



Minutes Congress 2006 in Gothenburg (Sweden)

- Date: 14th to 16th September 2006
- Place: Hotel Scandic Europa, Gothenburg
Volvo Demo Centre, Gothenburg
- Participation nations: Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovakia, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary
- Number of participants: 33 persons
- Subjects of the Congress:
1. Preparation and driving in country of mission
 2. Working group statistics
 3. Revised terms of reference and job descriptions
 4. Internet
 5. Feedback on successes
 6. Working groups
 7. Future planning
 8. Common campaign
 9. Finances
 10. Congresses 2008 / 2009
 11. Elections
 12. Place, time and subject of the next Congress
 13. Any Other Business
- Management of the Congress: Swedish Armed Forces
- Congress languages: German, English, French
No simultaneous translation. When required, translations were conducted by a representative of the Volvo Demo Centre.

Welcome words of the President

The President welcomed all participants to the Congress and thanked the host nation for the interesting program. He explained that around ten reports had to be presented and asked for quick presentations because we only had four hours. He welcomed the translator from Volvo Demo Centre and thanked her for her support. He was delighted to note the increased level of participation by delegates, with two new nations taking part. The President concluded by offering all participants an enjoyable and instructive congress.

1. Preparation and driving in country of mission

Nearly all nations had submitted a report about the subject. The complete reports would be distributed on a CD Rom after the Congress. Below is a summary of the main points:

Sweden

The importance of team work between the Army and civilian institutions was specially emphasised. Sweden commented on the serious effects of an accident for all involved persons. Especially important was the practical training in country of mission.



Austria

Austria reported on the three main operational areas of the Austrian Armed Forces. An overview on slide 8 of the report described the drivers training regarding these main contingents. The number of columns is to put on the same level with the number of weeks of training. Annually Austria trains around 300 - 500 drivers.

Lithuania

The main cause of accidents of the Lithuanian Armed Forces during missions, were the changed conditions (streets, weather, etc.). The reason for the participation is that the representative has to establish a course for drivers training in Lithuania. He wanted to procure ideas and concrete suggestions from this board. Explanation of an item on slide 7: HMWVV = tank driver.

United Kingdom

Explanation of an item on slide 25: Master Driver = Warrant Officer (WO). One of these WOs is on the ground during the whole mission. During cross-country exercises (slide 25), driving with different equipments would be undertaken. A big problem was handling of left-hand drive vehicles and driving on the right. We should not underrate this problem. Drivers had to wear special protective clothing and vehicles have a bullet-proof windscreen. The British Armed Force launched accident prevention campaigns on the ground (slide 38) and campaigns to support driving on return to Britain. (slide 49). Subsequent to a mission, all participants had to participate in special schooling. Target of this education was to sensitize the soldiers and to support them in psychological way, to get them back to "normality". Many accidents were happening after returning home because of the difficulty in changing behaviour patterns.

Czech Republic

Czech Republic only had a small, reduced Army (around 30'000 soldiers). Training took place under complicated conditions, because there were few financial means. Actual mission areas are Iraq (100 soldiers), Afghanistan (150 soldiers) and Kosovo (200 soldiers). The preparation for the mission happens in a simple structure around three months before the mission. Duration of drivers training is three weeks. Czech Republic had at their disposal a good training area. Only a few differences between the conditions in homeland and in country of mission exist. Czech Republic only has a few accidents (4 in 2002).

Netherlands

Before the report about the subject, the representative briefs about the methods of basic training in Netherlands. Additionally, the Army used mobile simulators. The simulators are also on the ground (in trucks) during a mission. Structures of drivers training: 1. solid basic training, 2. special training, 3. practical driving (use of training areas in Norway or Scotland).

Slovakia

Training happens on civilian basis (slide 7). Like in United Kingdom, Slovakia has problems with left and right traffic. At the end of training, soldiers have to pass an examination. If they don't pass this test, soldiers can make only one re-attempt. The operation training (simulation of difference influences) is not possible. No registration of accident data till now. This will be adjusted in future.

Germany

Regarding the further development of drivers training (modernization of training means), Germany accepted longer training times. The construction of around 40 training centres is in planning. This means, that Germany has to train 50 additional military driving instructors. Drivers, which will go for a mission, have to pass a safety drivers training (with vehicle, which they will drive during the mission). Germany plans to make a safety training for all drivers every two years.

Switzerland

No comments. You find all information on CD Rom.

