

WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION
23rd Meeting of the Standing Committee on
European Affairs in Montenegro
16 – 19 June 2014

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS (SCEA)

1. INTRODUCTION

I am indeed very happy to have this meeting in beautiful Montenegro and I am honoured to be the guest of our member organisation, Union of Associations of Antifascists of Montenegro and their members. I know they have spent hundreds of hours to make this meeting a great success. Thank you! It is also my privilege to submit a report on the activities of the Standing Committee on European Affairs to cover the period since the last SCEA meeting in Ukraine 2011. This has been a busy and productive period to build up the Friendship Across Borders concept among member associations. After the ongoing survey in the WVF and into the member fields we have achieved considerable progress in the European area for veterans. Our team of dedicated supporters have accomplished good results and we have established and maintained useful contacts with other NGOs, the UN, the Council of Europe, EU, governments, other veteran organizations and partners. My report will cover the main activities during this period.

2. SCEA MEETING IN Kiev (Ukraine) 2011

It was clear that there was a very high level of importance attached to our SCEA meeting in Kiev by the Ukrainian Government, and both Veterans' organisations – Ukrainian Union of War Veterans of Afghanistan (YCBA) and International Ukrainian Union of War Veterans (MUSUV). I am indebted to both General V. Vorontsov and General Sergei Chervonopisky for their generous hospitality and detailed administrative arrangements.

I noted that the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence had deployed considerable resources to ensure the success of the meeting and for this I thank the present Vice Prime Minister, Sergiy Thipko.

I was also grateful for the enthusiastic and wholehearted participation of all delegates. It was clear to all that there were considerable advantages to the nation hosting a SCEA meeting in terms of veterans' profile and the raising of veterans' issues on a public platform.

A statistical summary of the meeting is shown below:

Date of Meeting:	26-28 May 2011
Countries Represented:	21
Country Reports Received:	21
Recommendations Adopted:	4

Elections:

Vice Chairman	Mr Robert Créange (France)
Rapporteur	Mr. Kjetil Valrygg (Norway)

This meeting, with its mission “Friendship Across Borders”, was most positively accepted and I am grateful to all participants for that. This project has the following objectives:

- To further friendly relations among national as well as international organizations of veterans and victims of war.
- To encourage cooperation between national organizations and the exchange of expertise and experience in all field of interest.
- Become an activist organization in the promotion of international peace and security.

The project has the following strategic goals:

- Become a more veteran-focused organization by providing comprehensive services to members and non-members
- Become an activist organization of the promotion of international peace and security
- Become a financially independent organization

To fulfill these objectives and strategic goals the following working groups were set up:

WG on Veterans Health & Welfare (WGVHW)	Mr. Jos Weerts (Netherlands)
WG on Women (WGW)	Mrs. Inge Nedergaard (Denmark)
WG on Eastern Europe Countries (WGEEC)	Mr. Sergei Chervonopisky (Ukraine)
WG on Southern Europe Countries (WGSEC)	Mr. José Arruda (Portugal)
WG on Northern Europe Countries (WGNEC)	Mr. Tom Asplund (Finland)
WG on Western Europe Countries (WGWEC)	Mr. Remco Seijin (Netherlands)

Later in the WVF General Assembly in Jordan in 2012 during the SCEA meeting, two more groups were set up.

WG for Caucasus Veterans. (WGCV)	Mr. Gia Toratze (Georgia)
WG for the International Vetran Rally. (WGIVR)	Mr. Gennady Shorokhov (Russia)

3. THE SCEA Working Group for Veterans Health & Welfare. (WGVHW)

The old Steering Group presented its Final Report to the 21st SCEA in Portugal. This report was adopted both generally and specifically by that meeting.

As for the future, it was agreed that the Steering Group would now become a Working Group with Mr. Jos Weerts (Netherlands) as Chairman.

The SCEA defined four themes and subjects that are relevant for all or most affiliates in Europe:

- physical and mental health;
- social support and recognition;
- family support;
- legislation.

The working group will present its report during this meeting and has taken on the task of arranging the Veterans' Support Symposium during the SCEA meeting in Montenegro.

4. THE SCEA WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN. (WGW)

Chairman Mrs. Inge Nedergaard (Denmark) has cooperated with the Chairman of the SCOW, and the SCEA was a big contributor to the SCOW meeting in November 2011 in Oslo, Norway. Her report will be presented at the SCEA meeting.

5. WORKING GROUP ON EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. (WGEEC)

This group under the energetic leadership of General Sergei Chervonopisky (Ukraine) has completed work in a number of areas to involve all veterans in CIS. His effort has opened up a new perspective for WVF to support veterans from Eastern Europe. Due to the ongoing conflict in his country the General has not been able to fulfil his mission. However, Mr. Shorokhov from Russia, Secretary General of the association "Battle Brotherhood" is assisting with this as he has member associations from many Eastern European Countries. This working group will deliver its report during the SCEA meeting.

