


Regional conference



***BEST PRACTICES IN PROTECTING THE HUMANE
RIGHTS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES***



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BIH PARLIAMENTARY MILITARY COMMISSIONER HOSTS ANOTHER REGIONAL CONFERENCE

BEST PRACTICES IN PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES



On 21 and 22 March 2013, the Parliamentary Assembly was the venue of a two-day regional conference on the Best Practices in Protecting the Human Rights of Members of the Armed Forces.

The conference was organised by the Office of the Parliamentary Military Commissioner of BiH in cooperation with UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the aim to exchange positive experiences and best practices in the protection of human rights and freedoms of members of the armed forces in countries participating in the conference. During the conference, it was underlined that the institutions dealing with the protection of human rights in the armed forces play an important role in ensuring transparency in the management of the armed forces, and that in accordance

with its mandate, these institutions contribute to strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms of members of the armed forces.

In their opening remarks, participants of the conference were addressed by the National Parliamentary Military Commissioner Boško Šiljegović, Chairwoman of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security, Dušanka Majkić, Defence Minister Zekerijah Osmić, Deputy Parliamentary Military Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany Fritz Günther, and on behalf of the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program in BiH (UNDP BiH) Yuri Afanasiev, Head of Programmes with the UNDP in BiH Slobodan Tadić.

The conference was attended by representatives of Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, as well as representatives of international and non-governmental organisations operating in BiH.

Representatives of these countries and institutions, as well as international organisations, discussed the five decades of experience in this field in Germany and Austria, decades-long protection models in Serbia, Slovenia and Macedonia, as well as experiences in Croatia and Montenegro during this two-day conference.

National Parliamentary Military Commissioner Boško Šiljegović, and representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces and the General Inspectorate of the Ministry of Defence noted that the practices and experiences of countries participating

in the conference will be valuable and very useful in improving the protection of human rights and freedoms in the armed forces.

National Parliamentary Military Commissioner also stressed the excellent cooperation with the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of BiH, adding that rules, regulations and other relevant bylaws are still missing to further improve the impacts of the joint efforts. However, the Commissioner nonetheless pointed out that since the establishment of the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner, 86% of

the total of complaints received by the Commissioner have been resolved.

At the end of the conference, the participants jointly expressed their gratitude to Šiljegović for a very successful organisation and the opportunity to exchange views in this area, and General Zdravko Jakop, RACVIAC Deputy Director, awarded the National Parliamentary Military Commissioner with a medal for the promotion of human rights and freedoms of members of the armed forces.

It should be noted that the services of the Secretariat of the Parliamentary

Assembly also gave a significant contribution in the organisation of this event. The team that prepared and successfully organised a conference included Boško Šiljegović, National Parliamentary Military Commissioner, Željko Grubešić, Special Advisor to the Joint Commission for Defence and Security, Inja Hadžialić-Bubalo and Martina Čerkez, Expert Associates in the Office of the Parliamentary Military Commissioner of BiH and Jasmin Porobić, Project Manager with the United Nations Development Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNDP BiH).



Conference participants

RECEPTION AT THE HOLIDAY HOTEL



On the eve of the opening of the conference, a reception was organised at the Holiday Hotel in Sarajevo for all the participants. Participants were greeted by the National Parliamentary Military Commissioner Boško

Šiljegović, who noted that all participants are expected to contribute to the conference. The rest of the evening was an opportunity for informal discussions and exchange of experiences.



DUŠANKA MAJKIĆ, CHAIRWOMAN OF THE JOINT COMMISSION FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY OF BiH

“INSIGHT IN THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS ALSO ACQUIRED THROUGH DIRECT CONVERSATIONS – FROM THE LEVEL OF SOLDIER TO THE HIGHEST-RANKING OFFICERS”



During the first day of the conference, participants were addressed by Dušanka Majkić, Chairwoman of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of BiH. At the beginning of her speech, Majkić tried to briefly describe the role of the National Parliamentary Military Commissioner:

“These activities are primarily focusing on the protection of human rights in the Armed Forces of BiH. The Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of BiH have developed a new mechanism of parliamentary oversight and strengthened a number of measures for the protection of human rights in the defence sector. We take pride in what has been done so far and we believe that the results to be achieved in the future will justify the reasons for the Parliamentary Assembly to adopt the Law on Military Commissioner”, stressed Majkić, adding

that in the process of long-term reform of the defence sector in BiH from 2003 to 2006, the Parliamentary Assembly made a significant contribution in the adoption of the relevant legislation.

“The Parliamentary Assembly has reaffirmed its commitment to basic democratic principles of development by introducing new mechanisms to protect the defence and security sector. One of the most contemporary and widely accepted approaches in strengthening parliamentary oversight of the defence sector and the protection of human rights of its members is to establish the function of the military commissioner”, said Majkić.

Chairwoman of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of BiH further continued to discuss the approach that is strived for when it comes to protecting human rights in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina: “We do not approach the problems

of the protection of human rights merely through statistics, submissions, reports and information that come to us. We also acquire an insight into the state of human rights through direct conversation – from the level of soldiers to the highest-ranking officers. During our field visits, many issues were discussed. The state of human rights in the defence sector should be one of the leading questions for all units and commands. The mechanism of the Parliamentary Commissioner has helped us learn about certain phenomena indicative of significant human rights violations in the Armed Forces of BiH. I must say that after our conversations with soldiers, it was concluded that the issues of their status and improved standard of living in the units should be addressed far more seriously, followed by adjustments in laws and bylaws relevant to these issues”, concluded Dušanka Majkić.

ZEKERIJAH OSMIĆ, DEFENCE MINISTER OF BIH

"ARMED FORCES OF BIH ARE THE DRIVING FORCE ON THE COUNTRY'S PATH TO NATO"



In his speech, Defence Minister Zekerijah Osmić stressed that the greatest progress has been made in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of BiH since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord.

