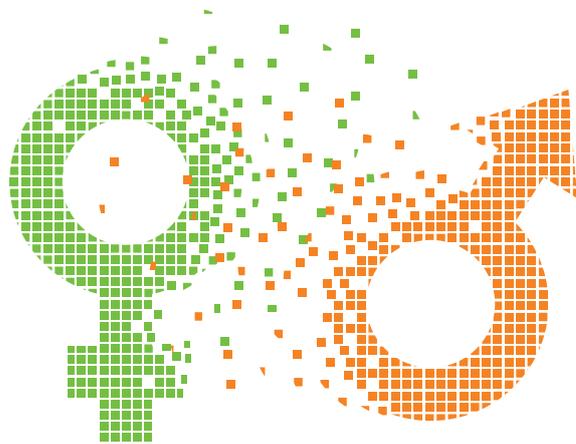




*This project is funded by  
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*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



# **GENDER AND SALW**

**Gender Aspects of SALW  
and How to Address  
Them in Practice**



The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) has a mandate from the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council to support all international and national stakeholders by strengthening national and regional capacity to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and thus contribute to enhanced stability, security and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

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# GENDER AND SALW

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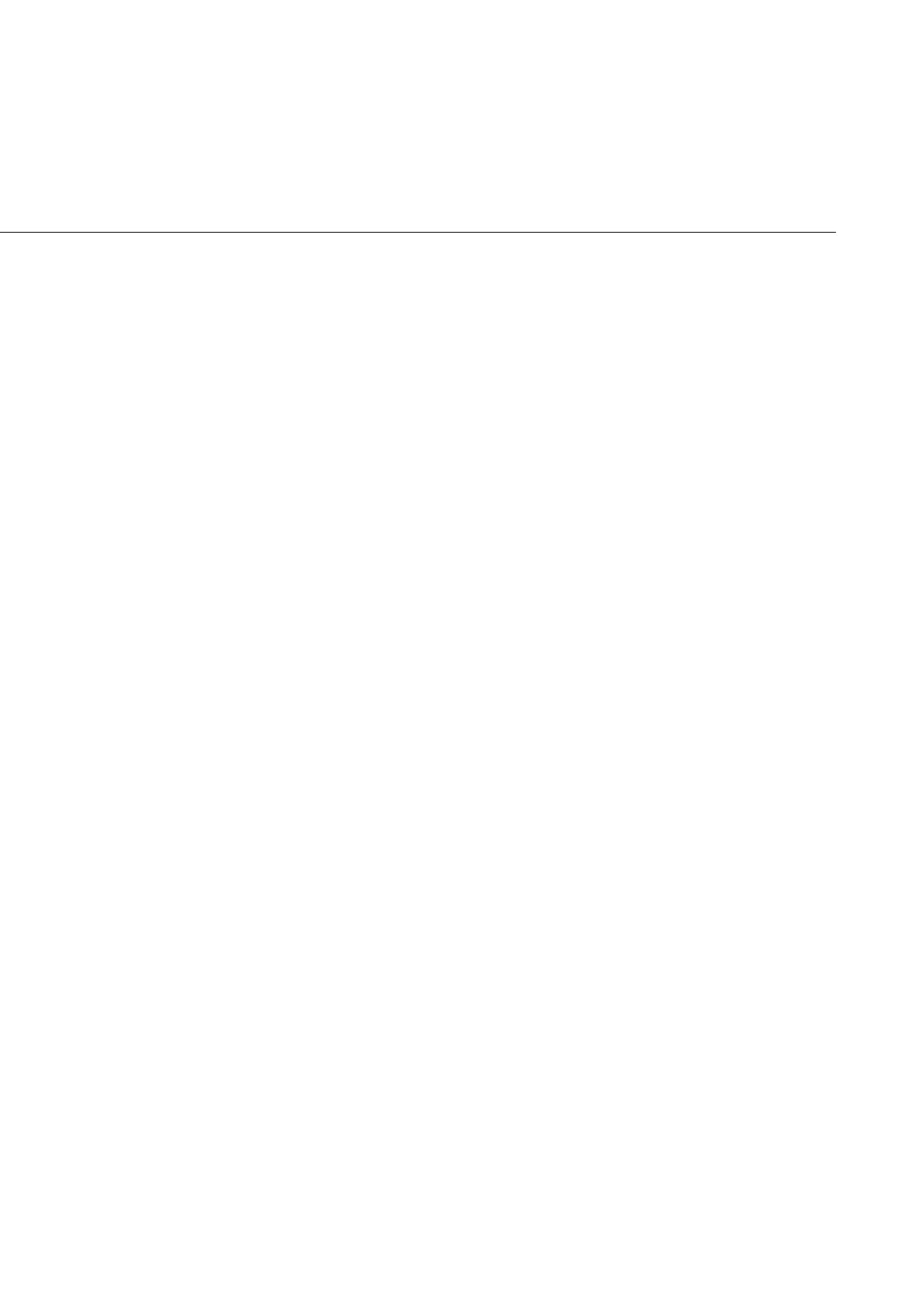
Gender Aspects of  
SALW and How to  
Address Them in  
Practice



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 LINKAGES BETWEEN GENDER AND SALW

*The growing body of literature and available sex-disaggregated data have significantly contributed to the increased recognition of linkages between gender and small arms and light weapons (SALW). In that respect, it has been argued that the differentiated impact of SALW on women and men calls for the consistent integration of gender concerns into SALW legislative and policy frameworks (SEESAC, 2007a), and that it is necessary to explore gender differences in order to develop adequate strategies to counter the misuse and proliferation of SALW (Cukier and Cairns, 2009, p. 19).*

In this regard, continuous efforts have been taken by academia, researchers, gender practitioners, women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations to shed light on the different ways in which gender and SALW practices intersect. Researchers explored the complex interplay between gender and small arms proliferation, regulation and misuse (Farr and Gebre-Wold, 2002; Cukier, Kooistra and Anto, 2002; Cukier and Cairns, 2009). Also, there are numerous attempts to explain the multi-layered effects of SALW proliferation with a strong focus on violence against women in conflict and non-conflict settings, and particularly links between SALW presence and domestic violence (AI, IANSA, OI, 2005; Alvazzi del Frate, 2011; Shaw, 2013; Dziewanski, LeBrun, and Racovita, 2014). Research has been initiated in order to capture factors which shape men's SALW related behaviour and practices, with special attention given to young men. In doing so, the specific risks and underlying societal, cultural and ideological conditioning of firearms misuse and their links with masculinity have been investigated (Bevan and Florquin, 2006; Page, 2009; Mankowski 2013). Additionally, efforts have been undertaken to critically analyze the gender aspect of multilateral resolutions, treaties, and commitments on conventional weapons and women's rights and participation (Farr, 2002; Bastick and

Valasek, 2014; Acheson, 2015) or to explore the responsiveness of the SALW legislation to domestic violence within a particular geographic context (Krkeljčić, 2007; Dokmanović, 2007). In South East Europe, attempts have been initiated to at least partially overcome a lack of sex-disaggregated data through the establishment of a database and a gender aware analysis of media reporting on firearm-related violence (SEESAC, 2015; SEESAC, 2016; SEESAC, 2016a).

