



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Cooperative and Security Environment with Focus on Arms Control Pillar

Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar

**15 - 18 February 2016, Rakitje, Republic
of Croatia**

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

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).



Seminar participants

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.



Group photo

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.



Mr Guy Valente and Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC

* 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).

During the first working day (Tuesday, 16 February 2016) the following topics were presented:

“The Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW”: During this presentation Mr Guy Valente gave a brief overview of the Convention itself with particular emphasis on Article X and the functional relationship between OPCW and member states.

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.



During the Seminar

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.



Mr Guy Valente, OPCW

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*