



## **CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION**

### **Cooperative and Security Environment with Focus on Arms Control Pillar**

#### **Chemical Weapons Convention Seminar**

**17-20 March 2014, Rakitje, 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 this Seminar was to discuss relevant issues related to the CWC and to provide a broad overview of the Chemical Weapons Convention implementation procedures and a general outline of specific conditions in the region.

The Seminar's objectives were:

- To provide an overview of the CWC, Article X in particular, including major achievements and challenges;

- To clarify any uncertainties in the fulfilment of Article X obligations of the CWC by the Member States of the OPCW;
- 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 introduce a Chemical Incident Crisis Management exercise, in order for the participants to see and learn how to react in those conditions;
- To emphasize the importance of Capacity Building in the fight against Chemical Weapons Agents (CWA) and Toxic Industrial Chemicals (TIC), through national- and regional level projects;



*Group photo*

- To update participants on Contingency Operations and to talk about regional support during operations in the field;
- To enhance participants' knowledge about OPCW verification procedures and OPCW inspections;
- To provide information about assistance offered by the countries in the region under Article X of the CWC and about their

preparedness, reaction time and provision of logistic support;

- To execute training via a Table Top Exercise for prototypical Chemical Incident Consequence Management.

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

The Seminar was conducted with the assistance of four (4) lecturers: Mr Mark Albon, Mr Jerry Boland, Ms Megan Thomas (OPCW, The Hague); Prof. Zvonko Orehovec (University of Applied Sciences, Velika Gorica, Croatia).



*First working day*

It was carried out as a combination of lectures and presentations followed by questions and answers, completed by a Table Top Exercise, based on a real chemical emergency situation. This workshop 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 way ahead. The workshop also provided a favourable environment and atmosphere for valuable and focused discussions.

### Execution

The Seminar began on 18 March 2014 with the welcome address of the Deputy Director

of RACVIAC, Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop, followed by the opening remarks by Mr Mark Albon, Director of International Cooperation and Assistance, OPCW.



*Opening remarks by BrigGen Zdravko Jakop, Deputy Director of RACVIAC*

Finally, as part of the first panel, the floor was given to Ms Megan Thomas (OPCW) as the first presenter.

During the first working day (Tuesday, 18 March 2014) the following topics were presented:

- *The OPCW and the Chemical Weapons Convention* by Ms Megan Thomas (OPCW).

Ms Thomas gave a brief overview of the Convention itself and the OPCW as well as of the history of the chemical weapons. The milestones in this process were the first large scale gas attack in 1915 at Ypres, during WWI, the Iraq/Iran war, the Halabja incident in 1988, chemical terrorism in Japan and the attack in the Tokyo subway. Later on Ms Thomas also talked about the CWC and reflected on its composition.

- *Implementation of Article X and Capacity Building* by Ms Megan Thomas (OPCW).

In a short introduction Ms Thomas emphasized the most important details of Article X and talked about capacity building as well. The audience watched a relatively long but very interesting video clip of an exercise concerning a gas attack in a stadium, somewhere in the fictional country

of Daniria. The situation and its consequences were shown in detail, involving experts and non-professional actors.

- *Recent Challenges – An Update on Syria* by Mr Mark Albon (OPCW).

The centrepiece of Mr Albon's lecture was the ongoing destruction of Syria's chemical weapons contingent. Syria has signed the CWC, and the OPCW supported the UN investigation. The UN mission arrived to Syria on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013, while inspection started on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. The states parties to the CWC contributed to the special fund for destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. Until now, 14,5M EUR have been received and 21M EUR have been formally pledged for the cause.

- *Consequence Management/Chemical Incident Response* by Mr Jerry Boland (OPCW).

Mr Boland in his very well built presentation reflected on the phases of a chemical incident, in the following order: notification, response, stabilization and restoration. During his lecture he gave a detailed picture of these phases and of the tasks of the stakeholders.

The second day of the Seminar was devoted to another presentation and a Table Top Exercise (TTX), in the following order:

- *Military, technical and defence security standards in industrial facilities protection in case of terrorism and a military attack* by Prof Zvonko Orehovec (University of Applied Sciences, Velika Gorica).

Professor Orehovec talked about the possible consequences of an attack on chemical industrial facilities. The audience was informed about the flammability of different chemical materials like sulphur, etc. mainly through lessons learned from past events.



*Mr Mark Albon, Director of Intl. Cooperation and Assistance, OPCW, The Hague*

The participants learned how to define, evaluate and neutralize the ensuing environmental damages.

Later on during the Seminar the participants engaged in a Table Top Exercise (TTX), forming three groups, whose members represented all participants in the Seminar. The participants were tasked with having to deal with the consequences of a series of explosions in the chemical terminal area of the harbour of Jakarta. The members of the three groups worked along the lines of the tasks (1-2-3) and questions posed in a distributed document. The speakers (all of them members of the TU delegation) in each group informed the audience about the results of their work, including a press release during a fictional press conference, which necessitated very good communication skills and professional expertise, since they were exposed to a crossfire of questions, mostly posed by the representatives of the OPCW. This part was

especially appreciated by the participants in the Seminar.



*The signing of a MoU by Mr Mark Albon (OPCW) and BrigGen Zdravko Jakop (RACVIAC)*

### Proposals

According to the Questionnaires distributed and retrieved, in the future, the participants would like to hear more about the following topics and lectures:

- The legal aspects of chemical weapons;
- Consequence management;
- The possibilities of dialogue and the practical approach;
- Recent Challenges – An Update on Syria.

### Conclusion

Thanks to the cooperation between RACVIAC and the OPCW, high-level lecturers took part in this Seminar. Their 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 with all of the means it has at its disposal.

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