These developments have nevertheless given a new urgency to the issue and have provided insights into different aspects of SALW control, which consequently urge for gender concerns to be carefully considered when solutions are designed. These diverse aspects can be grouped into five main concerns where gender aspects play an important role in shaping and understanding SALW practices (Cukier and Cairns, 2009):

1. Gender and effects of small arms,
2. Domestic violence (and regulation of civilian possession),
3. Gender and demands for small arms,
4. Gender and attitudes toward small arms and regulation,
5. Gender and political processes.

By building on this classification, in the next section these five aspects are briefly outlined.

## BOX 1. GENDER AND SALW: INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

*The international community is demonstrating increasing commitment to address gendered aspect of small arms. The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW (UN PoA) highlights that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has a negative impact on women. The Outcome Document of the recent Third Review Conference of UN PoA reaffirms the relevance of the gender perspective to small arms control and calls for mainstreaming gender considerations into SALW policies and programmes, including in the areas of programme design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Arms Trade Treaty obligates governments to assess the risk of gender-based violence and violence against women and children. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's report on small arms to the Security Council, adopted in December 2017, underlines that "recognizing and integrating gender as a factor in all cycles of small arms control enables the creation of more targeted measures". Finally, the Agenda for Disarmament launched by the UN Secretary-General in May 2018, clearly recognizes the role of gender responsive disarmament in reducing violence against women and girls in both public and private spheres and strongly calls for the integration of "gender perspectives in the development of national legislation and policies on disarmament and arms control." It also calls for "attention of the gendered aspects of ownership, use and misuse of arms; the differentiated impacts of weapons on women and men; and the ways in which gender roles can shape arms control and disarmament policies and practices".*

*UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) released in 2017, a specific module (ISACS 06.10) "Women, men and the Gendered Nature of small arms and light weapons" as a part of their efforts to develop International Small Arms Standard Control and provide practical and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of SALW control.*

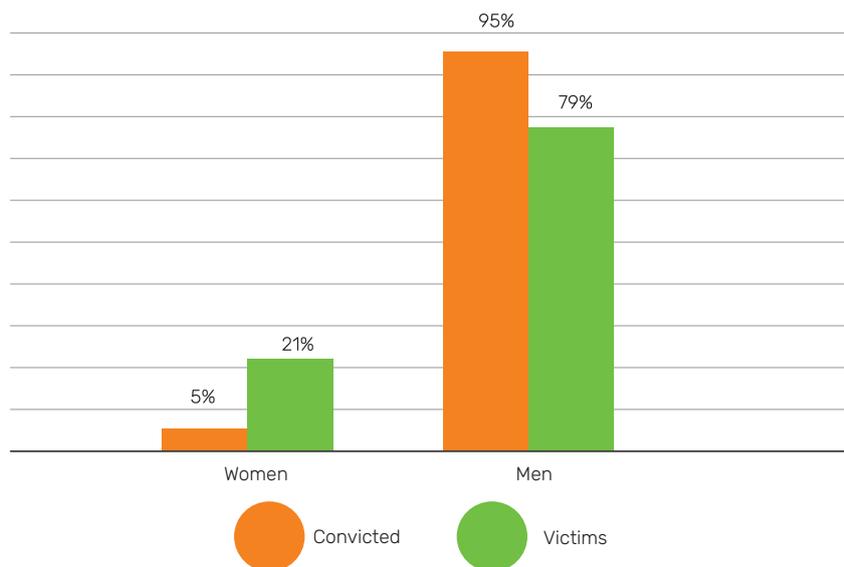
*In addition, recently published NATO Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in SALW Projects "provide guidance on how to take advantage of gender mainstreaming for improving SALW-related activities and the overall impact of security operations".*

## 2 MAIN POLICY CONCERNS

### 2.1.1 GENDER AND EFFECTS OF SMALL ARMS

The available data on homicide worldwide indicates a sharp polarization in terms of the gender patterns of homicide and the differentiation of security concerns of women and men (UNODC, 2013; Racovita, 2015).

**% OF MALE AND FEMALE HOMICIDE VICTIMS AND OF MALES AND FEMALES CONVICTED OF INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE**



Men dominate among both perpetrators and victims but are significantly more often (95 per cent) perpetrators of intentional homicide than victims (79 per cent). The men homicide rate (9.7 per 100,000) is approximately 1.5 times that of the global average (6.2 per 100,000) and 3.6 times that of the women homicide rate (2.7 per 100,000) (Ibid., 2013, p. 13, 21). Women, on the contrary, are several times more likely to be victims, than to perpetrate intentional homicide.

Although homicide rates vary drastically in different regions, the men to women ratio remains rather constant regardless of the country or territory. The rates in Europe are significantly lower than the global averages, but the share of women in Europe is higher both among convicted perpetrators and victims of homicides – 8 per cent and 28 per cent respectively (UNODC, 2013, p. 13).

With respect to firearms, estimates about the share of firearms as a homicide mechanism range from 40 per cent (Ibid., 2013, p. 15) to 48 per cent (WHO, UNODC, UNDP, 2014) globally, which make them the most prevalent weapon when homicide is committed (UNODC, 2013, p. 15).

The gender patterns of homicide committed with firearms closely follows the patterns of homicide in general. **Men account for the overwhelming majority of victims in accidents involving firearms with estimates going as high as 90 per cent at the global level (IPU, CHD, 2007, p. 81) and 76 per cent in Europe (Duquet and Van Alstein, 2015, p. 27). Additionally, they also make up an absolute majority of perpetrators of firearm-related incidents.**

**Women, on the other hand, own only a minor share of firearms, hardly ever misuse it, but are disproportionately represented among victims, which indicates that they are disproportionately affected by the consequences of small arms’ (Farr 2006, p. 17).**

From a policy perspective, as early as in the 1990s it was noted that this discrepancy makes a strong case for ‘positioning this debate in the context of human rights and equity’ (Cukier).

**The misuse of SALW is not only restricted to fatal events, since it is frequently used as a tool to inflict psychological violence,** emotional harm, intimidation, rape, sexual abuse, coercion and other forms of violence (IPU, CHD, 2007; Alvazzi del Frate, 2011; Shaw, 2013), which can have severe consequences on victims, but which are usually both under-reported and under-researched. Most often these forms of violence primarily happen in the private, i.e. domestic sphere (Shaw, 2013), and often go unrecorded and unaddressed by competent institutions.

## 2.1.2 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Available data **discloses the highly gendered and differentiated patterns of the violence women and men are exposed to.** Based on premeditation, motivation context, instrumentality, and perpetrator – victim relationship, UNODC classifies all homicide cases into: 1. Homicide related to criminal activities (where the main aim is to generate illicit profit or other related reasons); 2. Interpersonal homicide (perpetrated by intimate partner/family member, without any secondary goal but as a means of resolving a conflict and/or punishing the victim through violence); and 3. Socio-political homicide (where homicide is committed in order to pursue certain social or political goals, related to social prejudice, political agendas, or other socio-political agendas) (UNODC, 2013, p. 39-49).