"This progress is confirmed by countries that lead and command over our forces in various peacekeeping missions, just as it is confirmed by the fact that 15 years ago we had about 60,000 peacekeepers in Bosnia, and now we have only few hundred", said Osmić. The Minister also added that the defence reform in BiH is an example that local politicians and representatives of the international community most commonly use to show how things in our country can move in a positive direction.

"Since the establishment, the Armed Forces of BiH have been successful at the national level when it comes to organisation and professionalization, and particularly in the area of participation in international peacekeeping missions. It can be said that the Armed Forces of BiH are the driving force on the country's path to NATO, but the Armed Forces also face certain problems.

Due to a closed and traditional system of their operations, the problems of professional servicemen usually remain within the system without broader social engagement to address these problems", stressed Osmić.

The Minister also explained that the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH back in 2009 was the first in the region to establish the institution of the Parliamentary Military Commissioner, whose primary goal is to strengthen the rule of law and protection of human rights and freedoms of military personnel and cadets of the Armed Forces of BiH and the BiH Ministry of Defence.

"According to reports from the Parliamentary Commissioner, the majority of complaints submitted to the institution refers to the lack of transparency in procedures for advancement in service. Although certain steps have already been taken with the aim of more transparent procedures and equal opportunities for the advancement of members of the Armed Forces, including appropriate recommendations by the Military Commissioner, some problems still remain unresolved. Certain unequal

opportunities for the members of the Armed Forces are also found in the evaluation system for professional military personnel. The procedures in this field are complicated, as these are regulated by various laws. The attempt is to try to overcome all the causes of shortcomings in the evaluation of military personnel through continuous training. Religious freedoms of members of the Armed Forces are guaranteed and regulated, as well as compliance with UN Resolution 1325 Women in the Armed Forces".

In his final remarks, Minister Osmić assessed the state of human rights in the Armed Forces of BiH:

"There are mechanisms to protect the rights of members of the Armed Forces based on the respect of laws and regulations within the system itself. In line with the firm commitment, the Ministry of Defence of BiH and Armed Forces of BiH will pay special attention to monitoring and continuous strengthening of the protection of rights. In this regard, the safeguard mechanisms for rights will be continuously improved and perfected", concluded Zekerijah Osmić, Defence Minister.

BOŠKO ŠILJEGOVIĆ, PARLIAMENTARY MILITARY COMMISSIONER OF BiH

“86% OF COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED”

Boško Šiljegović, Parliamentary Military Commissioner of BiH, thanked the previous speakers for their kind words, adding that these words serve as a further commitment for him and his associates to work better and more efficiently. Šiljegović then explained that the goals behind the establishment of the institution of the Parliamentary Commissioner were twofold.

“One goal was to increase confidence in the military sector by creating greater transparency in the entire administrative process conducted in the Ministry of Defence of BiH and the Armed Forces of BiH, without prejudice to the military hierarchy, the authority of the military chain of command or reducing the military readiness. The second goal was to eliminate the risk that the misuse and abuse of members and employees of the Armed Forces will go unpunished due to a lack of confidence in the internal disciplinary procedures, and for fear of retribution by military commanders. Thus, the institution of

Parliamentary Military Commissioner protects human rights of citizens in uniform”, said Šiljegović.

According to Šiljegović, 132 complaints were received in 2010, but the state of human rights and freedoms of members of the Armed Forces in this period was rated as good.

“In 2011, 116 new complaints were received. Problematic areas found in the complaints include advancement procedures for professional military personnel, evaluation of professional military personnel, conduct of disciplinary proceedings in the Armed Forces of BiH, the lack of specific bylaws, instructions, regulations, benefits other than salary, food for Armed Forces and travel and accommodation in the barracks of the Armed Forces of BiH”, said Šiljegović. National Parliamentary Military Commissioner pointed out that recommendations were issued in these problematic areas that should serve as the basis for the Ministry of Defence of BiH and the Armed Forces of BiH to eliminate deficiencies and

problems.

Šiljegović then commented on the previous year.

“In 2012, we received 94 complaints, 60 were resolved and 34 are pending. During the operations of the institution of the Parliamentary Commissioner, meaning since 2010 to the late 2012, more than 250 complaints were received, 216 were resolved, and 34 are currently pending. Therefore, 86% of complaints were resolved”.

Boško Šiljegović concluded his presentation with the general assessment of the state of human rights in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina:

“Despite success stories, there are still difficulties in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. We are faced with a slow pace in eliminating the problems, and in some cases, even certain resistance. But I’m personally encouraged to see that the transparency of these procedures is increasing. And there were problems in reaching the level where certain procedures are now transparent”.



ENES HUSEINOVIĆ, INSPECTOR GENERAL WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF BIH

“OUR IMPERATIVE IS THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE AFBIH MUST BE PROTECTED IN EVERYDAY PRACTICE”



Enes Huseinović, Inspector General with the Ministry of Defence, informed the participants about responsibilities of the General Inspectorate and the system of inspectors in the Armed Forces in the field of human rights protection.

“General Inspectorate is an organisational unit of the Ministry of Defence, and the Inspector General is directly responsible to the Minister for his work. In addition, the system of inspectors in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina includes inspectors who work within the subordinate command units. Members of the Armed Forces enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as all other citizens. These apply equally to civil and political rights, as well as the rights arising from living in barracks and in operations. Our imperative is that the human rights of members of the Armed Forces must be fully protected in everyday practice”, said Huseinović, adding that anyone can file a complaint, allegation or request

for assistance to any inspector in the Armed Forces, and that no one can be restricted in a lawful communication with the General Inspectorate.

“If the Armed Forces of BiH wish to effectively serve to the society, then there is no room for socially unacceptable behaviour, including discrimination and other forms of human rights violations. The command staff here has a crucial role to play. In addition, commanders are leaders who create working environment and their role is crucial for the respect of human rights of members of the Armed Forces. In this context, commanders have a duty to create a climate of trust and mutual respect among the troops and have the obligation to take all necessary measures to prevent their subordinates to commit illicit acts”, said the Inspector General.

