Ms Alexandra Stiglmayer, Senior Analyst, European Stability Initiative, Dr Murat Erdogan, Professor at the Turkish German University, Istanbul, and Dr Filip Dragović, Senior Consultant & Advisor, UNDP, Istanbul.



Second Conference Panel speakers (from left to right): Ms Senada Šelo Šabić, PhD, Ms Alexandra Stiglmayer, Mr Murat Erdogan, PhD, Mr Filip Dragović, PhD

They emphasized the lack of common migration and asylum policies, absence of coordination among involved countries, and also the symbiosis of negative factors such as radicalisation of migrants, the failed integration process and the rise of right-wing parties. It was concluded that the key factor for success is social inclusion of migrants within the host countries. In order to efficiently deal with migration challenges national authorities and international organizations should more accurately define the problem, re-consider migration policies, introduce a new asylum model, adjust national legislations and work towards more equal burden sharing.

The second day of the Conference was marked by an Academic Forum on the topic of extremism and violence.

The Panellists were Dr Senada Šelo Šabić, Dr Valery Perry, Project Coordinator at OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ms Ariane Wolf, Violence Prevention Network, the Federal Republic of Germany,

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Mr Igor Tabak, an analyst at the Croatian website OBRIS, Ms Tijana Rečević, Junior Researcher, Faculty of Political Sciences Belgrade, Dr Zoltan Gyorgy Bacs, National University of Public Services, Budapest, and Dr Marta Zorko, Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Sciences Zagreb.



The Academic Forum - the Panellists (from left to right): Ms Senada Šelo Šabić, PhD, Ms Valery Perry, PhD, Ms Ariane Wolf and Mr Igor Tabak

The key highlights of this Panel were the lack of cooperation between practice, academics and policy making, the importance of addressing reciprocal radicalization (the rise of right-wing extremism connected to the rise of ISIL), the significance of building resilient communities, coherence of strategies and action plans, foundation of values, strengthening education, and awareness of the risk of securitization of societies and social activities. The Panellists pointed out the role of media in security and their influence on the creation of public perceptions of challenges, risks and threats, and, consequently, policy responses. The media also represents a virtual platform for various activities leading to extremism and violence.



The Academic Forum - the Panellists (from left to right): Ms Senada Šelo Šabić, PhD, Ms Tijana Rečević, Mr Zoltan Gyorgy Bacs, PhD and Ms Marta Zorko, PhD

Conclusion

“The 6th Annual RACVIAC/KAS Conference on Security Challenges for Europe” highlighted the importance of the Euro-Atlantic integration processes on security and stability of South-Eastern Europe as well as the dedication of the aspiring countries to continue on their path to full membership in NATO and the EU. The Conference also focused on migration issues, extremism and violence as the most notable security challenges in Europe. In South-Eastern Europe these security developments are additionally augmented by some unresolved political issues and ongoing transitional processes. The influx of migrants has influenced the European security and political situation and posed societal and security challenges to the European countries. A unified EU response to migration challenges, in terms of solidarity, asylum and migration policy, is required. In order to increase the resilience of societies the institutional capacity for dealing with migration issues, extremism and violence should be strengthened.

*Compiled by SSR Pillar
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