Given the available statistics, **homicides related to criminal activities or those linked to socio-political agendas affect men to a far greater extent than women, while interpersonal homicide disproportionately affects women.**

Within these differentiated patterns, **women are targets of specific types of gender-based violence such as domestic violence and sexual violence** (Cukier, 2002, p. 28). It is estimated that of all ‘women who were the victims of homicide globally in 2012, almost half (47 per cent) were killed by intimate partners or family members, compared to less than six per cent of men killed in the same year (UNODC, 2013, p.14). Consequently, this means that **while men are more often at risk of firearms misuse by their non-intimate men acquaintances (or even persons they may not know), women are more at risk in a domestic context by their intimate partners (Ibid., p. 28-29).**

A number of studies provide evidence that **the presence of a gun increases the risk of a lethal outcome for women within the domestic context** (SAS, 2013; Cukier, 2006; Alvazzi del Frate, 2011; Shaw, 2013). In the analysis conducted across 26 high income and 10 upper middle-income nations, Hemenway and Miller document a clear correlation between firearms availability and homicide rates - ‘where guns are more available, there are more homicides’ (2000). For instance, in the USA, which has one of the highest rates of firearm ownership, 84 per cent of all murdered women were killed with firearms (AI, IANSA, OI, 2005, p. 11) which is over twice the global average. A study carried out in the USA showed that while ‘having a gun in the home increased the overall risk of someone in the household being mur-

dered by 41 per cent, for women in particular, the risk was nearly tripled (an increase of 272 per cent) (Ibid., p. 12). According to other estimates, the presence of firearms increases the likelihood of a lethal outcome for women by five to 12 times, in comparison to cases where firearms are not involved meaning that 'abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm' while 'domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force' (Law Centre to Prevent Gun Violence).

As a result, it has been argued that, within the wider social context of existing gender inequalities, **firearms 'increase power imbalances and reinforces social hierarchies which give men dominance over women'** (Farr, 2006, p. 111) – which consequently takes its most radical expression in the context of domestic and intimate partner violence, and its most fatal outcome – intimate partner femicide.

Several factors increase the likelihood of a fatal outcome in intimate partner violence when firearms are involved (AI, IANSA, OI, 2005, p. 13):

- severity of wounds caused by gunshot,
- women's reduced capacity for resistance,
- reduced chances for women to escape or for outsiders to intervene and assist them,
- increased chances that an abuser will actually use firearms in domestic violence cases (Campbell, 2003).

**Firearms also play a role when sexual and other forms of gender-based violence are committed**, both in conflict and non-conflict settings. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the presence of firearms can result in injuring and maiming and is associated with psychological violence against women by their partners, which can take different forms (threatening, intimidating, stalking etc.).

### 2.1.3 GENDER AND DEMANDS FOR SMALL ARMS – MASCULINITY AND GENDER NORMS

**Men heavily dominate among firearm owners, perpetrators of firearms-related incidents and account for the majority of victims. It has been argued that certain roles, behaviours and expectations attributed to men which encourage risk-taking behaviour among them.** Therefore, attempts to understand and practically address these gendered patterns, have specific forms of masculinity in society as their point of departure. In this regard, efforts have been undertaken to capture the mechanisms of how socially prevailing conceptualizations of masculinity and dominant gender norms influence and shape SALW use and misuse (Bevan and Florquin, 2006; CHD, IPU 2007; Page, 2009; Blagojevic, 2013; Mankowski, 2013).

The concept of **hegemonic masculinity** (Connell) has been widely used to explain gender practices relating to 'men, gender and social hierarchy' (Connell and Messerschmitt, 2005, p. 829). It encompasses a set of characteristics which 'embodies the currently most honoured way of being a man, it requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it and aspire to it, and it ideologically legitimates the global subordination of women to men' (Ibid., p. 829) and some men to other men (Page, 2009, p. 2). The dominant masculinity is in practice constructed through a set of characteristics which include 'aggressive and risk taking behaviour, emotional restrictiveness, competitiveness, heterosexuality' (Ibid. p. 15) but also 'physical and emotional courage, the ability to endure hardship, to not break down emotionally in the face of horror' (Page, 2009, p. 2).

**The centrality of the category of power** in this regard also has to be taken into account. As observed, **violence can be triggered by the significance attached to power in men's social relations, actions and experience** (Hearn) and the attempt to exercise this power. This is particularly relevant in situations when there is a tension between perceived entitlement to power, disempowerment and the state of being 'socially conditioned to seek power' (Bevan and Florquin, 2006). Some of these features are directly related to the numerous factors connected with gun violence (Mankowski, 2014, p. 15) since in the absence of these features one's manhood is contested (Ibid., 14). In terms of policy response to armed violence, there is a need to explore the interplay

between this form of masculinity and SALW and examine 'both the notions of masculinity and the role of guns in men culture and to develop practical strategies to decouple them' (Cukier, 2009, p. 29).

With regard to the demand for firearms, the diverse factors which influence men's decisions to possess and use guns range from the 'feeling of social and economic disempowerment and necessity to reassert power through gun use, urge to comply with the prevailing understanding of masculinity, tool to gain power, respect or material status or a means to retain a dominant position in changing circumstances' (Page, 2009, p. 3).

Given the statistical evidence, particular attention, both in terms of research and policy options to reduce firearm-related violence, should be given to young men, because 'men's violence is age-related' (Hearn and Pringle, 2006, p. 149) and gender and age are strong predictors of violent behaviour.

**Young men generally represent a disproportionately high share of both victims and perpetrators of firearm-related violence** (Bevan and Florquin, 2006, p. 296; IPU, CHD, 2007, p. 82). Young men often 'perceive violence – particularly small arms violence – as a means to reach a position of social and economic status that they feel entitled to' and in this process small arms can bear particular attractiveness to them since they offer 'empowerment in the face of exclusion from socially defined masculine roles and can be a strong symbol of power for marginalized young men' (Bevan and Florquin, 2006, p. 295, 296). However, it is important to notice that a 'young man's gender is not the sole determinant of his association with or willingness to use armed violence; in fact, his understanding and use of social and cultural ideologies of masculinity will largely determine whether he turns to armed violence' (Ibid., p. 301).

Having said that, it is equally important not to downplay the role of the wider social context and the complex set of other factors which determine whether young men would resort to violence. Among these factors, researchers underline coercive violent parental control, limited parental control, socializing with delinquent peers, having been brutalized, having witnessed or experienced violence in the home or community, etc. ' (Ibid., p. 300). Therefore, gender is a strong predictive factor but it is activated if a number of other social factors are present. Taking this 'situational approach' helps to explain the fact that although young men dominate in the

perpetration of armed violence, the majority of young men do not get involved in firearm violence (Ibid., p. 300). Despite young men committing the majority of firearm-related violence, it is actually a 'small proportion of young men responsible for most armed violence' (Ibid., p. 298), this is an important takeaway for policy response because it makes a strong case for focused policy intervention.

The prevailing gender system must be tackled as an integral part of SALW control policies by reiterating that 'countering the socially constructed association between guns, violence, power and masculinity is a key component of any effective, long-term prevention strategy' (Ibid., p. 296). The role of the media and education in supporting the formation of hegemonic identities should also be taken into account, as well as other factors that help reproduce predominant gender regimes.