Huseinović also noted that education on human rights is an obligation of commanders, but also of the General Inspectorate.

“General Inspectorate has the following

functions and responsibilities: conducts trainings and education of professional military personnel in a professional and ethical sense, provides advice to the Minister of Defence regarding the elimination of conditions that affect morale, efficiency, reputation, and in this case, human rights in general in the Armed Forces and gives recommendations for setting the professional standards. Also, the General Inspectorate initiates, conducts, controls and monitors testing and conducts investigations into the allegations of misconduct and violation of human rights in the Armed Forces. In addition, the Inspectorate General has the authority and obligation to ensure the protection of human rights without any prejudice or bias. As a result of the overall work and findings, the Inspector General is authorised to propose to the Minister of Defence the adoption of systemic solutions which establish appropriate procedures to protect these rights”, concluded Huseinović.

FRITZ GÜNTHER, DEPUTY PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

“I’M PLEASED THAT BIH ADOPTED THE GERMAN MODEL”



Attendees in the White Hall of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina were also addressed by Fritz Günther, Deputy Parliamentary Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany. At the beginning of his address, he conveyed sincere greetings from the German Parliamentary Commissioner Hellmut Königshaus who wanted to address the participants in person, but was unable to travel to the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina due to a session of the Bundestag.

Günther then pointed out that the organisation of a conference of this type is yet another step towards the improvement and furtherance of cooperation and exchange of ideas between young democracies in the Balkans.

“Parliamentary oversight of the armed forces and the accompanying protection of fundamental rights of the members of the armed forces is one of the pillars of a democratic system that the European Union expects from applicant countries. There are various ways to organise parliamentary control of the armed forces. In Germany we opted for the institution of parliamentary commissioner, elected by the Bundestag, who assists the Bundestag in parliamentary oversight of the armed

forces. I am pleased that Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted this same model and that it had independently created exactly the same kind of institution”, stressed Günther.

Deputy Parliamentary Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany added that the decision of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt the German model of parliamentary commissioner for the armed forces was also considered in close cooperation between the heads of these offices.

“We have more than five decades of valuable experience in the oversight of the armed forces and assisting the Parliamentary Commissioner in its implementation. The Bundestag and the Federal Ministry of Defence make sure that reports of visits to troops and annual reports are submitted to the Parliament as an important and valuable source of information that is used for timely detection of problems and shortcomings in the armed forces and for taking appropriate measures to protect the rights of members of the armed forces”, said the Deputy Commissioner.

Günther explained that they recently became aware of the importance of the work of the commissioner for the armed forces, after the deployment of German troops in Turkey.

“The deployment occurred after NATO’s decision on the joint protection of the Turkish border against possible Syrian attack. For this purpose, two stations with Patriot missiles were deployed from Germany to Kahramanmaraş. Deployment of troops is a concrete expression of solidarity within the Alliance and all Member States have given the highest importance to it. However, deployment of troops is not just a matter of high-level politics, but also the specific condition in which they must operate in the field. During his recent visit to German troops, Königshaus was in a position to see the actual conditions and discussed the problems and deficiencies related to the accommodation of German forces in Turkey. It came as a surprise to local Turkish military commanders and initiated debate over issues that are now tackled in the spirit of cooperation between the competent political and military command structures. In my opinion, this case clearly shows how important it is to exchange ideas and experiences on an international level, between friendly nations and allies, on the principles of parliamentary control over the armed forces and protecting the rights of military personnel”, concluded Günther.

PAUL KISS, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

CONFERENCE IN SARAJEVO IS A FURTHER STEP TOWARDS IMPROVING SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION IN THE INTEREST AND TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL SOLDIERS

At the beginning of his speech, Paul Kiss, Chairman of the Commission for the Federal Armed Forces of the Republic of Austria, thanked the Parliamentary Military Commissioner of BiH for a well organised conference and the invitation to participate. Further, he noted that the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces was founded in 1955, together with the Austrian Armed Forces, as a legitimate oversight body of the National Council of the Parliament of Austria. The legal basis for the formation of the Commission is set out in the Law on Defence.

“The commission is led by three executive chairmen who preside on a rotating basis—being one of them, and the Commission has six members. Chairpersons are elected by the Austrian Parliament, while other members are appointed by political parties in proportion equal to the number of the General Committee of the National Council. Every political party with a representative in the General Committee of the National Council has the right to have its own representative in the Commission. In its sessions, the Commission is also advised by senior officials of the Ministry of Defence; thus, there is a constant exchange of views between supervisors and the subjects of their supervision”, said Kiss.

The guest from Austria then explained that the Parliamentary Commission must accept complaints submitted to it directly or indirectly, in writing or orally, by persons who were volunteers in preparation for admission to the military service or training service, persons responsible for preparing for admission to military service, soldiers, representatives of soldiers, recruits from the police forces and reserve units and individuals who went through training.

He also pointed out that the Commission must consider a complaint and decide according to the recommendations for resolving a specific complaint. Every soldier has the right to directly contact the Parliamentary Commission.

“An authorised group may also file a complaint about the omissions or deficiencies in the military, and the Parliamentary Commission is authorised *ex officio* to examine any failures or complaints in the army that the Commission suspects to have happened”, noted Kiss.

