



Centre for Security Cooperation

## SSR and OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspect of Security SSR-09-S

17-19 September 2012



*Group photo*

**Abstract:** The OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security is one of the main OSCE mechanisms to address global security challenges. Adopted in 1994, it came into force on January 1, 1995 and remains a unique document aimed at regulating the role of armed forces in democratic societies.

It also commits the OSCE Participating States to developing a comprehensive mechanism of civilian control over their armed forces, including military, paramilitary and security forces, intelligence services and the police.

It contains politically binding rules on the deployment of armed forces by the OSCE Participating States both at home and abroad and, in particular, on the democratic control of armed forces and other armed state organs.

With its comprehensive objective based on the rule of law, the OSCE Code of Conduct (CoC) goes beyond the OSCE's politico-military dimension, thus linking the security and human dimensions of the OSCE *acquis*. The CoC has gained in importance with the decision in 2003 to include information on national counter-terrorism efforts in the reports by the OSCE Participating States.

The main tools of the CoC are the annual exchange of information by means of Participating States implementation reports and regular review conferences. The effectiveness of the CoC in the OSCE

area could be markedly improved by, in particular, increasing the evaluation of the information exchange and making it better known to the public.

No matter how deeply the countries of South East Europe have been engaged in the Security Sector Reform, the OSCE Code of Conduct is a perfect tool for tracking continuous changes they have made in democratization of their transition societies. It is also a great opportunity to transparently show to their public the improvements of the overall security of their societies.

### **Activity Background**

The idea for organizing the Seminar on Implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico–Military Aspects of Security (CoC) and for emphasizing the importance of the CoC for successful security sector reforms in South Eastern Europe (SEE) originates from the RACVIAC Strategy 2012-2015 which highlights enhancement of security cooperation in the SEE region as one of the most important objectives.

### **Activity Facilitators**

The seminar was planned, organised and executed by RACVIAC and supported by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Vienna. The seminar was generously sponsored by the Kingdom of Norway, as a RACVIAC MAG country.

The Code of Conduct is a core document with regard to the OSCE politico-military dimension that commits the Participating States to a set of principles governing democratic control of armed forces, police and security forces.

The main purpose of the seminar was to raise awareness about these commitments and discuss experiences and challenges in the practical implementation thereof. Special emphasis was given to security sector governance and reform.

### **Activity Venue, Duration and Participation**

The seminar was held from 17 to 19 September 2012 at RACVIAC facilities.

It was comprised of three panels, each followed by a questions and answers session, which prompted the participants to exchange views and openly discuss the issues raised.

The participants and lecturers were representatives from seven countries and two organizations: Albania (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7), Croatia (6), Montenegro (1), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\* (1), Poland (1), Slovenia (1), Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF Institute Ljubljana) (1) and OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (1).

### **Activity Description and Content**

The event started with the opening speeches and the first to welcome the audience was Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski, Director of RACVIAC. Ambassador Todorčevski stressed the political significance of the Code which lies in the fact that the OSCE participating States have undertaken for the first time to base internal regulations for their armed forces on agreed international guidelines. At the same time, they have surrendered their sovereignty through principles and agreements setting standards of civilized behaviour. They let themselves be measured against those guidelines by the community of the OSCE States.

The first Panel started with the presentation “Content, Structure, Implementation and Recent Developments of the CoC in the OSCE

Framework” given by Mr Fabian Grass, Conflict Prevention Centre, Vienna. In his excellent presentation, Mr Fabian Grass gave the participants an overview of the OSCE CoC. At the end of his presentation, he stressed the importance of the implementation of the Code, its relevance for successful Security Sector Reforms, while he also informed the participants about the development and current proposals regarding the CoC.



Mr Fabian. Grass,

The Panel continued with the presentation “Anthropological and Ethical Aspects of the OSCE CoC” given by professor Beno Arnejčič, University of Primorska, Koper, Slovenia. In his very impressive presentation, professor Arnejčič stressed the importance of two aspects of standards and principles in the OSCE CoC: participation of national OSCE states and the aspect of obligations deriving from the CoC for individuals. In the second aspect, Mr Arnejčič pointed to the importance of individual perceptions when implementing provisions of the OSCE CoC.

Professor Emir Vajzović, M.Sc., from the University of Sarajevo was the first presenter in the second Panel. The title of his first presentation was “The CoC, Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Security Sector Governance”. After this presentation, he continued with the last

presentation in Panel II, which focused on the “Mechanisms and Procedures of Parliamentary Oversight over Armed and Security Forces”. He stressed the role of national parliaments and the influence of ombudsman institutions.



Mr Fabian. Grass, Mr Beno. Arnejcic, Ph.D., (ret) Col Zbigniew Pluskota and Mr Emir Vajzovic, MA

The first day of the event was closed with the wrap-up discussion and the participant conveyed their impression about the items raised during the day.

The second day started with an excellent, academically oriented presentation made by professor Heintz Vetshera, Ph.D., Vienna University, entitled “Democratic Control of Armed Forces / International Commitments”.



Mr Heintz Vetschera, Ph.D.

The lecture given by professor Heintz Vetshera was followed by a presentation made by the retired Colonel Pluskota Zbigniew, MoD Poland. The title of his presentation was “Polish Experiences in the Implementation of the OSCE CoC”. In the continuation, there were five national

presentations on the “Relevance of the CoC for the Security Sector Reform on the National Level” given by the representatives from: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, and Montenegro.

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

The last presentation on “Future Perspectives of the Code Implementation and Development in the OSCE Area (with a focus on the SEE)” was given by Mr Fabian Grass who, among other things, prompted the SEE countries to engage in direct exchange of information based on the Questionnaire, as it is a working and open document that is not intended to be merely filled in and delivered to the Vienna Office, but rather it can be a tool of permanent collaboration among the countries.

During discussions Mr Igor Tabak well elaborated on his experience as a civil society member of the Defence Committee of Croatian Parliament ([www.obris.org](http://www.obris.org)).



Mr Igor Tabak

### **Closing remarks**

The seminar “SSR and OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico Military Aspect of Security” was closed with an interesting wrap-up discussion. The main message deriving from the discussion was included in the closing remarks given by Professor Heintz Vetschera from the Vienna University and Mr Fabian Grass, the expert

on CoC from the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Vienna.

Based on their first impressions, they both agreed that it would be very useful to

continue the process started in 2012 during this Seminar on the CoC in RACVIAC, with the intention to deepen the knowledge and exchange experiences on the CoC both on the academic and expert level in the future.

Another interesting idea emerged to organize a similar event in RACVIAC that would be perhaps more practically oriented, focusing on the content of the annual information exchange based on the replies to the questionnaire on the CoC. This future event, which would be, according to Mr Fabian Grass, supported by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, would aim to continue and support the process of the implementation of the CoC, especially among the Members of Parliament, in particular among Defence and Security Committees, as well as to possibly share lessons learned and best practices with the Mediterranean Partners, providing a link to Security Sector Governance and Reform.

Compiled by:  
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