#### 2.1.4 GENDER AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMALL ARMS AND REGULATION

Gendered differences between women and men can also be tracked in terms of their attitudes towards small arms. Discrepancy in attitudes between women and men in this regard is closely connected with 'different experiences of men and women with small arms, as well as the pervasive gendering of guns in society and even in the debates over controls' (Cukier and Cairns, 2009, p. 36). **Women generally tend to more often have a negative opinion about SALW than men and are generally more prone to opt for stricter regulations** (Ibid, p. 36-38). However, beside gender, other grounds of differentiation between attitudes such as cultural, class, geographic, ethnic and racial factors depending on the context should not be overlooked. Women can also play a different role and support the use of firearms, as has been documented in certain communities, but that poses hardly any challenge to prevailing gender patterns (Farr, 2002; AI, IANSA, OI, 2005, p. 6). In South East Europe, women responded more frequently than men that they would not own firearms because they do not like guns. For example, 36 per cent of women and 16 per cent of men in Bosnia and Herzegovina said they do not like guns, while in Montenegro, the disparity between women and men is even more apparent with 51 per cent of women and 15 per cent of men (SEESAC, 2006, p. 24). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, women more often than men said that the possession of a firearm is a threat to family safety rather than a means of protection.

## 2.1.5 GENDER AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

Closely connected with the discussion above is the link between participation, representation and SALW policies outcomes. Bringing gender concerns to the core of SALW control policy-making poses a challenge to the usual way policies are designed when gender aspects are largely unnoticed, or if mentioned, usually have little, if any implications for policy development. It therefore challenges common understandings of firearm-related behaviour, which most often does not question underlying gender patterns of SALW use and misuse. Consequently, it calls for a change in the usually men dominated structure of stakeholders involved in policy making, establishing a balanced representation of women and men, and the participation of women's organizations and/or gender practitioners in SALW control agenda-setting.

As already highlighted, women and women's organizations play a vital role in advocating for stricter options with respect to SALW regulations, and also in disarmament processes. There is ample evidence in various countries and territories and diverse settings, both conflict and non-conflict, that women have mobilized themselves to curb the problem or advocate for solutions (Farr, 2002; Cukier, 2009; AI, IANSA, OI, 2005). Examples that led to stricter SALW control in Canada, Australia, South Africa and Brazil, demonstrate the importance of women's participation when SALW problems are considered. The flagship case is the lobbying of IANSA Women's Network, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Amnesty International for the inclusion of gender-based violence within the Arms Trade Treaty, which is the first international arms treaty to obligate governments to assess the risk of gender-based violence when exporting arms.

Although the role of women in SALW control and disarmament processes was recognized in UNSCR 1325 (2000) and reiterated in several General Assembly resolutions, including UNSCR 2020 (2015), **there is still a tendency for women's organizations and women in general to be insufficiently included in decision making and policy development.** This is often related to the traditional and persistent men dominance in the institutions regulating and implementing policies relevant for SALW control. As observed, inclusion of women, women's organization and articulation of gender perspectives can also be hindered with the predominantly technical definition of SALW related expertise, which is more

focused on the technical aspects of SALW where men still predominate, rather than on knowledge of violence where women have longstanding expertise, which consequently 'shapes the way in which an issue is addressed' (Cukier, 2009, p. 42).

Furthermore, women, particularly in the case of international agreements are usually seen as a vulnerable group (most often together with elderly people and children) and 'the automatic framing and emphasis of women as primarily vulnerable victims and innocent civilians exposes men to further violence and strips women of their agency' (Acheson, 2015, p. 9).

The challenges to meaningful participation are also related to the general characteristics of the policy process that they are involved in and which is usually characterized by a masculinized institutional culture (Connell). Although women and men do not necessarily have different opinions, women's 'positions or ideas are often forced to conform to the dominant perspective—underpinned by notions of violent masculinity—in order to be taken seriously' (Ibid., p. 10).

In order to ensure that the preconditions for gender mainstreaming are met, it is important to track and explore further how masculinity is institutionalized and how it governs both policy making and implementation of SALW control policy and not to disregard that it can have 'invisible' effects on the ways in which policy debates and research are constructed. (Cukier, 2009). One way to ensure gender is not absent from the debate is to ensure the participation of women's organizations, gender equality institutions, gender experts and practitioners.

## 2.1.6 CASE STUDY: MAIN GENDER CONCERNS RELATED TO SALW IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

In 2016, SEESAC conducted a **comprehensive research on Gender and SALW in South East Europe in order to:**

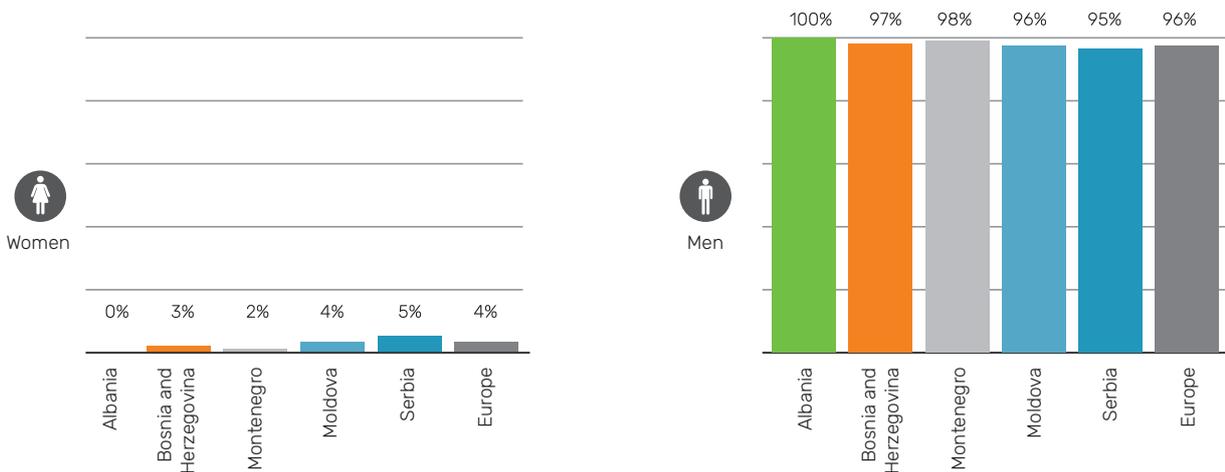
1. Map gender concerns related to SALW in South East Europe,
2. Assess if and to what degree the gender perspective is integrated into SALW policies in South East Europe (legislative and strategic frameworks),

3. Provide evidence-based recommendations and a practical tool for integrating the gender perspective into the SALW legislative and strategic frameworks.

The analysis of the available sex-disaggregated data in South East Europe collected in cooperation with SALW Commissions<sup>1</sup> has confirmed that dominant gender patterns play an important role in shaping and influencing prevailing SALW practices and the effects of SALW use and misuse. For example:

- In terms of ownership, men dominance reaches over 95 per cent and this gendered pattern of demand for firearms is stable over time.

