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NN&PP: Which institutions and organisations in your service have already had experience in co-operating with other countries?

Dr. Štok: Cooperation with neighbouring countries is arranged through international agreements. The Ministry of Health has started a joint project with Italy on cooperation in the health field, including emergency and disaster medicine. Additionally, there are a number of health institutions and services with

ACTIVE MEDICAL CO-OPERATION

NN&PP: How is your medical service organised?

Dr. Štok: Within our Ministry of Health we have a department called “Military and Disaster Medicine” responsible for preparations of the health care system in case of war and disasters.

The tasks of the Ministry of Health derive partly from our heritage as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where the committee of health was responsible for organising medical services of territorial defence units. As a state of 2 million inhabitants, with approximately 4,000 doctors in a medical system of 37,000 employees, we are forced to treat our human resources extremely carefully. We realize that we have a momentous responsibility during both peacetime and military operations.

We have excellent relationships with the military medical service since most of our personnel, working in health care centers and private clinics, are reservists. The civil-military co-operation in medical areas will always work out fine especially when looked upon from the financial and professional side.

The Ministry of Health also cooperates in disaster relief planning. The plans are prepared in cooperation with different ministries, under the leadership of the Administration of Protection and Rescue, within the Ministry of Defence. In the event of a disaster of an extensive nature, cooperation of different services is organised by the headquarters of civil protection, established by the Government and communities. A representative of the

Ministry of Health cooperates in the Civil Protection Headquarters on the national level.

NN&PP: Do you have different medical organisations, e.g. for civil defence protection? and for purely military purposes?

Dr. Štok: We do have “Civil Protection”, we also have a “Civil Defence System”. Civil Protection is dealing with major accidents or catastrophes, such as e.g. earth quakes, nuclear incidents, floods etc., and Civil Defence in our country is – according to the Law on Defence – classified as Support of the Community to the Armed Forces.

The Ministry of Defence is responsible for co-ordinating and supporting all tasks in this area for all ministries. We have a strategy for a wartime health care system, but these plans were directed only towards enemies from abroad attacking our nation.

But now, preparing to join NATO, we have new tasks.

NN&PP: In case of war would you integrate more personnel from the civil side to the military side?

Dr. Štok: Right now, our system is still actually more oriented towards reserve. In case of war, reserve doctors will join the Military Medical Corps.

international reputation and experience – the World Health Organisation reference lab for hemorrhagic fever, the burns department of the Medical Center in Ljubljana, ophthalmology clinics, etc...

NN&PP: What is your experience in Pfp exercises and other international events?

Dr. Štok: Since 1994 when Slovenia joined the Partner for Peace programme, we have been active in various committees and in numerous exercises, and have attended seminars. There is much that we can learn so we are very keen on this cooperation.

I am a member of the Joint Medical Committee (JMC). The Slovenian Representative and Head of the Military Medical Service is the member of the Slovenian delegation with the JMC. On the other hand, the Head of the Military Medical Service will always be the Head of delegation at COMEDS/PfP meetings, accompanied by a representative of the Ministry of Health. This way we guarantee an optimal flow of information.

We are actively involved in the preparation and execution of different workshops and conferences. In 2002, at the first conference on disaster and military medicine, we hosted surgeons general of some NATO countries and Switzerland, who presented the current organisation and planned changes of their military medical corps. We also discussed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and presented the organisation of civil defence, protection and rescue, as well as the military defence in Slovenia.

In September this year, we are hosting the first NATO medical symposium which will be attended by experts from medical logistics, WMD, blood-provision and experts for diagnostics. The symposium is organised by NATO Joint Medical Committee.

We are eager to bring top experts to Slovenia who offer us the expertise of other countries, aiding Slovenia – as well as other PfP countries – to further develop their medical services.



Medical unit Pall 1 in Sarajevo.





Some of the research groups are directly supported by the Ministry of Defence.

NNPP: Did you already have a chance for co-operation in scientific areas with NATO or in other international organisations?

Dr. Stančič: In 1996, Slovenia as a NATO partner country, could for the first time apply for the individual forms of participation within the NATO Science Programme, and it actively participates in the NATO Science for Peace Programme. Slovenian scientists are participating in all available sub-programmes including the Science for Peace sub-programme. In 1997, 5 projects out of 31 applications from Slovenian organisations were approved and financed in the amount of 641,000 Euros. In 2000, 4 of the Slovenian projects are in the final step of the evaluation procedure.

In the multilateral field Slovenia promotes and supports the participation of Slovenian R&D organisations in projects financed or co-financed by the European Commission, agencies of the United Nations, and other international and intergovernmental organisations. Since its independence in 1991, Slovenia has been participating in the European Union programmes (ACE, partly in the 3rd Framework Programme and in the 4th Framework Programme with 54 projects, in TEMPUS with 83 projects, in PECO with 58 projects, in INCO-COPERNICUS with 84 projects, in COST with 179 projects). In 1999, Slovenia formally joined the 5th Framework Programme and thus became a partner country in the European R&D activities. Taking into account the response to all calls in 1999 and 2000, 197 projects were retained for EU co-financing. In 1994, Slovenia became a full member country of the EUREKA initiative with 49 projects. Since 1992, Slovenia is a full member of the United Nations Organisation and cooperates with UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes on a regular basis.

NNPP: How do you organise scientific support in your procurement procedures?

Dr. Stančič: In order to encourage and assist our researchers to participate in national or international research activities, different support measures are taken at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, such as contact persons for specific programmes, information days, workshops, seminars, information brochures and web pages.

NNPP: In which way do you guarantee that civilian scientific work and ideas are integrated in military R&D?

Dr. Stančič: It is guaranteed by the joint activities of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, mostly through the common target research programme.

NNPP: Would you be prepared to send scientist also to NATO organisations?

Dr. Stančič: Although the participation of the research sphere in Slovenia within the NATO Science Programme is quite good we are trying to increase the number of future applications by different promotion actions. Last year the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport received a request to propose some Slovenian scientists for the Associated Members in the Selection Panels, one for every thematic panel. The NATO Science Committee approved two of the proposed scientists. In general we are encouraging our scientists to participate with the NATO organisations in every possible way.

NNPP: What are your plans for future co-operation in the science field?

Dr. Stančič: Stimulating international scientific co-operation is one of the priority tasks of Slovenian science.

In order to increase the participation of Slovenian researchers in the NATO Science Programme activities the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is planning to encourage its regular promotional activities. Further on, the information on the activities of the NATO Science Programme and Slovenian participation in them will be included in the process of raising awareness of the general public in Slovenia about NATO and the significance of becoming a NATO country.

In the framework of bilateral co-operation our priority is to stimulate applied and basic international projects, which could evolve into multilateral or regional projects. Accordingly, Slovenia is trying to be an active and contributing partner in the process of the development and enforcement of the common European research policy called "Towards a European Research Area".

