

Conference on “Gender Perspectives and Security in South Eastern Europe”

06-08 April 2016, Rakitje, Croatia

Summary

On 06th - 08th April 2016 RACVIAC- Centre for Security Cooperation together with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Office in the Republic of Croatia co-organized in Rakitje, the Republic of Croatia, the Conference on "Gender Perspectives and Security in South Eastern Europe". The Conference panel topics were selected around previously established conclusions from the RACVIAC 2014 Gender Conference when the requirement for periodical events of this particular nature was clearly established. In this way, RACVIAC and KAS as a traditional SSR Programme partner decided to join resources and continue to enable Gender National Focal Points' networking process in SEE, ultimately supporting the existing gender equality efforts, this time primarily within the context of the contemporary security challenges for Europe and beyond.

The Conference objectives were as follows: to address the progress made to implement UNSCR 1325 and corresponding resolutions in the countries participating in RACVIAC; to convene a relevant subject matter expert forum; to support professional development for the two key subject matter professional groups directly or indirectly involved in the National Action Plan implementation (national focal points and gender instructors), and to suggest some specific tools to monitor the implementation of UN SCR 1325 NAPs - as one of the identified critical common requirements in SEE. Additionally, this year's event managed to increase the visibility of this highly specific and important field of interest by being able to host some high level guest speakers and distinguished members of the diplomatic core accredited in the Republic of Croatia. Namely, Ms Maja Čavlović, MSc, Envoy of the President of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Ms Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and President's Advisor for Defence and National Security; H.E. Semiha Borovac, Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and H.E. Ambassador Astrid Versto, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in the Republic of Croatia addressed the audience during the Conference opening session.

Activity Background

After the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, it took more than a decade for its instruments to be translated into national policy agendas, including the countries of South Eastern Europe. Over the time, the SEE countries have either adopted, started developing or chose not to adopt a dedicated document. No evidence exists as to which extent these policies have contributed to UNSCR 1325 expected results since design, implementation and monitoring differs from country to country.

Thus, RACVIAC and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) as a traditional SSR Programme partner decided to join resources and enable Gender National Focal Points' networking process in SEE, ultimately supporting the existing gender equality efforts, this time specially within the context of the contemporary security challenges for Europe and beyond.

The 2016 Conference initiative followed the 2014 Gender Conference Conclusions when the requirement for periodical events of this particular nature was clearly established. The Conference purpose was primarily to address the gender equality topics regarding the current progress made to implement UNSCRs 1325 and corresponding resolutions in the countries participating in RACVIAC, to convene a relevant subject matter expert forum, to support professional development for the two key subject matter professional groups directly or indirectly involved in the National Action Plan implementation (national focal points and gender trainers), and to suggest some specific tools to monitor the implementation of UN SCR 1325 NAPs - as one of the identified critical common requirements in SEE. This was the third event of this kind



Conference Group Photo
Rakitje, RACVIAC HQ Building, 07th April 2016

established as the part of RACVIAC's initiative to support the Gender National Focal Points' networking process in SEE.

Activity Facilitators

Provision of expertise and overall organization were respectfully divided between RACVIAC as the Conference proponent and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Office in Croatia. Both parties were at certain point included in organizational support, development of the agenda and speakers' invitations.

Mutual partnership between RACVIAC, and the KAS Office in Croatia was successfully utilized during the preparation and execution of this event,

RACVIAC developed and presented an initial activity concept and corresponding programme, which was then additionally improved through direct consultations



Conference Opening - Welcome Addresses

(starting from left)

H.E. Haydar BERK, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation (speaking)

H.E. Astrid VERSTO, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in the Republic of Croatia

H.E. Semiha BOROVIĆ, Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms Maja ČAVLOVIĆ, MSc, President's Advisor for Defence and National Security, Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia

Dr. Michael A. LANGE, Head of the KAS Office in Croatia

Lt Col Janus KASCHTA, Military Attaché, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Republic of Croatia

It is required to state here that initially, and regardless of the obvious need for this kind of activity, the required funds were not available and RACVIAC skipped the organization of similar conference in 2015. In 2016 this obstacle was overcome in cooperation with KAS, which recognized the importance of RACVIAC efforts in the programme area of human rights, and decided to join this important undertaking.