**FIGURE 5:  
GUN OWNERSHIP, BY SEX**

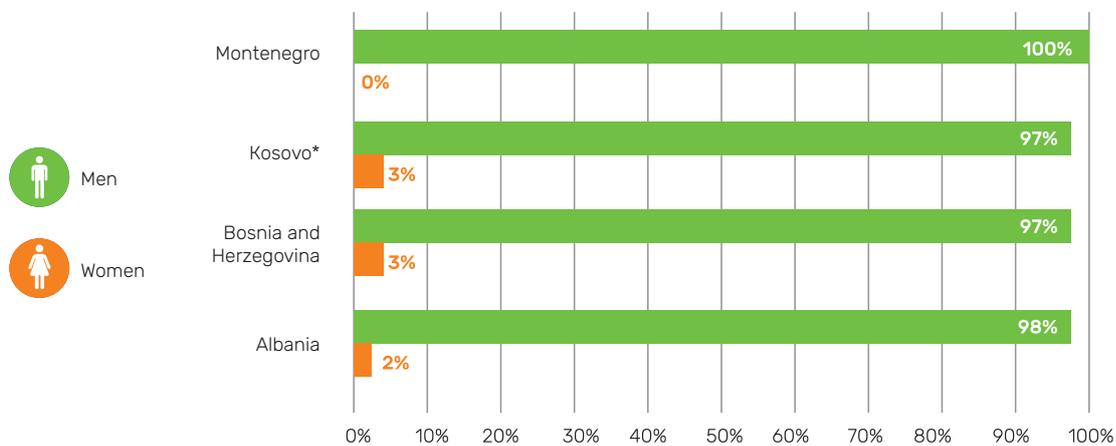


**Source: For Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia SAS 2014, SEESAC database for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania.**

<sup>1</sup> A National SALW Commission is defined by the UNDP's guide on "The establishment and functioning of National Small Arms and Light Weapons Commissions" as: "a national inter-agency body that is responsible for policy development, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of efforts to address all SALW related issues within a national territory. Depending on the region and process, National SALW Commissions are also called National Focal Points (NFP), National SALW Coordination Committees and/or SALW Coordination Agencies". This document uses SALW Commission throughout.

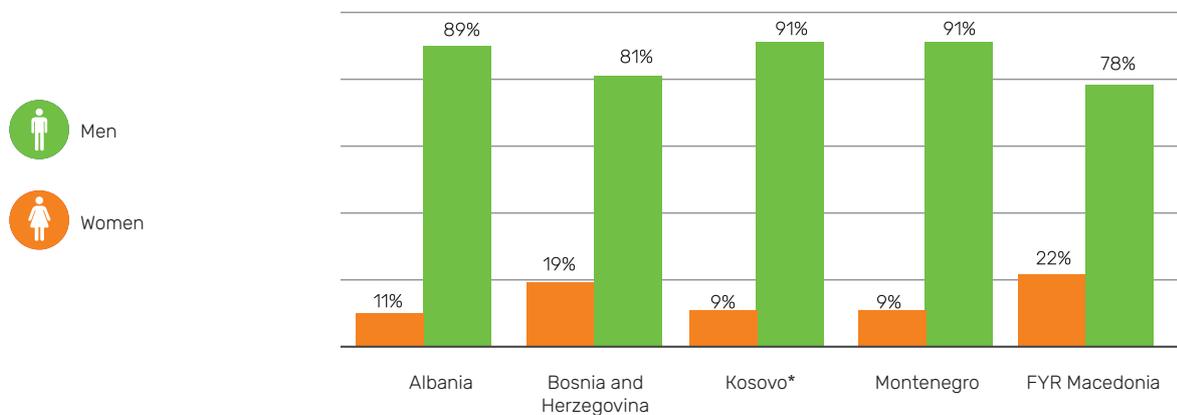
- Men account for an absolute majority of both perpetrators (98 per cent) and victims of firearm-related incidents (83 per cent).
- Women are very rarely perpetrators of such incidents (2 per cent of cases), but are much more often represented among victims (17%).

**PERPETRATORS OF FIREARM-RELATED INCIDENTS, BY SEX, 2011-2015**



**Source: SEESAC database (Note: Data for Albania are provided only for 2015)**

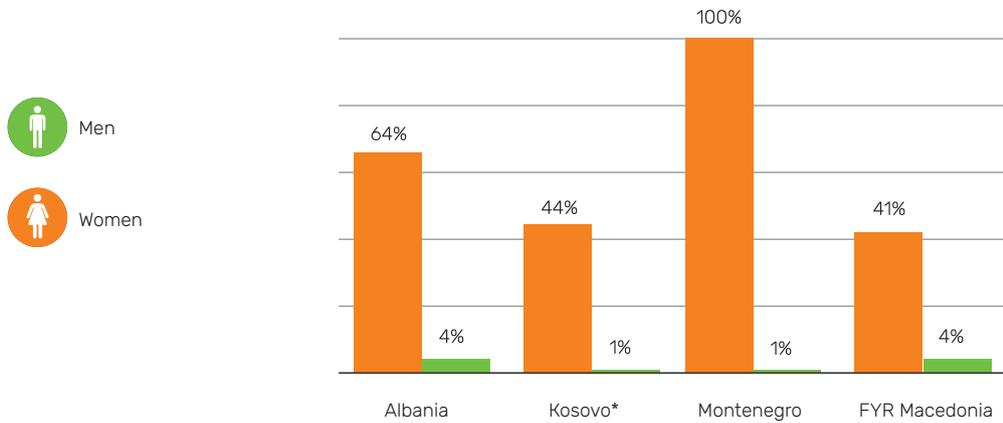
**INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN FIREARM-RELATED INCIDENTS, BY SEX**



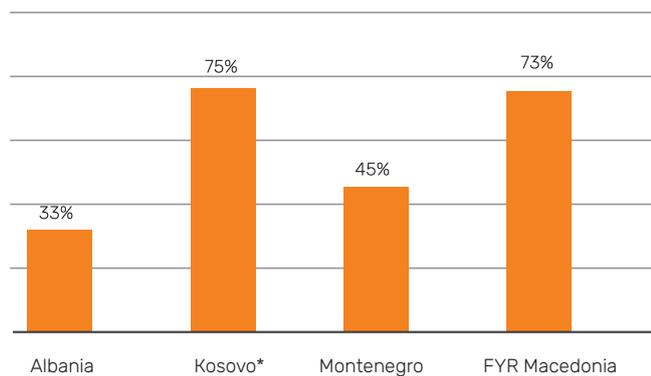
\* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

- The presence of firearms in domestic violence incidents affects women significantly more than men. Murder by intimate partner is the most common form of women homicide; comprising only a minor share in the total number of men homicides.

### PROPORTION OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE IN TOTAL HOMICIDE, BY SEX



### PROPORTION OF INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE COMMITTED WITH FIREARMS IN TOTAL NUMBER OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE

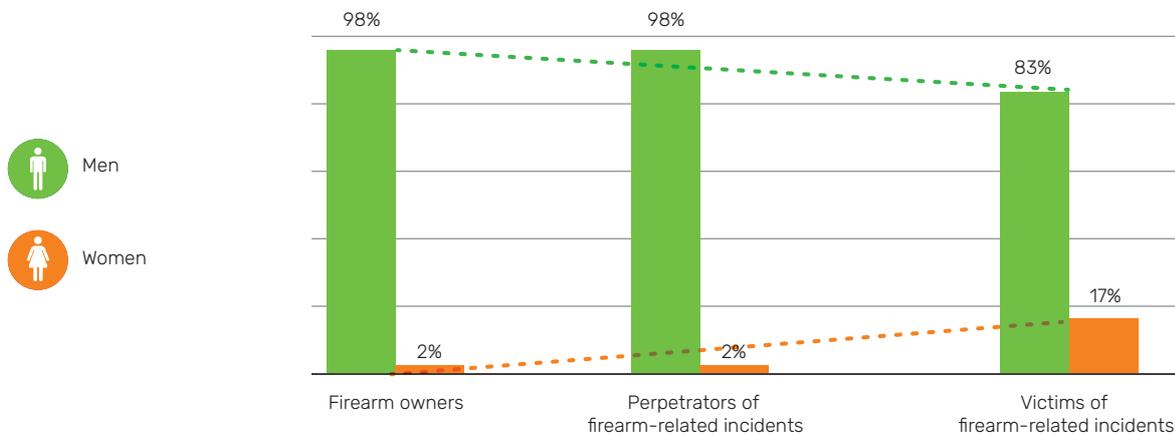


Source: SEESAC database

\* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

- The high share of women murdered with firearms, reflects the high lethality of firearms within the context of domestic violence.
- In all societies in South East Europe, young men are disproportionately represented both among perpetrators and victims.
- Women tend to have a more negative attitude toward SALW and many women’s organizations have persistently advocated for stricter SALW control.
- Women are still underrepresented in the policy making process and institutions in charge of SALW control.