2. Working groups statistics

Data protection has a high rate within the working group because members want to encourage other Armed Forces to contribute the different statistics. Unfortunately the working group received only a few reports for the survey. It's hard to transform this limited data into a common overview. The aim is to create a database, like 2005, to get an overview and to help to identify dangerous situations in future.

If we look at the comparison of the number of accidents and kilometres driven, the tendency is going up. Main causes of accidents are mainly: speed and lack of attention during reversing. To a lesser extent other contributory factors are: alcohol or drugs, tiredness, lack of training or insufficient knowledge about the vehicle, mechanical errors, disobeying traffic rules, weather or road conditions.

Further targets of the working group are: creation of an ECRAF-statistics-archive to highlight trends, registration of costs of accidents to 2009, creation of a database for registration of non professional driver accidents, evaluation of data and feedback to future Congresses. In addition, a future consideration may be to allow participants to have direct access to the database, to allow them to manipulate the data as required.

The President invited all participants, to send the necessary data to the working group. He will make a special letter after the Congress. To confirm receipt of emails, recipients were asked to send a short acknowledgement to the sender.

3. Revision of terms of reference and job descriptions

Terms of reference

Concordant passage of the adapted terms of reference by the participants of the Congress included the points about "data protection" and "reduction of the Congress languages to German and English". After signature, all ECRAF members will get them.

Job descriptions

All participants of the Congress got 14 days time, to send possible alternations and suggestions the secretariat. At this time and after signature by the President, Vice President and the secretariat, all ECRAF members will get the documents.

4. Internet

You will find the complete report also on CD Rom. To create a complete information platform, the secretariat needs the support of all ECRAF members. New call of the President and Vice President, to send the following necessary data to the secretariat: URL, absolute URL, short description of the campaign and some keywords. The secretariat isn't responsible for the translation of the website of the different nations. The secretariat is only responsible to make the link. Websites are to be overview by the different Armed Forces. Time slot: 14 days.

5. Feedback on Successes

The President invited participants to notify any successes arising out of the ECRAF Congresses. These would be passed on to inform all ECRAF members.

6. Working groups

Statistics Working Group

It was agreed that the Statistics Working Group would continue. Current members are: Germany, Denmark (definite information will follow), United Kingdom and Switzerland.



Integration Working Group for the implementation and post processing of the results out of the Congresses

A new Working Group was established to make data out of the Congresses available for the further processing by individual nations. This working group will check a possible integration in NATO committee reporting. Current members are Germany, United Kingdom and Switzerland.

7. Future Planning

The subject of the Congress in 2007 was discussed but not finalised. The President invited participants to send further suggestions to the secretariat. Integration into the future planning by the secretariat will follow. After that Germany will make the final decision about the subject of the Congress in 2007. Time slot: 14 days. The creation of a working group is possible.

8. Common campaign

Could ECRAF present a Common Campaign? Due to the different cultures of the members it's difficult to launch a campaign which is valid for all members. The President invited all members to send further suggestions and wishes to the secretariat. The Swiss Army will try in team work with the internal graphic agency to find a cost-saving solution. The secretariat needs the written statement of all members if they support a common campaign or not. Time slot: 14 days.

9. Finances

The Vice President briefed participants about the active balance of the ECRAF account. Currently there are no further purchases planned. In future we have to have simple book keeping. A written notice about the finances to all members will follow. Participants can write to the President or secretary if they have ideas about future purchases. Election of a reviser (Representative from Netherlands Armed Forces).

10. Congresses 2008 / 2009

The following nations made the offer to discuss with their superiors possible hosting of the Congress in 2008 and 2009: Denmark, Finland and France. In case of an acceptance, the secretariat need to have a written confirmation.

11. Elections

The following persons are elected:

President	:	Representative from United Kingdom (1 year)
Vice President	:	Representative from Switzerland (2 years)
Secretariat	:	Representative from Switzerland (2 years)

The elected persons thanked all participants for their support. The whole team will try to implement the wishes and needs of all ECRAF members in the future.

12. Place, time and subject of the next Congress

The Congress 2007 will be organised by the participants from Germany. The President was grateful for this offer. The Congress will be held from 13th to 15th September 2007. Further information will follow (see ECRAF Website). The subject of the Congress is not yet finalised. Final decision by the host nation will follow after the deadline for ideas has passed.



13. Any Other Business

A representative from the Netherlands makes the statement that this will be his last participation on an ECRAF Congress. He presented an USB-stick to all participants of the Congress as a farewell gift. On behalf of all, the President sent his best words of thanks to him and he wishes him all the best for the future.

The minutes were written in German language. We translated them later into Congress languages.

Berne, 3rd November 2006