



# FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE (FSC) ACTIVITIES

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The FSC has been deeply involved in planning the Family Support activities for the deployment of the NRDC-ITA members to ISAF 9/1 mission. Since the beginning, it was involved in a meeting, held inside the base, between the Mayors of Busto Arsizio and Solbiate Olona, the NRDC-ITA Commander and the NRDC-ITA National Senior Representatives (SNRs). The debated issues were related to: everyday life, the integration with the local communities, public transportations, schooling system, security and surveillance from the local police forces and more, in the light to get answers from local Authorities.

In order to have a clear picture of the deployed personnel needs, seen from the family support point of view, a “one man team” has been deployed to Afghanistan from the end of October to the beginning of November. LT Ranieri has been sent to ISAF HQ for this ten-day tour in order to bring “fresh” feedbacks back concerning all matters related to the possible impact of the personnel departure on the family members everyday life (such as the most common communication systems like: emails, on-line chat messenger, on-line telephone providers and even the

“old”, but still very effective, letters in the envelope).

All feedbacks, brought back by the Officer in tour, were inserted in a brochure, edited by the Family Support Centre. This brochure is supposed to be a very useful tool for NRDC-ITA members. It contains information such as: the FSC mission and organization, points of contact, addresses, telephone numbers plus a wide range of information about life in garrison, in Italy in general and, last but not least, a section dedicated to the ISAF 9/1 mission. All chapters are reader-friendly and could be considered a real helpful tool to facilitate families’ daily life.

A “safety card” was also edited by the FSC. It is a small card (a business card type) to be used in case of emergency. It is printed on both sides, one in Italian language and one in English, the following text: “Good morning, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a \_\_\_\_\_ citizen. I work in Italy for the NATO HQ in Solbiate Olona and I don’t speak Italian. In case of need, please contact the following numbers”, listing the telephone numbers of the NRDC-ITA Staff Duty Officer, the numbers of the FSC and the Support Brigade Carabinieri (Military Police) Section. It could be used in



different situations - in particular for not-Italian speaking personnel - to facilitate contact with NRDC-ITA personnel for help and support in difficult situations or danger. A fac-simile of this card has been provided to the Mayors of Solbiate Olona, Busto Arsizio, Gallarate and Varese, to the Questura of Busto Arsizio and Varese and to the Carabinieri Companies of Gallarate and Busto Arsizio, to make them aware of this card and its aim.

Before the deployment to Afghanistan, a farewell event has been organized. It was articulated in different phases: to begin an introductory and comprehensive briefing, both in Italian and English, given by the FSC members to NRDC-ITA personnel and families members concerning FSC issues during the ISAF mission period, followed by a farewell speech given by NRDC-ITA Commander. Finally a buffet lunch was served. In the meantime, entertainment for children was arranged, with clowns, magicians and an amusement area within the ORs Club.

The briefing agenda was very detailed, even if easy to follow: who are the members of the FSC, where it is located, what can they do for families and what support can be provided during the deployment period. More specifically, further information were offered as: location of the internet point and how does it work, basic regulation for benefits and passes and all points of contact for FSC and barracks. with us in the easiest and quickest way possible. At the end of the briefing, the FSC members have answered several questions addressed by the audience.

The FSC also organized a "computer course for beginners", with the aim of helping families to keep in touch with their deployed beloved. Issues dealt were: how to surf the net, how to use a search engine, how creating and managing a personal email account, the use of a chat messenger, microphone and web-cam.

Since the beginning of the mission, several families requested the FSC support for many different issues, all of them solved so far. The range of support has been quite wide, from simple issues to more important ones.

Here is some examples of provided support to the families:

- **linguistic assistance:** provided for all international NRDC-ITA personnel and their dependants to face everyday life problems;
- **car pass renewal:** assistance in filling in the forms and collecting the new passes;
- **personal ID renewal:** assistance in filling in the forms and collecting the new IDs;
- **tax free procedures:** assistance for the families in order to provide them with a better understanding of the buying procedures and supporting them in their implementation;
- **insurance problems:** assistance in contacting insurance companies in order to: stipulate or modify contracts or define other bureaucratic details;
- **information technology:** assistance for problems related to: new software installation, software crash, internet connection, software management, LAN/WAN management and, when necessary, "on-site" assistance;
- **telephone companies:** assistance in different situations: when stipulating or modifying contracts, during land-line installations, define other bureaucratic details;
- **electric companies:** assistance in contacting electric companies in order to: stipulate or modify contracts or define other bureaucratic details;
- **communication between families and deployed personnel:** assistance in putting through deployed personnel with their families for urgent matters and vice versa (as requested by deployed personnel in Afghanistan);
- **electrician/plumber:** assistance in finding appropriate contractors within Busto Arsizio / Gallarate area in order to fix minor domestic problems;
- **medical issues:** assistance in finding a physicians within Varese area in support of family requests for routine medical examinations.

Last but not least, the FSC was also able to provide support to NRDC-ITA personnel family members not deployed to Afghanistan but to different mission areas such as KFOR (Kosovo) and UNIFIL (Lebanon).