



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

## Open Skies Treaty Aerial Observation Course

*in cooperation with  
Canada, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Hungary*

26 March - 05 April 2012, Zagreb

### 1. INTRODUCTION

RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation, in cooperation with Canada, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany and Hungary organized an Open Skies Treaty (OST) Aerial Observation Course (CSE-04-C) in the period of 26 March – 05 April 2012. This kind of course has been taking place since the year 2002, as part of continuous efforts made by RACVIAC to train military personnel of the South East European (SEE) countries in terms of planning and carrying out observation flights according to the provisions of the OST.

This year, the Course was sponsored by Canada and Germany. It comprised presentations and a practical phase. The theoretical part took place at RACVIAC, while the practical phase was conducted at the Croatian Open Skies facilities at Pleso Airbase. The practical part included a training flight over the territory of Croatia. Hungary as a contributor made available the observation aircraft AN-26, certified for the purposes of the OST.



*Course participants in front of the AN-26 aircraft*

## **2. PROGRAMME/METHODOLOGY**

The total duration of the Course was about two weeks, travel dates included. The Course was carried out as a combination of lectures and practical exercises. The time intended for the theoretical and practical part was equal, providing a unique opportunity of participation in a training observation flight. The Course was carried out in English.

### **2.1 Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the Course was to train personnel from the SEE countries in planning, organizing and executing an Aerial Observation Mission based on the provisions of the Treaty on Open Skies (OST), thus also increasing their administrative capacity in the field of security cooperation.

The objectives of the Course were:

- To give an overview of the specified elements of the OST, highlighting the most comprehensive and commonly followed rules and procedures of its execution;
- To provide the participants with information about the current situation in the development and implementation of the OST;
- To carry out a training Aerial Observation Mission, providing practical experience;
- To deepen contacts between representatives of national organizations and agencies engaged in the accomplishment of arms control and/or security- and confidence-building measures;
- To set an example of security cooperation on national, regional and international level.

### **2.2 Participation**

Thirteen participants from ten countries took part in the Course, namely from Albania (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Croatia (2), Hungary (1), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\* (2), Montenegro (1), Poland (1), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1) Slovenia (1). Most of the participants represented the air forces and verification centres of their countries. Only a few had the knowledge of the OST provisions.

RACVIAC hosted altogether six lecturers from Canada (1), Croatia (1), Germany (3) and Hungary (1). During the Course, several other specialists supported us with briefings on different topics, such as the air-traffic control (ATC), weather forecast and the work of the photo laboratory at Pleso Airbase. Also, serving the purposes of the Course, members of the Hungarian team prepared numerous briefings on the Hungarian Open Skies Observation System.

### **2.3 Overview of the Course**

The first phase (27 - 30 May) was conducted as a combination of presentations and a classroom exercise on a mission plan as a preparation for the accomplishment of the training observation flight. The presentations covered the provisions of the Treaty on Open Skies, the OSCE Decisions and Chairman's Statements augmenting the original text of the Treaty, notifications and the used formats, OS platforms and sensor suits used by the Member States, certification procedures, pre-flight inspection, film processing, duplication and procedures of access to information, mission planning, mission rundown and tasks related to receiving an OS mission, mission plan negotiation and preparation of the mission report.

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

During the classroom exercise, participants were divided into four teams and practiced preparation and review of a mission plan by conventional methods, under the supervision of the lecturers.

The excellent lecturers covered all topics in a most efficient way and shared their personal experiences they gained during real OS missions.



#### *Mission planning*

In the second week (2 - 4 April), the activities were carried out in compliance with the OST and with close similarity to the time schedule of a real OS mission. This phase included the training in point of entry (POE) procedure, real life meteorological and ATC briefings, pre-flight inspection, mission plan negotiation and mission plan review, preparation for the observation flight, observation flight, development of the aerial photographs, preparation and signature of the mission report.

The participants were provided with full access and in small groups were given detailed explanation of the different computer systems used by Canada, Croatia, Germany and Hungary for the mission planning, mission plan and flight data verification. Also, the Hungarian AN-26 aircraft and the installed observation system were presented in detail by the Hungarian OS team. During the training flight, participants practiced performing their duties, both as members of the observation and escort teams.

The Croatian media specialists provided detailed briefings at all workstations of film processing, analysis and duplication. The participants had a chance to touch the equipment, take part in the development of the aerial photographs taken during the observation flight and examine the results.

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*Signature of the Mission Report*

### **3. SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to experts' and participants' assessments provided at the end of the event, the Course proved to be successful and it achieved all of the objectives. Highly professional lectures and their personal experience attracted participants' attention and generated open discussion on all aspects of the OST. Moreover, the training observation flight increased participants' motivation and significantly contributed to the learning process. Participants improved their knowledge about the OST and its implementation. They have taken back to their air forces, national arms control agencies and verification centres the knowledge and skills gained in these two weeks, which they can use in their current or future positions. Countries considering accession to the Treaty in the future can rely on the knowledge of their new experts who received the training at our Course.

RACVIAC has been organizing courses on the OST since 2002, and it is recommended to continue the successful series of courses at least every two years, to the benefit of the SEE region. Therefore, the next course is scheduled for 2014. It is important to carry out a training flight during these courses, since it gives the participants a unique opportunity to be involved in a mission very close to reality.

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