“The work of the Parliamentary Commission is supported by soldiers and members of civil forces, as well as the Austrians. Members of the Parliamentary Commission are obliged to perform their duties discreetly and are devoted exclusively to problems of soldiers. The Commission does not deal with views related to political parties, and the particular weight of its recommendations stems from the fact that the Commission decides unanimously and therefore has the support of all political parties. So far all the ministers of defence have been implementing all the recommendations of the Parliamentary Commission. The Commission may at any place launch an investigation in the armed forces. It is free to make its decisions, and may at any time, immediately, directly, and without any notice, investigate all the units, staff, offices and bodies of the Austrian armed forces, both in Austria and abroad. On-site investigations reveal surprising deficiencies related to, for example, the chain of command”, stressed the Chairman of the Commission for the Federal Armed Forces of the Republic of

Austria, adding that the annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the work of the Commission, citing complaints, places and anonymous applicants, thus protecting the identity of all parties involved.

Finally, Kiss emphasised that the Austrian Parliamentary Commission has good cooperation with various institutions for legal protection.

“The Commission has access to special expertise, knowledge and experience, and can therefore propose comprehensive solutions to significantly improve conditions for Austrian troops in domestic and international missions. For this reason, representatives of soldiers gladly seek advice and assistance from the Parliamentary Commission. In its history of 60 years, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces guarantees that all problems will be effectively resolved. However, especially when it comes to the system of complaints, there are processes which definitely require a comprehensive exchange of ideas at the international level. The focus is on the role of ombudsman institutions to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of soldiers”, concluded Kiss stressing that the conference in Sarajevo is an additional step towards improving the successful international cooperation in the interest and to the benefit of all soldiers.



JOSIP TADIĆ, RELIGIOUS SERVICE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF BIH

“PROMOTING POSITIVE PRACTICES IS MORE INSPIRING”

On behalf of the Religious Services of the Armed Forces and on behalf of Bishop Tomo Vukšić, the audience was addressed by Josip Tadić from the Office of Catholic Chaplaincy. According to him, the Regional Conference on “best practices in the protection of human rights of members of the Armed Forces” is highly important, since the issue of human rights is of vital importance

in every society, in all its aspects, including the armed forces. Thus, Tadić commended the choice of this topic.

“All the organisers, especially the Parliamentary Military Commissioner Boško Šiljegović and the management of the UN Development Programme should be commended for discussing the protection of human rights of members of the Armed Forces from

the prism of good practices that are at work. Highlighting best practices has a far more educational, inspiring and stimulating effect than any other course of discussion on human rights. Also, highlighting best practices as a method is a very successful corrective for situations where human rights of members of the Armed Forces are potentially at threat”, said Tadić.

PRESENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MONTENEGRO

OBRAD MIŠO STANIŠIĆ, MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY OF THE PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO

“WE HAVE BUILT SOLID GROUNDS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION SYSTEM”

In his speech, Obrad Mišo Stanišić, a member of the Defence and Security Committee with the Montenegro’s Parliament, stressed that the protection of human rights and freedoms of all citizens, thus including the members of the Armed Forces, as a separate element of the defence and security system in his country is guaranteed by the Constitution. “By developing a defence and security system in Montenegro, at the same time we have also developed mechanisms of quality parliamentary oversight of the system in the Parliament. This resulted in the adoption of the Law on Parliamentary Oversight in the fields of security and defence in December 2010, which contains all the standards of respect for human rights of all citizens of Montenegro, and especially of all employees in the defence and security system”, said Stanišić.

He also explained that a specificity of this Law is that the Committee and its professional services are both the initiator and leaders of the entire project, so in addition to the experience of countries in the region and Europe, they fully tapped on their own experiences.

“We have gladly exchanged some of the experiences with our regional counterparts, especially with our friends from the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH. Certain provisions of the Law address the issue of the protection of employees in this system, specifically Articles 17 and 18 of the Law which clearly regulate the role of each individual in the defence and security system that allows them to point to any possible violations”, said Stanišić.

Further on, Stanišić emphasised that one should not overlook the fact that the actual safety and stability of relations in the country and the region depend on the functioning of this system.

“Two years into the application of our Law, we have built solid basis for further development of the human rights protection system. In addition, I would like to point out that the Committee continues to pay special attention to the position of women in the defence and security system, as well as the implementation of the UN Security Council’s Resolution No. 1325. Further, we continue to insist on a separate briefing as a part of annual reports of the bodies and institutions under our oversight, relative to the number and position of women in these bodies and institutions. By doing so, we strive to fuel a more decisive implementation of the Resolution”, stressed the member of the

Defence and Security Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro.

He also highlighted that the current legal arrangements have demonstrated a strong will of all political stakeholders and their readiness for all further steps.

“It remains our task as parliamentarians to fully honour both domestic and international legislation in the field of human rights protection in the defence and security system, and to successfully implement it”, said Stanišić, who underlined that regional cooperation is key to mutual success, and that Montenegro is extremely pleased with the cooperation with the countries of the region.

“The highlight of that cooperation is that our soldiers - members of the Armed Forces of Montenegro and Croatia deployed together to a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan”, said Stanišić.



PRESENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MONTENEGRO
ŠUČKO BAKOVIĆ, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OMBUDSMAN OF MONTENEGRO



At the beginning of his speech, Human Rights and Freedoms Ombudsman of Montenegro Šučko Baković noted that his country belongs in the group of countries where the Ombudsman Institution protects human rights and freedoms of all citizens, therefore including the members of the Armed Forces.

“Following its declaration of independence after its statement of succession, Montenegro became a signatory to numerous UN conventions and other international instruments, including, *inter alia*, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. By ratifying this document, the State has committed to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms to all persons within its jurisdiction as enshrined in the Convention and its accompanying Protocols. In doing so, the State must take into account the specific nature and character of the profession performed by the members of the Armed Forces, which necessarily imposes numerous restrictions on their human rights”, underlined Baković.

Baković said that the Constitution of Montenegro stipulates that the guaranteed human rights and freedoms may be restricted by law only to the extent permitted by the Constitution and necessary to satisfy the purpose for which the restriction was granted in an open and free democratic society.