Conference Welcome Addresses

Dr Michael A. LANGE

Head of the KAS Office in the Republic of Croatia (speaking)

Activity Venue, Duration and Participation

This was the third SSR 2016 Programme activity at the time of its

execution. In total 48 participants from the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, Japan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Turkey, and Kosovo**, including subject matter experts, members of RACVIAC and partner organizations' staff took part in the Conference.

The event itself lasted for three working days, from 06th to 08th April 2016, with 06th April designated as the arrival day.

Activity Description and Content

This particular event for the first time introduced a specific conference concept that included subject-related workshops targeting both major groups of participants (national focal points and gender trainers). The concept was a success and the SSR Pillar will continue to further develop and utilize this organizational model. Another important achievement to be underlined here is the introduction of new security aspects to the subject of gender perspectives and security in SEE in the light of contemporary security challenges - primarily negative gender aspects of uncontrolled migrations (this was the first time we went a step forward in view of the UNSCR 1325). The standard conference format was used during the first day, while the second day was solely dedicated to respective workshops.



Conference Opening - Welcome Addresses

Lt Col Janus KASCHTA, Military Attache

Embassy of the Federal republic of Germany in the Republic of Croatia

The Conference was initiated by welcome addresses of the partner organizations' executives: H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, and Dr. Michael A. Lange, Head of the KAS Office in Croatia, and the representative of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Republic of Croatia, Lt Col Janus Kaschta, Military Attaché.

* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name

** This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence (In accordance with Arrangements regarding representation and cooperation)



Conference Opening Speeches

H.E. Astrid VERSTO,

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in the Republic of Croatia

The first conference opening speech was provided by H.E. Astrid Versto, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in the Republic of Croatia.

In her exposé, H.E. Astrid Versto stressed that the UNSCR 1325 is one of the greatest accomplishments in this particular and important subject area and that women are, and must be considered one of the key resources for achieving peace and stability. Unfortunately, women are still in position to suffer from forced marriages, sex crime, unavailability of education, exclusion from public life, and similar gender related difficulties. In her conclusion, Ambassador Versto invited RACVIAC to continue to support this initiative and make it stronger.

H.E. Semiha Borovac, Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina underlined that results on implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina are more and more visible especially through the increased number of women entering the security sector.



Conference Opening Speeches

H.E. Semiha BOROVAC,

Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the same time, some of the obstacles still can be found, such as traditional stereotypes and insufficient availability of required funds. At the end, H.E. Semiha Borovac concluded that one of the

areas that requires special attention and action is the issue of victims of conflict related sexual violence, one of the most difficult post-conflict burdens in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Conference Opening Speeches

Ms Maja ČAVLOVIĆ, MSc, Personal Envoy of the President of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović.

President's Advisor for Defence and National Security, Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia

Last, but not least to give the conference opening speech was Ms Maja Čavlović, MSc, a personal envoy of the President of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, and the President's Advisor for Defence and National Security. Ms Čavlović emphasized the fact that "there is no development without security". In this context, women are a powerful asset of peace and should be more involved in the process of prevention of conflicts, while all related policies should reflect this.

The first day of the event had a standard conference structure and included two main panels: Panel I on "Gender and Security in SEE - Implementation of UNSCR 1325", and Panel II on "Contemporary Security Challenges for Europe and Gender Perspectives".

Panel I started with the eminent subject matter experts' presentations provided by BG Gordana Garašić, MSc, Head of the Military Office in the Cabinet of Defence and National Security, Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia; Ms Ankica



Subject Matter Expert Presentations - Panel I

BG Gordana GARAŠIĆ, Head of the Military Office, Cabinet for Defence and National Security, Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia

Tomić, MSc, Deputy Chairperson of the Coordination Board of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina for monitoring the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and Head of the Department for International Cooperation, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ms Zorana Antonijević, Doctoral Candidate, University of Örebro, Sweden/University of Novi Sad, the Republic of Serbia; and Lt Col Strašo Stojčevski from the Ministry of Defence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*.