FIREARM-RELATED INCIDENTS



**In South East Europe, men make up 98% of firearm owners, commit 98% firearm-related incidents and account for the vast majority of victims (83%), but are more often perpetrators than victims. Women own only a minor share of firearms (2%), hardly ever misuse it (2%), but are disproportionately represented among victims (17%).**

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY RESPONSE IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Based on these findings, SEESAC conducted an in-depth gender analysis of SALW control strategies and action plans, laws on firearms and other relevant documents in South East Europe in order to assess response to such explicitly gendered aspects of small arms. Some of the main findings are as follows:

- The prevailing tendency is that the main gender policy concerns are not being recognized as important policy issues needing to be adequately addressed. Gender is, therefore, being significantly under-prioritized in SALW control agendas.
- Only exceptionally is there a formal commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, but even then, it is not being articulated with a systemic approach.
- The low recognition of gender differences with respect to ownership, use and misuse of firearms, the differentiated effects of firearms on women and men, is in sharp contrast to the highly gendered effects of SALW.
- Despite the highly gendered dimensions of SALW, policies regulating SALW in South East Europe do not address gender issues in a way to match the scale of the problem. When attempts are made to address existing gender concerns in legislation, they are being tackled only sporadically and in a fragmented way, primarily in the field of domestic violence through the regulation of civilian possession.
- In laws on firearms in South East Europe, significant progress has been made in terms of adopting a set of legal provisions regulating civilian possession and linking it to domestic violence. These provisions that restrict access to firearms or remove weapons if domestic violence occurs are in place in almost all laws on firearms in the region. A set of other laws, such as laws against domestic violence, laws on criminal code procedures and laws on policing also regulate this issue although they are not necessarily always coherent.
- In spite of these recent legislative changes, the high share of women killed with firearms within the domestic context in South East Europe is persistent. These figures call for a thorough evaluation of the actual implementation of legislative framework regulating civilian possession and a mapping of the gaps in legislation, to serve as a starting point for future legislative reforms.
- The lack of sex-disaggregated data or comprehensive research on linkages between gender and SALW persistently represents a hindering factor for the development of gender responsive SALW policies and contributes to the insufficient recognition of the problem.
- The absence of gender analysis in the policy making process further makes gender concerns related to SALW invisible and consequently not a matter of, or only sporadically a matter of, policy intervention.
- SALW legislative and strategic frameworks overlook the gender differentiated security needs and concerns of women and men and therefore reduce the complexity of the policy problem. By doing so, they presuppose that security needs are common for all citizens and that they can be addressed in the same manner irrespectively of gender, age, etc.
- The final outcome of this gender-blind approach is that it generates persisting problems (such as for instance the misuse of firearms for intimate partner femicide or young men's dominance among perpetrators and victims) which cannot be effectively addressed if gender is marginalized.

### 3 PRACTICAL TOOL FOR INTEGRATING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN SALW LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

*SEESAC has developed a practical tool aiming to facilitate the integration of the gender perspective into SALW legislative and policy frameworks and help overcome the identified challenges.*

The goal of this tool is to assist policy makers to better identify and address gender specific SALW-related risks, and in doing so, reduce the negative effects of SALW proliferation on both women and men, girls and boys leading to the development of innovative policy solutions. This will increase the effectiveness of SALW policy and legislative frameworks resulting in tangible improvements in the security of all citizens.

The suggested tool benefits from a wide combination of methodologies and approaches and draws on some of the well tested practices in the integration of the gender perspective in public policies (JämStöd, 2007). It also relies on a broad box of tools such as checklists, guidance for data collection and methodologies for gender analysis such as Method 4R (Ibid., p. 47, UNDP, 2008). Equally important, it builds on the experience of working with institutions from the security sector and insights into the challenges they face in evidence-based policy making.

The integration of the gender perspective, if it is to be sustainable, must be approached strategically and with a long-term view. It has to be an essential part of regular policy planning and design, to guide everyday implementation, to be effectively monitored and its effects and benefits to the women, men, girls and boys evaluated. The findings of the evaluation will then steer a new policy cycle, paving the way for better and more effective policies.

Taking the following concrete steps will facilitate the translation of commitments to gender equality into practical measures:

STEP 1	Ensure balanced representation and meaningful participation of women and men in policy making
STEP 2	Ensure consensus on the importance of gender for SALW control among policy makers
STEP 3	Get an overview of the impact on women and men with respect to SALW - Collect sex disaggregated data
STEP 4	Identify gender patterns and concerns - gender analysis
STEP 5	Address identified gender patterns - Respond to them
STEP 6	Track progress - Monitoring and evaluation

### 3.1.1 STEP 1: ENSURE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLICY MAKING

Women and men must be equally included in SALW control policy making and implementation.

Unbalanced participation of women, hinders the articulation of different perspectives and development of more gender responsive SALW measures. On the contrary, including women, women's organizations, gender equality institutions and gender experts will facilitate the integration of the gender perspective and ensure that the project is credible. It will bring diverse perspectives to the table and widen the range of topics addressed by policies, and ensure that policies are informed by expertise.

#### What should be done:

- Map the factors which hinder meaningful representation of women in SALW control policies making/implementation,
- Address these factors with a long-term strategic approach,
- Develop measures and establish procedures to ensure balanced representation of women in SALW bodies in charge of SALW control,
- Ensure that both women and men can share their expertise in an atmosphere of respect,
- Include and consult representatives of women's organizations, gender equality bodies and gender experts in development and implementation of SALW control policies.

### 3.1.2 STEP 2: ENSURE THERE IS CONSENSUS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER EQUALITY FOR SALW CONTROL AMONG POLICY MAKERS

This is the point of departure for gender equality work. In order to provide effective and sustainable mainstreaming of gender in SALW control, certain preconditions have to be in place.

#### 1. Shared understanding - Gender training

The shared understanding of the role gender plays in shaping SALW-related behaviour, practices and specific risks for women and men is the basic precondition for the effective and sustainable integration of the gender perspective into SALW control frameworks. It is therefore necessary to ensure that all stakeholders involved share this knowledge and have received training in gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, domestic violence gender equality laws and strategies and linkages between gender and SALW.

#### 2. Relevance of gender equality for SALW control work

Integrating the gender perspective into SALW control is not simply counting women and men, girls and boys but using sex-disaggregated data to recognize and respond to the gender-specific risks women and men face with respect to SALW. Mainstreaming gender into all cycles of SALW control and management increases the understanding of the complexity of the problem and, therefore, enables the creation of more adequate and effective SALW control policies better suited to the challenges at hand.