“No restrictions may be introduced for purposes other than those prescribed

under the Montenegro Constitution. Human Rights and Freedoms Ombudsman is defined as an independent and autonomous body that take measures aimed at the protection of human rights and freedoms and performs in its role based on the Constitution, laws and ratified international treaties, abiding by the principles of justice and fairness”, added Baković.

The Human Rights and Freedoms Ombudsman of Montenegro also discussed concrete procedural possibilities for servicemen in Montenegro.

“In exercising his functions, the Ombudsman is empowered to indicate, criticise, recommended and publicly present facts on any irregularities established in the work of public administration, or a violation of human rights and freedoms. In accordance with the Law on the Army, servicemen in Montenegro have the right not only to address the Ombudsman Institution, but also the right to speak to the Defence Inspection, to protect their rights. The Defence Inspection is an internal oversight body within the Defence Ministry.

“The Constitution of Montenegro stipulates that no one can be held responsible or suffer other adverse consequences due to attitudes raised in their submissions”, stressed Baković in his presentation.

He explained that the current complaints mostly relate to violations of labour rights and the termination of professional services, a violation of housing rights,

housing issues, and a violation of political freedom and freedom of association.

“We had a very significant complaint, which was a turning point in the work of this institution. This was a complaint filed by 100 beneficiaries of pension and disability insurance. They were former members of the armed forces and they have sought the intervention of our institution. In essence, the complaint mainly related to pension not being aligned with military regulations, back in the period after the independence of the Republic of Montenegro was declared. We faced a situation where military pensions were previously regulated on the basis of regulations of the common state, and after the independence, we did not have our own regulations, so federal regulations were enforced as an interim solution. However, this interim solution was not good and resulted in a discriminatory position of retired military personnel. During the testing procedure, launched by the Institution in contact and discussions with the Ministry of Defence and the Pension and Disability Insurance, the infringement had been corrected during the actual procedure. There was an amendment of the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance and, for the first time in the pension system, Montenegro also included the pension entitlements of members of the Armed Forces. Since then, adjustments of pensions of members of the Armed Forces are done according to the law”, said Baković and gave several similar examples.

PRESENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM CROATIA
TOMISLAV IVIĆ, CHAIRMAN OF THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE OF THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

WE ARE WILLING TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THOSE WHO ARE JUST STARTING



Tomislav Ivić, the Chairman of the Defence Committee of the Croatian Parliament addressed the audience. Ivić thanked the host for the good organisation of this regional conference, and in his presentation, he focused on the most important issues when it comes to human rights protection in the Republic of Croatia and the existing legal framework.

“In Croatia, the legal and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of human rights is at a high level. This is supported by the fact that the international bodies that monitor the system for the protection and promotion of human rights especially in the accession process of the Republic of Croatia to the EU often point out that the legal and institutional frameworks are in compliance with all required international standards. According to the Constitution, the Republic of Croatia is sovereign, democratic and social state where human rights and fundamental freedoms are protected based on the principles of equality before the law, non-discrimination and gender equality. In its Article 3,

the Constitution notes the respect for human rights as the highest value of the constitutional order, and all other provisions of the Constitution are interpreted in this spirit”, said Ivić, adding:

“Responsibility for the implementation of national legislation and accepted international obligations to promote and protect human rights lays in the hands of the entire system of government and civil society organisations whose work is supported by the Croatian Government. A special role in the protection of human rights is played by courts that are established under the law, with their independence and autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution. In addition to courts, government offices are also involved in the protection and promotion of human rights.

There are also numerous national bodies that deal with human rights and protection of vulnerable groups, including: the Croatian Government Commission for Human Rights, the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the Roma

National Programme, the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Commission for the Improvement of Protection from Domestic Violence and other”.

Ivić stressed that in its foreign policy, the Republic of Croatia actively supports the protection and promotion of all human rights enshrined in international instruments, and at the end, discussed the protection of human rights of members of the Croatian Armed Forces.

“The issue of human rights of members of the armed forces is regulated by the Law on Service in the Armed Forces, the Defence Law and other laws and bylaws. The Law on Service is applied at all times to any of the rights and obligations of members of the Armed Forces. Croatia has long been a member of NATO, and we will soon become the 28th Member State of the European Union and we are willing to gladly share the experiences that we have acquired along the way with those who are at the beginning or will soon embark on this journey”, concluded Ivić.

PRESENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM CROATIA

SUNČANA VUKELIĆ, ASSISTANT DEFENCE MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

WE CONTINUOUSLY EDUCATE OUR STAFF ON HUMAN RIGHTS, CULTURES AND RELIGIONS

Assistant Defence Minister of the Republic of Croatia for Human Resources Sunčana Vukelić also shared the experience of the Republic of Croatia. In her introduction, she noted that by respecting and honouring human rights, gender equality and equal opportunities, together it is possible to improve the security and defence system, military organisation, and security in general, as both men and women alike are the foundation of security and defence policy.

“In its laws and bylaws, the Croatian Defence Ministry regularly adheres to the provisions of the Gender Equality Law of 2008 and implements the national policy measures for the promotion of gender equality. National policy is a basic strategic document that is adopted in order to eliminate discrimination against women and establish genuine gender equality by adopting a policy of equal opportunities. Also, in preparation of any proposal for a new document, it ensures that these proposals are in compliance with the provisions of Security Council Resolution UN 1325 and related resolutions”, said Vukelić, adding that according to the latest data on the total number of employees in the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces 16.02% are women.

“There are as many as 52.34% of women in the administrative part of the Ministry of Defence, while women account for 12.67% of the total number of employees in the Croatian Armed Forces. Women hold 7.6% of leadership and command posts, and also there are 12.5% of women among senior officers, and 9.8% among military personnel”.

According to Vukelić, in 2010 the Ministry of Defence adopted the Action Plan for Promoting and Achieving Gender Equality in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces for the period until 2014, adopted in accordance with the Gender Equality Law, which mandates all organisational units of the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces to take further action.

