



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Parliamentary Oversight: Annual meeting of Regional Parliamentary Defence and Security Committees“

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Parliamentary Oversight: Annual Meeting of
Regional Parliamentary Defence and Security Committees
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Group photo

Abstract

Effective parliamentary oversight is crucial in ensuring that the responses to new security threats are devised and implemented with full transparency and accountability towards the State and the Citizens.

Otherwise, the outcome can turn into placing heavy strains on scarce resources, excessive or unbalanced political and economic influence in the current economic crisis or even worse, the ineffective State.

Activity Background

This Conference was a new meeting of Parliamentary Committees on Defence and Security from the area of South East Europe, in line with a series of events jointly organised by RACVIAC and the Joint Committee on Defence and Security of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This time around the meeting was supported through expert engagement of the George C. Marshall Center, Germany.

Participation

The participants were Members of Parliaments and Committee experts from six Parliaments from South East Europe, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey. The participation of Mr Nikita Smidovich from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) provided special benefit to the Conference on new security risks. Last but not least, the participation of Mr Anton Travner from DCAF Office, Ljubljana and Mr Rade Kovač, Ph.D, Assistant Director, Foreign Nationals Service, Border Police, BA afforded an opportunity to parliamentarians to become acquainted with operational effects of regional co-operation in border security matters.

Activity Overview



Working session in the Croatian Parliament

The event started with the opening session in the Croatian Parliament and the first to welcome the audience were Mr Josip Leko, President of the Croatian Parliament, who pointed out the connection between the State and the well-being of its citizens through an

accountable parliamentary framework, Brigadier general Zdravko Jakop, Deputy Director of RACVIAC and Ms Dušanka Majkić, Chair of the Joint Committee on Defence and Security, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

They all highlighted that co-operation and parliamentary oversight were of crucial importance in the current state of economic and security affairs.



Mr Nikita Smidovich from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

The introductory Panel was shared by Mr Nikita Smidovich from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and Mr Rade Kovač, Ph.D, Assistant Director, Foreign Nationals Service, Border Police, BA. Mr Smidovich provided an excellent insight into the global security challenges addressed by the UN SCR 1540 on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and how the most important thing to do is to implement articles on terrorism in the national legislation or, in other words, to recognise the potential threat of terrorism. Mr Kovač comprehensively addressed regional challenges in illegal migration and related risks and how co-operation can be beneficial in coping with that risk.

Panel 1 on countering corruption, extremism and illegal migration stressed the importance of parliamentary oversight in these matters due to the fact that the society and the state can be negatively

affected in cases where these three threats are not countered consistently.



Ms Valbona Zeneli, Ph.D., George C. Marshall Center moderating Panel – Countering Corruption, Extremism, Illegal Migrations

This panel marked the closing of the working session in the Croatian Parliament.

Panel 2 on small arms and light weapons (the challenge of storage) and re-considering of conversion of military facilities produced an exceptional example of co-operation in a project on the SALW issue (the project EXPLODE).

Panel 3 on cyber, energy and border security saw presentations delivered by Mr Alessandro Scheffler, George C. Marshall Center and Mr Anton Travner, DCAF Office, Ljubljana.



Mr. Alessandro Scheffler, George C. Marshall Center, DE

Mr Scheffler delivered an encompassing presentation on the regional and global situation and trends in the sphere of energy resources, energy distribution and energy dependency. Among other well rooted views he pointed out that while strategically deciding on energy investments the environmental aspect must not be neglected because in the end that will drive prices higher, at least in the EU.

Mr Travner stressed that nowadays States do not hold the overall control as they used to a few decades ago and that borders are not so tight thanks to regional inter-state co-operation or integration.

Panel 4 on the constraints in the sphere of economy comprised a comprehensive presentation given by Ms Valbona Zeneli on the current status, origins as well as possible moves to take in the economic status of SEE countries.

Mr Boris Blažeković, Head of the Croatian Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Croatian Parliament delivered a speech in which one of the most important insights was the view that Governments should be more focused on the economic activities which motivate employment rather than strictly on profit-gaining activities.

This panel as well as the working part of the conference ended with a very balanced and realistic speech given by Mr Mevludin Nuhodžić, Member of the Montenegrin Parliament, which contained the following three statements:

- since security represents a national interest all segments of a society must participate in coping with the situation;
- through enhanced capacity and role of the Parliament the interactive relation with the Government should bring about

- more sustainable and overreaching outcomes,
- establishing and developing friendly and reliable relations between neighbours sets a corner stone in national and human security, as well as the international status.

Closing remarks and Recommendations



and its consequences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia constitute a serious reason to address this issue before the parliamentary Defence and Security committees.

In her final words, Ms Dušanka Majkić suggested that the next meeting be held in the Serbian Parliament.

As confirmed by the participants, the main goals of the conference were achieved and once again it was proven that RACVIAC, as a regionally owned security organisation serves as the right platform for addressing and raising of security issues in collaboration with the parliamentary community of its member states.

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Ms Dušanka Majkić, Chair of the Joint Committee on Defence and Security, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brigadier general Zdravko Jakop, Deputy Director of RACVIAC

This Annual meeting of Regional Parliamentary Defence and Security Committees was yet another in a series of events that constitute RACVIAC and the Joint Committee on Defence and Security of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts that focus not only on the Parliamentary oversight over the security sector but also on the parliamentary capacity building and the role of the Parliament and its relations with the Executive. Naturally, with a view of the well-being of the whole society, i.e. human security in the context of the long-lasting economic crisis.

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Mandić reiterated that the recent flooding