The final part of Panel I included individual previews on UNSCR 1325 implementation provided by the participating national delegations, after which all participants had an opportunity for discussion on the given topic.



National Presentations - Panel I

Panel II had the same structure and it was covered by the subject matter experts: Ms Nermina Komarić, Coordinator, European Migration Network (EMNI), International Organization for Migration (IOM); and Ms Sabine Freizer from UNWOMEN, who respectively covered topics on "Gender and Migration", and "Violence Against Women Refugees" in the context of current security challenges for Europe in general and SEE in particular.

In accordance with the event's concept, the first day was concluded with the conference closing session in which final remarks were provided by Ms Samra Hadžiabdić-Filipović, Chairperson of the Coordination Board of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina for monitoring implementation of UNSCR 1325, and Head of the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina; BG Gordana Garašić, MSc, Head of the Military Office in the Cabinet of Defence and National Security, Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia; and H.E. Ambassador Haydar Berk, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

As already underlined, the second day of the conference was solely dedicated to the workshops designed to support professional development requirements of the individuals who are involved in the implementation effort of the UNSCR 1325 - primarily national focal points and gender trainers. Thus, RACVIAC managed to establish a specific subject matter support mechanism that is currently unavailable at the regional level, but as previously pointed out presents one of the major requirements for this particular group of professionals. Two workshops were planned for each group of participants respectively, but one of them had to be abandoned at the very

last moment due to cancellation from the engaged expert lecturer. In this way, the subject event was not able to deliver all established outcomes. Nevertheless, and thanks to the level of expertise and skills that were provided by Ms Zorana Antonijević, the conducted workshop was a success. The workshop itself was designed to present participants with "Analytical Tools in Gender and Security Situation Analysis" which was primarily targeted for gender trainers, but also included national focal points who appreciate it equally.

The second day finished with the corresponding Round Table, including Conference/Workshop evaluation process, which produced specific conclusions and recommendations to be included in the design process for the Gender Conference event in 2017.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The enhancement of cooperation on the part of the KAS Office in Croatia was of crucial importance for RACVIAC to be able to continue enabling SEE national gender focal points networking, and initiate a specific set of support activities dedicated to their professional development - the goal that the SSR Pillar has set for itself based on the analysis of the 2014 Gender Conference discussions. Now, this activity has the potential to become a long-term joint project. In this way, RACVIAC should be able to establish itself as the leading regional facilitator for the national gender focal points networking process, while at the same time being able to directly support subject matter professionals' development.

To be able to achieve this, and in the course of the applied 2016 Programme activities' structure and design, the SSR Pillar for the first time in RACVIAC introduced a conference concept that incorporated corresponding subject matter workshops as already described. By doing this, we successfully introduced the new multidimensional Programme event concept, and thus brought some newly added value to our events. Our intention is to continue to apply this model which enables us to do more within the same framework and organizational constraints (accomplish a broader scope of objectives within a single Programme activity and with the same level of available resources).

The event itself was rated as excellent in all of its elements, except in regard to time that was available for discussions, which should be considered as a positive indicator, and suggests that the Conference should last one day longer. In conclusion, and similar to those of the 2014 Conference proposals, the majority of participants once again recognized the importance of this type of event and suggested having another one in 2017 in the form of a "Key Leadership Conference". The is the result of the valuable fact that the event had a relevant participation structure - expert forum that is perfectly capable of recognizing common subject matter interests and requirements.

It can be concluded that the Conference succeeded in its mission as already described. Unfortunately, and due to force majeure, not all of the outcomes were achieved, and they will be re-incorporated in the future event. ■

Compiled by the SSR Pillar
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