“This document is aimed at achieving the following objectives – promoting women’s human rights and gender equality, creating equal opportunities in the defence system and career

development, balancing the participation of women and men in decision-making processes and eliminating all forms of gender discrimination and the like”, noted Vukelić, stressing that the Gender Equality Committee was established with the Personnel Council of the Ministry of Defence.

Further, Vukelić explained that the military disciplinary court is an autonomous and independent body that decides on disciplinary offences in the Armed Forces under the provisions of the Law on Service and the Rulebook on Military Discipline.

“Therefore, disciplinary offences in the Armed Forces involving sexual abuse and harassment, and procedures which

freedom. Croatian Constitution guarantees the equality of all religious communities, as well as freedom of conscience and religion and free and public expression of faith, and this is also regulated by the Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities. The Republic of Croatia has signed four international agreements with the Holy See, including the agreement on chaplaincy for Catholics, members of the armed forces and police. The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces particularly emphasised cooperation with the Islamic community. As a result, every participant in operations in Afghanistan, before deploying on a mission, receives basic information about Islam, including



are insulting to the dignity according to gender, religion, nationality or skin colour, including the staff of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces engaged in international peacekeeping missions and operations, will be tried by a military disciplinary court.”

Vukelić added that the Defence Inspectorate as an independent organisational unit of the Ministry of Defence comprises an inspector in charge of monitoring the protection of fundamental human rights, that is, monitoring the implementation of measures in the field of gender equality.

“The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces are making significant efforts to educate its employees about human rights, cultures and different religions in pre-deployment training for peacekeeping operations. Croatian legislation ensures a broad discretion to express religious

an organised visit to Zagreb mosque”, noted Vukelić.

Finally, the Croatian Deputy Minister of Defence informed the participants that Croatia is currently in the adoption procedure for new laws relevant to this area, namely the Defence Law and the Law on Service.

“One thing that I would like to stress here is the new way of tackling problems in the Law of Service, for we have discussed issues related to the promotion and military training. We think that we have made a step forward. At the very least, allow me to share with you a thought by Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002, who said that human rights violations today are causes to conflicts that will happen tomorrow. So I think that together we have really a lot more to do to improve human rights”, concluded Vukelić.

IDŽET MEMETI, NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

“ACTUAL DEGREE OF REPRESENTATION OF ALL COMMUNITIES IN THE ARMED FORCES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING A MULTIETHNIC TRUST AND TOLERANCE”

Idžet Memeti, National Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia noted that in Macedonia, the Constitution defines the legal basis of human rights and freedoms to promote, enhance and improve their protection. The issue of human rights of members of the Armed Forces is the only one that is regulated by special laws governing the method and procedures for the exercise of individual rights of citizens employed with the Armed Forces.

“The Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia is a mechanism for the protection of human rights and freedoms, and at the same time, it is a factor that influences democratic process in our society. Although it basically protects the constitutional and legal rights of citizens, the actions of the Ombudsman have a broader role, since this institution contributes to the functioning of the essential principles of the rule of law. By signing the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the amendments to the Constitution, Macedonia also passed the new Law on Ombudsman back in 2003, which prescribed the responsibilities in undertaking actions to protect the principle of non-discrimination and adequate and equitable representation of members of communities in Macedonia”, said Memeti.

Further, Memeti explained that according to the statistics of the National Ombudsman, the most frequent complaints about the protection of the rights of military personnel or persons who are employed or the Armed Forces were recorded in 2002, during the conflict in the Republic of Macedonia.

“Once the conflict ended, the number of complaints began to decline significantly. According to the experience of the National Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia, the number of complaints relative to the protection of the rights of military personnel and conscripts was reduced, *inter alia*, due to the adoption of several laws such as the Defence Law, the Law on Service in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law on amnesty for citizens of the Republic of

Macedonia who did not complete their mandatory military service, and the Law for the Sale of Apartments of the Former Yugoslav People’s Army, thus enabling the improvement of the status of military personnel and conscripts and reducing the scope of possible violations of guaranteed rights for this category of citizens.”

Memeti also added that the protection of citizens’ rights is of great importance, among others, since citizens often perceive the National Ombudsman as a safe opportunity to exercise their rights, and the experience of the National Ombudsman has confirmed this in a number of cases.

“The National Ombudsman had a case which gave a clear picture. In fact, several years ago, it was in 2006 or 2007, based on information from media about the harassment of six soldiers from the Albanian ethnic community, I initiated the procedure on my personal initiative to verify the case and determine the factual situation, which included an immediate inspection of the garrison, where the case took place. On the basis of accurate and complete findings, my goal was to determine if there were any violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and the applicable regulations of the Republic of Macedonia. However, the following happened – the Ombudsman team was denied access to the garrison by two officials - the commander and lieutenant colonel in charge of training. In accordance with the Law on Ombudsman, I monitored and

reported to the Defence Minister, the President of the Republic of Macedonia, and after the reaction of the Minister of Defence, the President and Commander of the General Staff, access was enabled. After all this, we have concluded the existence of elements of the commission of the crime of harassment of soldiers by one lieutenant. We sent a request for prosecution by the public prosecutor, in a town in Macedonia, with the documents that we obtained in the course of our investigation. A public prosecutor then accepted our request, meaning the request of the Ombudsman, launched the proceedings and opened an investigation, resulting in an indictment and suspended conviction for one lieutenant in 2007 to one year imprisonment for maltreatment of soldiers. This is one interesting case that happened in the Republic of Macedonia”, said Memeti.

At the end of his presentation, the guest from Macedonia noted that although generally there is progress, representation of members of all communities in the Armed Forces of his country is still not at the required level, especially in managerial positions.

“According to the National Ombudsman, ensuring a realistic ratio between the number of employees and representation of all communities can contribute to the process of building a multi-ethnic trust and tolerance, and also represents a kind of prevention, in order to eliminate discrimination on the basis of ethnicity”, concluded the National Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia.