#### 3. Formal commitment

Formal commitment to gender equality in SALW work needs to be in place. This can be achieved by including a statement on how the gender perspective will be addressed in the strategic document and the action plan.

**What should be done:**

- Organize training on gender equality, gender aspects of SALW, gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, violence against women, intimate partner and domestic violence;
- Familiarise stakeholders with gender equality laws and policies, as well as international standards and commitments;
- Exchange experience with counterparts from other countries and territories who have already initiated work in this field;
- Identify needs to further advance the work: what kind of support is needed to more effectively integrate the gender perspective/have a clear picture on the relevance of gender for the respective work/seek out expertise;
- Include representatives of gender equality mechanisms, women's NGOs and gender practitioners in policy development;
- Ensure balanced representation of women and men in training. Define this in the rules of procedures.

**3.1.3 STEP 3: GET AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND MEN WITH RESPECT TO SALW - COLLECT SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA.**

Gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data are prerequisite for understanding the linkages between gender and SALW and a basis for the design of evidence-based gender responsive policies. If gender data is not available, gender concerns will be invisible, thus hampering an adequate understanding of the problem. Without information on the specific risks women and men face in respect to SALW and the differences in their security needs, which have to be addressed, may be overlooked. Lack of data hinders the development of gender responsive policies and will negatively affect the evidence-based character of policy response. Regular data collection is essential because trends only become visible over time from a long-term perspective.

**Which data to collect?**

The main policy concerns outlined in the introduction could serve as a starting point when deciding which sex-disaggregated data to collect. They will also help to identify the scale of the problem and which concerns are most relevant for the given context. The insight gained from this information should initiate discussion (See Step 4), which will guide further data collections.

**Mapping which data is already sex-disaggregated and which data that is part of regular data keeping could be disaggregated should be a point of departure for data collection.** For instance, all data on victims and perpetrators of firearm-related incidents, firearm owners, persons holding a license to acquire/carry firearms and other relevant data has to be consistently disaggregated by sex.



In order to fully grasp the gender aspects of SALW, it is also necessary to understand how gender intersects with other demographic characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, disability, place of living (urban/rural).

The table below shows an example of data disaggregated both by sex and age.

## Example 2.

### Data on Sex and Age

<b>Perpetrators of firearm-related incidents by sex and age</b>		
15-29		
30-44		
45-60		
60+		

<b>Victims of firearm-related</b>		
15-29		
30-44		
45-60		
60+		

In certain cases, data which does not directly refer to women and men, but are related to gender-specific problems, such as violence against women, intimate partner and domestic violence, will be used. For instance, such data could include

information on the legislative response to domestic violence such as the number of applications rejected due to domestic violence-related reasons, as shown in Example 3.

## Example 3.

### Number of applications rejected due to domestic violence-related reasons

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Number of applications to acquire firearm rejected</b>					
<b>Number of applications rejected due to domestic violence-related reasons</b>					

**During data collection, it is important to map not only the data at hand, but also those the data that is missing, determine the reasons why the data is missing and how this can be addressed.**

#### What should be done:

- Define which data should be collected;
- Determine sources of information and provide sex-disaggregated data on victims and perpetrators of firearm-related incidents, owners, etc. Use other sources of sex-disaggregated data as well (databases and reports produced by government institutions, international organizations, civil society organizations, etc.);
- Map the gaps in data availability, discuss challenges faced and plan on how to overcome this;
- Organize gender training for those in charge of data collection.
- All data must be disaggregated by sex.

### 3.1.4 STEP 4: IDENTIFY GENDER PATTERNS AND CONCERNS – GENDER ANALYSIS.

Include collected data in the situation analysis, making sure it informs the conclusions. Explore how gender differences relate to SALW control issues and identify and define specific gender-related risks and challenges.

A broad toolbox of practical methods, such as manuals, checklists and instructions for gender analysis, has been developed and is easily available<sup>2</sup>. A prerequisite for a meaningful gender equality analysis is a thorough understanding of gender regimes and gender relations between women and men. Once again, having gender experts, women's organizations and gender equality mechanisms on board will facilitate the process and help approach challenges adequately and deliver tailor-made solutions to the challenges at hand ensuring that the limited resources will be utilized in the best possible way.

This stage consists of two mutually interconnected steps. The first step, based on sex-disaggregated data, tries to identify prevailing gender patterns and answer the question:

#### a. What kind of gender patterns do we see?

If sex-disaggregated data is collected, it allows the identification of dominant gender patterns. Gender patterns should be formulated in a straightforward way. For example:

*Men account for the absolute majority among perpetrators of firearm-related incidents.*

*Men make up the majority of victims of firearm-related incidents.*

*Men are almost exclusively the owners of firearms.*

*Women are almost never perpetrators of firearm-related incidents.*

*There are more women victims than women perpetrators of firearm-related incidents.*

*Women are more at risk at home from intimate partner homicide with firearms than men.*

*Young men make up the majority of perpetrators and victims of armed violence.*

*Authorization of firearm licenses are hardly ever rejected on the grounds of domestic violence.*

*Women are less represented in SALW commissions.*

2 UNDP. 2007. Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit. Bratislava: UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; JämStöd. 2007. *Gender Mainstreaming Manual. A Book of Practical Methods from the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee*. Stockholm: Swedish Government Official Reports; UNDP.2001. Gender in Development Programme. Learning and Information Pack: Gender Analysis. New York: UNDP Learning Resources Centre;

After this step, it becomes evident that there are numerous gender-related concerns with respect to SALW control, which need to be addressed adequately.

## b. Why do we have these gender patterns?

The second step is a reflection on identified patterns, discussion of those patterns and attempts to determine their causes, in essence, asking why is this so? At this stage, needs for additional research could be identified.

### Example 1.

**Gender pattern:** *Authorization of firearm licenses are hardly ever rejected on the grounds of domestic violence.*

#### Why is this so?

How does this correlate with the high prevalence of domestic violence? Does the law ban authorization if a person is identified as committing the criminal offence of domestic violence? Are background checks done properly? Have the competent police officers received adequate trainings? Has domestic violence fatality review taken place? What was the status of firearms?

For instance, data collected by SEESAC in cooperation with SALW Commissions in South East Europe indicates that domestic violence is rarely invoked as grounds for restriction on a firearm license. For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the period 2011-2015, only 3.3 per cent of the total number of reasons for license rejection were related to domestic violence. In Montenegro, in the same period, there were no cases in which the authorization of a license was banned due to domestic violence. The fact that domestic violence constitutes only a small minority of reasons for firearm licence refusal could be indicative and calls for further research and eventually revision of existing legislation and practices. At the same time, it is urgent to provide more thorough insight into the overall structure of the most frequent reasons for the ban of firearm licenses.

Including the gender expertise will be of crucial importance to identify underlying reasons to be addressed in policy and will ensure that the solution matches the problem, that the limited resources will be utilized in the best possible way, and that the effectiveness of SALW control work will be increased.

