

Spring Session of the Gaming Initiative in Italy Chianciano Terme, Tuscany, Italy May 18 – 21, 2017

The Spring session of the Gaming Initiative took place from May 18 to May 21 in the Chianciano Terme spa center in Tuscany, Italy. Col. Svetozár Plesník, President of the Central Council of the Union of Officers and Warrant Officers of the Army of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as „Union“), Maj. Radim J. Marušák and Cpt. Ivan Lamprecht, Vice Presidents of the Central Council of the Union and Lt.Col. Miroslav Tlamicha and Lt.Col. Jaroslav Palkoska, members of the Central Council of the Union were taking part in this session. The participants were accommodated in the Savoia hotel which is owned by the National Union of Reserve Officers of Italy (UNUCI).

After the arrival on the spot on May 18, 2017, the participants were greeted by the Vice President of the Gaming Initiative LtCdr. Filipp Giuseppe Imbalzano and then they were registered, accommodated and familiarized with the agenda of the meeting.

The next day soon after breakfast the participants were transported to the coastal city of Pisa where they visited the barracks „**GAMERRA**“ of the drill training paratroop brigade „**FOLGLORE**“ and the very drill training center **CAPAR**. The deputy commander welcomed the participants, informed them on the present status of the brigade, its tasks and the plans for the immediate future. The representatives of the international conference laid wreath to the Memorial to fallen paratroopers. Then the participants inspected the representative museum of this paratroop brigade which brought closer to the participants the most famous Italian paratroopers of this brigade, their extraordinary achievements and medals and decorations, as well as their equipment and armaments.

After the lunch in the barracks the participants were taken to the racecourse of the National Park San Rossore where they were offered a small refreshment. Thereafter, they were preparing themselves for visiting the national culture heritage of leaning tour in Pisa. A qualified guide was accompanying the visitors through the baptismal font, cathedral and provided them with a detailed information on the history and the present condition of the leaning tower to the top of which nearly all participants were climbing. At the end of the day, the participants returned to the Savoia hotel where they were offered a typical Tuscany meal.

The working session itself of the Gaming Initiative started on May 20, 2017. In the morning, the mayor of the city Chianciano Terme welcomed the participants and a group photo of all participants was taken in front of the hotel. In the meeting room the participants paid honour to the deceased Col. Charles Ott, one of the founders of the Gaming Initiative, to deceased Maj. Rostislav Konečný, former President of the Central Council of the Union and to other Italian colleagues who passed away.

The substantive part of the meeting was opened by the statement of Maj. Enrico Maccari on actual situation of the Italian reserve forces. Subsequently, Maj. Alberto

Caruso de Carolis presented information on Italian rapid deployment forces in the NATO service further to the need of special financial services for a successful communication among all participating units. Afterwards, 1st Lt. Massimo Franchi offered to the participants a fresh information on technical innovations in the field of security and defense.

After the break, Maj. Silvano Ferracani, Italian President of *Confédération Interalliée des Officiers Médicaux de Réserve* (CIOMR) greeted the participants and expressed the hope in further close collaboration. It was preliminarily agreed that a Memorandum of cooperation will be signed between the Gaming Initiative and CIORM and a draft thereof will be prepared by the Italian colleagues.

A factual and topical information on the present situation of so called Islamic state (in Arabic Daesh) in the period from 2015 to 2017 was presented by the Italian newsman Antonio Albanese who follows this matter continuously. This topic aroused considerable interest among the participants who spent a longer time discussing various issues connected with this specific topic.

A meeting of the Gaming Initiative Presidency reserved for the heads of delegations took place after lunch. The Presidency dealt with two questions: the first one concerned a decision on the application of the Union of reserve officers of Macedonia to become members of the Gaming Initiative in 2018. In respect of this application, the heads of delegations have not reached a unanimous decision in view of the present political situation in Macedonia and the status of the Macedonian army. The President of the session, Lt.Cdr. F.G. Imbalzano decided to invite the delegation of Macedonia to the forthcoming session of the Gaming Initiative to Prague where the delegations should examine in detail as to whether the Union of reserve officers of Macedonia will be invited to the meetings of the Gaming Initiative at least as observer. The second question concerned the determination of the place for the spring meeting of the Gaming Initiative in 2018. Since it was impossible to decide this question on the spot, the participants were called upon to examine their possibilities on the understanding that the final decision in this respect will be taken in Prague in September.

The factual deliberations continued by delivery of special presentations offered by the Croatian colonel Branko Gacak on security and humanitarian aspects of the European migration crisis and by the Hungarian captain Gergely Toth on a new Hungarian association for sports and national defense. Capt. Toth also shared with the participants Hungarian experience acquired after the deployment of military forces on the southern Hungarian border.

The following part of deliberations was filled by presentations by national representatives on the topic „**How the Gaming Initiative countries organize and reorganize their reserve forces for the mitigation of existing threats**“. Maj. Radim J. Marušák presented on behalf of the Union actual information on this topic acquired in cooperation with brig.gen. Jaromír Alan, NATO NRFC and offered to the participants further written piece of information that described in some detail this actual theme.

In the area of internal organization of the Gaming Initiative the participants first approved the report on the deliberations of the Gaming Initiative held in Dresden in 2016. They further dealt with the updating of the web.site of the Gaming Initiative – here, the delegate of the Federal Republic of Germany Lt.Col. Sebastian Söllner was invited to clarify this issue with the German colleague who solved this specific question in the past. The participants were called upon to submit to the Presidency their opinions and suggestions as to how to improve communications between national delegations, to specify their relation to the respective national authorities, to civil sector and to the interested societies and organizations. At the same time, the participants were called upon to send to the Presidency documents and photographs from the past sessions of the Gaming Initiative that could be used as a reference for putting together a publication on 30th anniversary of the Gaming Initiative in 2019 for which it is necessary to collect appropriate materials and photographs and agree on its production, participation on its elaboration and to set the shares on the costs. The representatives of Switzerland and Italy who are in the Gaming Initiative from its very beginning will be the principal authors of this project.

Radim J. Marušák presented to the participants an invitation and information on the organization of the September Gaming Initiative meeting in Prague to be held from September 21 to 24, 2017. He specified the place of the meeting, possible ways of transportation to the place of the meeting, a number of auspices, accommodation and the total price for a participant to the meeting. He emphasized that this meeting is an important one for the Union and thus the Union pays to it maximum attention. It is possible to assume that all members of the Gaming Initiative will take part in the Prague session.

The spring session was terminated by a gala dinner during which the representatives of the Union granted to Maj.Gen. Labonia, UNUCI President and to Zygfryd Naczka, the Head of the Polish delegation the Union medal for merit. Also the present ladies received small memory presents and all participants received a certificate of attendance. On this occasion, the Gaming Initiative granted its cross of merit to col. Svetozár Plesník, President of the Union Central Council. The festive evening was ending by a singing performance of Maj.Gen. Labonia of several classic Italian songs.

The next 21st day of May the Union representatives went on a return trip to Prague.

Prague, May 22nd, 2017

Radim J. Marušák