SAŠA JANKOVIĆ, OMBUDSMAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

THERE IS STILL FEAR FROM FILING COMPLAINTS

Saša Janković, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia noted that the most frequent applications by servicemen in the army of the Republic of Serbia and in general the staff employed with the Ministry of Defence are related to economic and social rights.

"Economic and social rights depend on the economy, which in our country is obviously not in such a great shape.

It is then especially important in case of economic scarcity to have what is available distributed fairly in accordance with the law, according to the elementary needs and without arbitrariness. At this point I have 3,000 complaints pending, while 15,000 proceedings have been completed so far. Out of this number, less than 1% of complaints are related to the rights of people in uniform, soldiers,

officers. Still there is a fear that they will be faced with serious consequences in case they file a complaint", said Janković. Janković noted the most common cause of irregularities that he has determined arises from the awareness of senior staff of their power over the soldier, over their subordinates and they do not even need to explain their decisions.

"It is still deeply rooted in our Armed Forces. The infamous new posting followed by reasoning 'according to the needs of the service', while at the same time, the alleged needs of the service are by no means substantially justified. Interestingly, many of the complaints can be relatively quickly resolved only with a greater understanding of senior officers that soldiers are not people without rights. It is my pleasure to report that in the past year we marked a significant increase in the number of cases that get resolved only by turning the attention of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff to a problem and asking them to respond. Within ten to fifteen days, I get informed that the problem is solved", concluded Janković.



BREDA BUNIČ, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF SLOVENIA

MILITARY TRAINING SYSTEM IS IMPORTANT

Breda Bunič, a lawyer with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia thanked for the invitation to attend the conference and pointed out that she was honoured to be among those present, and hopes that together they can make a difference in terms of respect for human rights.

Bunič pointed out that the legislation of the Republic of Slovenia provides a good framework for the exercise of rights guaranteed by the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on human rights of members of the armed forces - CM/Rec (2010).

In her presentation, she recited all individual rights that members of the armed forces should enjoy, such as the right to life, right to liberty and

security, the right to dignity, health and occupational safety, the right to respect for private and family life, a fair trial, the right of access to relevant information, remuneration and pension and other rights.

Bunič also spoke about the importance of raising the awareness of members of the armed forces.

"The attempt is to achieve this through the system of military education and training, which includes human rights issues. Equality, diversity, non-discrimination and the promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovenia by improving the understanding of issues related to discrimination by enhancing the functioning of the established system

of equal opportunities, and through contributions to the development of moral, legal and political values", concluded Bunič, and also mentioned procedures that are available to members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovenia in case of violation of their human rights, which can be divided into those informal (counselling) and formal (actions, involving the commander, the minister).

The presentation by the representative of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia was concluded by an overview of the results of certain research conducted on the most common types of violence in the workplace, as well as the laws and regulations in force in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovenia.

ALMA DEDIĆ-RENKAPA, ADVISER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE UNDP

“OMBDUSMAN AND THE PARLIAMENTARY MILITARY COMMISSIONER ARE VERY IMPORTANT INSTRUMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION”

Alma Dedić-Renkapa, Adviser for Human Rights and Transitional Justice with the UNDP, offered a different approach to the topic of the conference. According to her, the idea was to place this issue in a broader context of issues that UNDP deals with in BiH.

“I will first briefly address a broader mechanism which is surely known to some of you, and it is called the universal periodic review. In fact, the review involves a cyclic four-year review of security and human rights

situation in a particular country. This mechanism is fairly new mechanism in terms of the UN and each member state is subject to such a review. One thing that BiH could take pride in this area, especially when it comes to institutions dealing with human rights protection including the ombudsmen and our today’s host institution, is that they are identified as very important instruments of human rights protection”, said Dedić - Renkapa.

In her presentation, she also tackled

the aspect of transitional justice, that is, the mechanism to cope with the past.

“For example, one novelty in BiH and perhaps you have heard of it is the preparation of the Transitional Justice Strategy which is now in its draft version and which, among other, addresses these issues as well. The Strategy is very interesting in BiH as it offers a cross-sectoral approach”, noted the Advisor for Human Rights and Transitional Justice with the UNDP.

ZDRAVKO JAKOP, RACVIAC DEPUTY DIRECTOR

“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION ON SECURITY ISSUES IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE”

In the introduction of his speech, Zdravko Jakop, Deputy Director of RACVIAC International Centre for Security and Cooperation in Southeast Europe thanked for the warm welcome and the opportunity to say a few words about the Centre, but also to share perceptions of security, building, and the degree of security, stability and trust in the region.

“This conference is organised in a positive direction, in a positive spirit. It is always important to think positively, that participants are willing to cooperate, willing to exchange views and ideas, and in essence, this is the platform on which the Security Cooperation Centre is working. As for RACVIAC, it was established in 1999 as one of the options for increasing stability and security in the region, as a part of the Stability Pact. In its twelve-



year history, RACVIAC went through numerous transformations. Initially, it was more related to arms control and application of the agreement in this area in our region, and today it grew to become an international organisation”, said Jakop.

He also underlined that the mission of RACVIAC is to encourage dialogue and cooperation on security issues in Southeast Europe through a partnership between the countries of the region and their international partners.

DENIS HADŽOVIĆ, CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

“MILITARY COMMISSIONER ALLOWS GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND INSIGHT INTO THE SITUATION IN THE ARMED FORCES”

Denis Hadžović addressed the participants on behalf of the Centre for Security Studies, an NGO founded in 2001 and engaged in promoting democratic values in the field of security. Hadžović stressed that civil society is very critical of the work of the BiH Parliament and politicians in general, but there are exceptions.

