



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION



Republic Agency for the
Development of Small
and Medium Enterprises
Republika Srpska
Bosnia and Herzegovina

**The 11th WG2 Workshop on Military
Base Conversion
Zagreb-Banja Luka, 14 – 16 October
2009**

*In cooperation with the Republic Agency
for the Development of Small and
Medium Enterprises, Republika Srpska,
Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation organized the 11th Workshop on Military Base Conversion in cooperation with the Republic Agency for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 14th –16th October 2009 at RACVIAC facilities in Rakitje and in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a field study trip.



Workshop participants

The purpose of the WG2 workshop was to bring together representatives from different ministries, regional and local authorities, international organizations, NGOs, financial institutions and businesses to examine and discuss all the aspects of military base conversion (MBC).

**Encourage Regional
Interoperability and
Cooperation**

The workshop gathered participants and lecturers from permanent Working Group 2 (WG2) countries - Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Romania and Moldova, as well as other countries (Germany) and international organizations (UNDP, OSCE and NATO).

Workshop Opening

The 11th WG 2 was opened on 14th October with the welcome dinner hosted by Željko Ceganec, Deputy Director of RACVIAC.



1st from left: Mr Dragoljub Davidović, Mayor of Banja Luka City

The workshop activities started on the second day. The participants were transported to Banja Luka, where the workshop was held in the conference room of Parliament of Republika Srpska. Mr Dragoljub Davidović, Mayor of Banja Luka, welcomed the guests and said that he appreciates the fact that military facilities are transferred to civilian purposes, to be used by local community-municipalities for various purposes: education, health care, sport etc. He

¹ Turkey recognizes Republic of Macedonia with its Constitutional name

also said that MBC process should be faster. The workshop officially opened with the short introductory speeches by Mr Slobodan Marković, WG2 Chairman and Director of the Republic Agency for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (RARS), who said that non-perspective military facilities are good for encouraging employment, local initiative and training for self-employment in cooperation with government institutions, and Col Mihajlo Mladenović, Programme Manager of Security Sector Reform pillar at RACVIAC.

Plenary Session

Mr Roland Vogt, Senior Expert for Conversion and the former member of the Federal Parliament of Germany gave the keynote speech. In his speech, Mr. Vogt provided a comprehensive and interesting presentation of the experiences with the military base conversion in the Federal State of Brandenburg (vast area surrounding Berlin) and the Conversion Network (CONVERNET) developed for the Baltic States.



He proposed the establishment of a similar network in the SEE region, emphasizing that the decisions on military base conversion should be taken at the highest possible level.



Two representatives of UNDP in Croatia – Mr Hans Risser, Senior Advisor and Programme Manager, and Mr Nenan Kocmur, Programme Officer, provided the next presentation. They presented their experiences in supporting local governments with military base conversion in Benkovac and Varaždin, Croatia. They highlighted the ways in which they can financially and logistically support conversion initiatives.

After these initial presentations, Mr Miladin Gaćanović, from the Republican Directorate for Reconstruction and Construction, introduced the auditorium with the current situation on the local host level and presented efforts of the Directorate and the problems they face in solving legal issues concerning the ownership and use of former military facilities. Problems in conversion of non-perspective military assets in Bosnia and Herzegovina was also the topic of the presentation by Sanela Jakubović, Head of Department at Common Affairs Service of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina.



The participants were also introduced with the current state of affairs in military base conversion of the former barracks Trapisti, both through a short presentation by entrepreneur Drago Gverić and a short visit to the above-mentioned facility afterwards. The first day ended with the dinner in the attractive castle restaurant “Kazamat” in Banja Luka.

The second day started with further presentations on the successful examples of Military Base Conversion. Mr Mico Stanojević from RARS gave the first presentation, talking about the conversion of military Brownfield sites for local economic development in Bosnia And Herzegovina. After that Mr Branislav Vujasin, Director of PREDA, briefly presented the successful business incubator that is located in the former barracks “Palančište” in Prijedor. Mr Nenad Račić, PhD, the Director of the Centre for Improvement of Villages gave the final presentation, portraying the Centre located in the former military training area Manjača. It was followed by the trip to the above-mentioned Centre, where the participants had opportunity to see the exact results of the conversion from a training area to the centre for agriculture, with both production and educational purpose.



Conclusion and proposals for the next WG 2 Workshop on MBC

The workshop proved as very useful and successful as it contributed to promoting an

even closer cooperation among the SEE countries on MBC issues.

The WG2 Workshop ended with the conclusion that Mr. Marković will send written initiative to all the actors to ask UNDP for the assistance in the development of the MBC program in order to boost the development of conversion policy. He would tackle the issue with SERDA Director. Then the relevant actors will jointly press decision makers with the developed concept. Lobbying for MBC is also important and Mr. Vogt offered help in the development of informal network on MBC similar to CONVERNET in the Baltic Region. The financing from IPA Project of EU Pre-Accession could be sought for such a developed Project on MBC in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The next WG2 Workshop will be hosted in Old Municipality Sarajevo, by Munir Zahiragic, Member of Municipality Council, and President of the Commission for Allocation of Business Premises.

From 2010 WG will have a new Chairman coming from Croatia and only an annual workshop is envisaged.

Summary

All participants agreed that the conversion of military structures is still a very complex process. Involvement of all the aspects of society in conversion would contribute to better results and reduce the costs of the process, and in long term strengthen the military-civilian relations. One of the most important things for the future successful work is forming of the database of the non-perspective properties and establishment of the efficient network system at national and regional level.



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