## Example 2.

**Gender pattern:** *Young men make up the majority of perpetrators and victims of armed violence.*

### Why is this so?

**In this stage it is crucial to ask questions.** Is there any additional data available on young men who committed firearm-related violence? Through what type of violence was the incident committed (criminal, organized crime, youth gangs, violence in school, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, etc.)? Is data about their socio-economic status available? Is there any cultural conditioning (a gun culture) which influences young men to resort to firearm-related violence? Where is the evidence for such culture? Has any preventive work been undertaken?

Studies show that small arms violence is often seen by young men as a means of achieving the social and economic status they believe they deserve. Therefore, small arms can be of particular appeal to young men as they frequently associate weapons with individual pride, masculinity, and enhanced social status, which can be a 'strong symbol of power for marginalized young men' (Bevan and Florquin, 2006).

The scarce data also indicates that in certain contexts firearms may play a role in rites of passage. For example, research conducted in Belgrade showed that, there is a noteworthy gender disparity in boys and girls experience with firearms - 29 per cent of boys and 48 per cent of girls claimed they had never held a firearm (SACISCG, 2005).

This data indicates that young men are somewhat more exposed to SALW which should be taken into account when a policy response is being designed. In certain geographical locations, such as Northern Albania and Montenegro, firearms have also been part of rites of passage, but data is scarce. A study on gun culture in South East Europe also brings anecdotal evidence about the role of small arms for young offenders, particularly in terms of power, who see a gun as a tool to 'keep up their status as people to be feared and not challenged' (SEESAC, 2007). The role of the media in supporting risk-taking behaviour should also be taken into account in this regard, as well as other factors that help reproduce predominant gender regimes. In terms of policy responses to the problem, reports that enable the tracking of emerging practices relating to the results of specific programmes in reducing firearm-related violence among young men have recently been published (Abt and Winship, 2016).

### What should be done:

- Based on collected data, identify gender patterns and formulate observations;
- Initiate a discussion about these patterns during the SALW Commission meetings, where this is in place;
- Ensure that gender experts are consulted. Their participation is crucial to identifying problems;
- Consult existing analysis and reports.

### 3.1.5 STEP 5: ADDRESS IDENTIFIED GENDER PATTERNS – RESPOND TO THEM

In this step it is necessary to design a policy response to identified gender-related challenges:

- Gender-responsive goals and objectives should be set;
- Practical and innovative measures based on sex-disaggregated data to address the gender aspects of SALW developed;
- Activities to meet the security needs of both women and men and tackle the risks they face designed.

Key questions: What can your institution do to address these issues within their mandate? What can be done through SALW control strategies and legislation in accordance with the findings from the previous step? How does your Institution's work relate to patterns identified? Use these questions to design action proposals.

## Example 1.

***Authorization of firearm licenses are hardly ever rejected on grounds of domestic violence.***

### What can be done?

#### Activities:

- ▶ Conduct analysis of domestic violence and intimate partner homicide, identify trends on the use of firearms, map omissions in institutional response;
- ▶ Develop recommendations for policy and legislative changes;
- ▶ Organize training on domestic violence for police officers authorizing licences;
- ▶ Design awareness raising campaigns on the risks of misuse of firearms within the domestic context.

#### Legislative actions:

- ▶ Review authorization process with respect to domestic violence,
- ▶ Identify proposals for the amendment of by-laws or rules of procedures and define more strictly the licensing procedures regarding domestic violence, including spousal notifications,
- ▶ Develop and adopt procedures for stricter background checks,
- ▶ Train police officers performing security vetting on domestic violence,
- ▶ Define and adopt procedures to restrict access to firearms to persons issued restraining orders.

## Example 2.

***Young men make up the majority of perpetrators and victims of firearm-related incidents.***

### What can we do?

#### Policy intervention:

#### Objectives related to the reduction of the number of young men involved in firearm-related incidents

- ▶ Conduct a study on firearm-related incidents involving young men and identify specific risk factors;
- ▶ Compile examples of programmes aimed at reducing firearm-related violence among young men;
- ▶ Conduct an analysis of media representation of firearms and impact on young men;
- ▶ Design and launch a campaign about the risks of the misuse of firearms focusing on young men;
- ▶ Develop a policy proposal for addressing this issue;
- ▶ Pilot prevention programmes for young men.

#### Legislative action:

- ▶ Increase age requirement to be granted a firearm license.

### What should be done:

- Initiate a discussion about these patterns during the SALW Commission meetings, where this is in place;
- Ensure that gender experts are consulted as their participation is crucial to identifying problems;
- Consult existing analysis and reports;
- Define activities and integrate them into the action plan;
- Provide a budget for implementation.

### 3.1.6 STEP 6: TRACK PROGRESS – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The aim of SALW control policies is to increase the general security of citizens through planning and implementation of various measures to curb the proliferation and misuse of SALW. Monitoring and evaluation must provide a proven track-record that gender-specific risks of women, men, girls and boys have been addressed and that they equally benefit from the measures in place. Monitoring the plan should fully capture the implementation of measures set to address the identified gender concerns.

There are several important points for gender responsive monitoring and evaluation:

## 1 Ensure that all indicators referring to individuals are sex-disaggregated.

For instance, instead of:

- ▶ Number of participants in the training on international small arms standards,

The indicator should be:

- ▶ Number of men and women participants in the training on international small arms standards.

This allows tracking of the extent to which the commitment to ensure the balanced participation of women and men is fulfilled. If indicators show that this is not the case, additional activities such as targeting more women or investigating factors that hinder the participation of women could be undertaken.

## 2 Ensure that tracking of the implementation of specific gender-related activities planned in the previous step is in place.

For example, if the planned activity is:

- ▶ Develop and adopt procedures for stricter background checks,

The indicator could be:

- ▶ Procedures for stricter background checks including domestic violence adopted

Or

If the activity is:

- ▶ Campaign about the risks of firearms misuse focusing on young men,

The indicator could be:

- ▶ Campaign about the risks of firearms misuse focusing on young men implemented.

As discussed previously, in most of the action plans only output indicators are given. They are important since they provide evidence that activities are being implemented. In the case of gender specific activities, they demonstrate that commitments are fulfilled.

### 3 Ensure gender responsive indicators for outcomes

From the perspective of evaluation, it is essential to capture whether the goal – increasing the security for all citizens, both women and men, girls and boys - is being achieved. Measuring this, is a complex task and it requires a set of indicators which has to be consequently sex-disaggregated. This disaggregation will confirm that needs of both women and men have been addressed and provide clear recommendations for further actions. Once again, having gender expertise when evaluation is planned will facilitate capturing these effects.

#### What should be done:

- Involve stakeholders with gender expertise in the planning of monitoring and evaluation;
- Create sex-disaggregated indicators and set specific indicators to track the implementation of gender specific activities;
- Ensure that indicators for evaluation capture the effects on both women and men;
- Present the evaluation and discuss the findings with other stakeholders;
- Based on all of these, start a new policy cycle!

## Example:

Gender - responsive indicators to measure whether security has been increased for both women and men should include:

- ▶ Number of women and men victims of firearm-related incidents;
- ▶ Number of women and men victims of intimate partner violence committed with firearms;
- ▶ Number of firearm incidents committed by young men;

The findings on monitoring and evaluation should provide clear recommendations on how to increase the gender responsiveness of SALW control activities. They have to point out what has been done properly but also what has to be improved. Finally, the conclusions of the evaluation should be discussed with other stakeholders in order to provide inputs for the new policy cycle.

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