“Here, I see the work of the Joint Commission for Defence and Security of the PABiH as a positive example. Since its establishment in 2004, the Commission invested a lot of effort and knowledge to improve the system of democratic control in BiH, and thus to improve

the activities of security institutions in this field. We clearly recognised this and even wrote about it in one of our studies conducted in seven countries in the Western Balkans. In my opinion, initiating and support for the adoption of the Law on Military Commissioner is one step ahead, and is an additional example of positive democratic practices in BiH”, said Hadžović.

Further, he noted that members of the Armed Forces due to the specific nature and character of their profession are bound to have a number of limitations related to human rights and it is normal to assume that a high degree of

subordination and centralisation of this service will not provide all those human rights as it does for their colleagues in the civilian sector.

According to him, from the perspective of civil society, the work of the Military Commissioner is seen as good practice of democratic development in the security sector. “Military Commissioner allows both representatives of civil society and the public to have greater transparency and through the Commissioner’s reports and findings, we can be more familiar with the actual situation in the Armed Forces”, concluded Hadžović.

SAMRA FILIPOVIĆ HADŽIABDIĆ, GENDER EQUALITY AGENCY OF BIH

THE MEANING OF WOMEN IN THE POLICE AND DEFENCE IS MANIFOLD

On behalf of the Gender Equality Agency of BiH, Samra Filipović Hadžiabdić pointed out that there is a significant relation between gender equality and the Office of the Military Commissioner and, in general, the areas of defence and security.

“Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Safety is the first resolution of the UN Security Council which specifically addresses the impact of war and armed conflict on women and girls, and women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Special significance of 1325 is that it calls for increasing the participation of women in decision-making processes, conflict prevention, post-conflict processes, peace negotiations and peace operations. BiH was the first in the region to design an Action Plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325, and the eighth country in Europe”, said Filipović Hadžiabdić.

Under the decision of the Council

of Ministers of BiH, a Steering Committee was established in 2011 to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

“These are representatives of the Ministry of Defence of BiH, the Ministry of Security of BiH, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH, Ministry of Finance and Treasury of BiH, Gender Centre of the Federation of BiH, Gender Centre of the Government of Republika Srpska, the FBiH Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Interior of Republika Srpska, Demining Centre and NGO representatives. Gender Equality Agency of BiH annually reports to the Council of Ministers of BiH on the implementation of this Action Plan, and the report is made on the basis of reports of members of the Coordination Committee.”

Representative of the Gender Equality Agency pointed out that the Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 strives to improve the status of women in the military

and police forces.

“The meaning of women in the police and defence is manifold. They increase trust, enable faster and more efficient resolution of cases of violence. In order to enable women to participate in the military forces, it is necessary to create adequate preconditions through the promotion of non-discrimination on the basis of gender in the Army and adapting facilities to persons of both sexes and respect for biological differences between women and men. Also, the promotion of the military profession, as a potential female occupation is very important, as it gives women the knowledge that they can contribute to the development of this calling. In this way, women are encouraged to apply”, added Samra Filipović Hadžiabdić, concluding at the end of that progress has been made in establishing and updating a database on women in the military and police forces.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE MISSION HARALD QUIEL, RETIRED BRIGADIER GENERAL

PARLIAMENTARY MILITARY COMMISSIONER SERVES AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RIGHTS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF BIH

At the conference, Harald Quiel, a retired Brigadier General and the OSCE Representative shared his views and thoughts on this matter. At the beginning of his speech, he noted that everyone should see the manpower of the Armed Forces, primarily and predominantly as human beings, and at the same time, and “respectable citizens” of their country.

“Their contracts, specific tasks and missions, as well as their uniforms give them certain privileges, but also restrict their personal freedom, in some cases even the full enjoyment of their rights, which a civilian citizen would never have to waive. However, this must be carefully considered and carefully addressed”, said Quiel.

He added that the 57 OSCE countries agreed that the “inherent dignity” of every person should be promoted and encouraged.

“Once these principles are translated into practice, then the other rights and freedoms can be effectively enjoyed and protected. In its activities, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is actively working with the Parliamentary Assembly since 2003 to develop adequate capacities for oversight, including monitoring of the defence sector in the protection of human rights and work on any violations”, said Quiel, and added:

“Security Cooperation Department of the OSCE Mission has contributed its expertise during the preparation of the legislative and institutional framework for the institution of the Commissioner, including the Law on Parliamentary Military Commissioner of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had established the institution. The Mission supports the Office in its efforts to promote its role, responsibilities and objectives, and the significance of its work, not only for members of the Armed Forces, but also for society in general. As for the command structure of the Armed Forces of BiH and civilian leadership, Parliamentary Military Commissioner



serves as a representative of the rights of members of the Armed Forces in the parliament and the public”.

He also highlighted that the Annual Report on the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner receives full support from various political representatives and delegates, passing a message to the delegates of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina are ready to support efforts to protect the human rights of members of the Armed Forces.

“There is still a list of recommendations for the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and the Ministry of Defence of BiH to remedy certain deficiencies and gaps that were observed during the examination of complaints, with solutions that have yet to be adopted. So in spite of the results achieved so far, and the recognition of the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner as an important institution, there is still work to be done in the exercise of legislative duties and developing a

clear and common understanding of the purpose of the army as defined by the state, and the basic needs and rights of military personnel”, said Quiel.

Representative of the OSCE Mission concluded his presentation with an assessment of the conference, from the perspective of his international organisation.

“Let us not forget that ensuring human rights protection of military personnel is an obligation of all 57 OSCE States, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, as clearly noted in the OSCE Code of Conduct on Political and Military Aspects of Security. Thanks to the presentations of representatives from the countries of South East Europe, we have learned more about the ways of different states in fulfilling this obligation to provide human rights protection of their armed forces, and how their system has developed over the years to better serve their soldiers”, concluded Quiel.

Regional conference “Best Practices in Protecting the Human Rights of the Members of the Armed Forces”, Sarajevo, 21. - 22. 03.2013.



From left to the right: Harald Quiel, Paul Kiss, Boško Šiljegović, Andreas Rotter