

SEESAC

South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons

AR/019

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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT REPUBLIC OF SERBIA - DESTRUCTION OF SALW (PHASE 2)

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 4 - SALW Awareness and Communications Strategy FA 6 - SALW Destruction Programmes
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	SG 1 - Capacity Building SG 4 - Project Support SG 5 - Resource Mobilisation

BACKGROUND

On 25 March 2003 the Government of Serbia proclaimed a fifteen-day amnesty for illegal weapons possession, to encourage voluntary surrender and registration of illegally held arms. The initial success of this initiative led to an extension of the amnesty until 24 April 2003. During this period anyone voluntarily surrendering illegal weapons to their nearest police station or military facility was not prosecuted. Individuals also had the chance to register non-military, sporting and hunting weapons according to the regulations governing firearms ownership. Approximately 55,000 weapons were surrendered or discovered during the amnesty initiative.

The Belgrade-based South East Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) supported by UNDP and the Stability Pact maintained close liaison and co-operation with the Serbian Ministry of the Interior during the amnesty initiative, and provided significant project advice and support for the destruction of SALW in support of the process. The first 3,859 weapons (Phase 1 Destruction) were destroyed on 12 April 2003, and this Activity Report covers Phase 2 of the destruction process.

WEAPONS DESTRUCTION

The weapons were prepared for destruction by limited disassembly at the Institute of State Security in Belgrade. The **physical destruction of 7,335 weapons** took place on 04 October 2003 at the **US Steel Sartid** industrial smelting facility in **Smeredevo**. The weapons were converted into approximately 20 tonnes of molten steel, which will be recycled by the US Steel facility. The operational costs of destruction were covered by the US State Department, who will also generously fund Phase 3 destruction of a further 10,000 weapons on 25 October 2003.

This weapons destruction has continued to draw valuable public attention to the process due to the extensive media coverage. It has also contributed towards maintaining the political momentum of the



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destruction initiative and has provided tangible evidence to the civil population that recovered weapons have been destroyed and permanently taken out of circulation. The cost per weapon destroyed was **five US dollars per weapon** (US\$ 5), but future



destruction costs are predicted to again be lower as capacity development continues and economies of scale start to apply¹. The destruction was attended by the Republic of Serbia Assistant Minister of Internal Affairs, Ms Stanisavljevic, the Head of the Gendarmerie, Major General Goran Radosavljevic and the UN Deputy Resident Co-ordinator, Ms Juliette El Hage. SEESAC and diplomatic representatives from OSCE and the USA provided monitoring and verification assistance.



SEESAC has also used this destruction process to field test a simple computer based destruction accounting system, which will shortly be available to all future SALW destruction agencies within South Eastern Europe. The Institute of State Security Firearms Team is conducting this trial in close cooperation with SEESAC.

SEESAC now intends to move on to Phase 4 of the process, which will be to encourage further destruction operations for the remaining 18,000 weapons collected during the amnesty

initiative, and then move on to the destruction of surplus stockpiled weapons. This will involve negotiation with Ministry of Interior, co-ordination activities and resource mobilisation with potential donors.

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¹ Destruction costs have reduced from US\$ 6.40 for the destruction in April 2003.