The following countries are covered in this working group:

Commonwealth of Independent States	Czech Republic	Georgia
Hungary	Poland	Romania
		Slovakia

6. WORKING GROUP ON WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. (WGWEC)

The Chairman of the SCEA Working Group on Western European Countries, Lt. Gen. Remco Seijn (Netherlands) has made a big effort to collect data on veterans in his area and he convened a meeting of the representatives from countries in this region during the 27th General Assembly of the WVF in Jordan, November 18-22 2012. During this meeting, points of contacts were identified and a framework and conditions for co-operation and co-ordination was discussed and developed. WGWEC also arranged an important meeting in Doorn together with representatives from WGEEC, WGNEC and WGVHW. This working group will deliver its report to the SCEA meeting.

The following countries are covered in this working group:

Austria	France	Germany	Luxemburg
Netherlands	United Kingdom		
International Confederation of Former Prisoners of War (CIAPG)			

7. WORKING GROUP ON SOUTHERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. (WGSEC)

Chairman Mr. José Arruda (Portugal) has indicated that he needs more support in his mission and the SCEA had made some efforts to establish a new working group to cover all members in this region. WGSEC will deliver its report to delegates at the SCEA meeting.

Here are the countries covered in this working group:

Albania	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus
Greece	Israel	Italy	Kosovo	Macedonia
Montenegro	Palestine	Portugal	Serbia	Slovenia
Spain	Turkey			

8. WORKING GROUP ON NORTHERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. (WGNEC)

Chairman Mr. Tom Asplund (Finland) has coordinated his work trough The Nordic Blue Berets and linked all members here together to exchange information. This working group will deliver its report to the SCEA meeting.

The following countries are covered in this working group:

Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	

9. WORKING GROUP FOR CAUCASUS VETERANS. (WGCV)

Chairman Mr. Gia Toradze (Georgia) has made a big effort to share experiences and establish relations with veteran organizations in the Caucasus area and had taken part in in the Caucasus “Peace and Solidarity” processes. His report will be presented during the SCEA meeting.

10. WORKING GROUP FOR THE INTERNATIONAL VETERAN RALLY. (WGIVR)

Chairman Mr. Gennady Shorokhov (Russia) took on the task of coordinating the march between Battle Brotherhood and WVF. The march will take place from 2013-2015 and the aim is to strengthen the cooperation between veteran organisations and to build everlasting personal relationships between veterans nationally and internationally. An update and further plans will be presented during the SCEA meeting.

11. OTHER ACTIVITIES

SCEA has done a lot of work to contact and visit many member organizations. The Chairman has visited 36 countries and had meetings with more than 80 WVF member organisations. A lot of efforts have also been made to visit government representatives in European countries to put the veteran issue on the agenda. The Chairman has also visited the UN, UNESCO, EU and other NGOs related to veterans affairs.

In November 2011, the Working Groups of SCEA met in Oslo.

The main issue on the agenda was to decide on future directions for co-ordination and co-operation among SCEA members.

The SCEA was also active in the planning and execution of the WVF Peace and Security Summit in Stockholm, May 2013 with the theme “How can veterans take part in creating peace and security in the society.”

A full report and update can be seen on our website <http://wvf-scea.org/> ,or on www.pss13.se

12. RELATIONS WITH HEAD OFFICE & OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

The SCEA has supported and assisted the head office in Paris and the Executive Board. It has also provided valuable to support other Standing Committee. Our liaisons are most valuable and in the interests of all Veterans.

13. CONCLUSION

Since the last Meeting of the Standing Committee on European Affairs much time has been spent on securing the future of the WVF and SCEA has contributed strongly to this. 7 new organizations have become members and new applications for membership are on the way. Many have noted very high levels of activities in the SCEA and plans for the future will increase the level of activities. The concept of Friendship Across Borders has been a success and we will continue to increase friendship for all veterans in Europe. The objectives and strategic goals set at the last SCEA meeting are well on their way and the tools we have used, namely the working groups, have learned a lot and a small adjustment will be made to increase the activity to reach the goals set. A meeting among all working groups will take place later this year to implement plans and programs for the future.

In the coming three years our focus will be on Veterans Support which also includes physical and mental health, social support, recognition, family support and legislation, and I hope this SCEA meeting will give us all inspiration to work hard for the well being for all our veterans. The Working Group for Veterans Health & Welfare will continue with this important task and exchange their experience with all members of the WVF.

We in the SCEA are determined to continue our work to also secure better treatment and conditions for our veterans and victims of war, and to work harder to get better recognition for all veterans and involve them in peace and security in their society.

We in Europe make up approximately 60% of all veterans within the WVF and we continue to have a most important role to play on behalf of the worldwide veteran community. I would like to thank all the dedicated veterans who work for their fellow sister and brothers, day and night, year after year, to create a better life for those who need help. Thank you!

**Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun
Chairman, SCEA**