

# SEESAC

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

AR/004

19 May 2003

### SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT

#### SEESAC/SAFERWORLD SALW MEDIA TRAINING,

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 4 - Public Awareness and Communications Strategy
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	SG 1 – Capacity Building SG 7 – Training Activities

**Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, 15-16 May 2003.** The uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking of SALW remains a serious problem in South Eastern Europe. As members of civil society, and as professionals uniquely able to investigate, scrutinise and publicise SALW-related matters, journalists have a crucial role to play in the fight against SALW proliferation. SEESAC has established partnerships to assist the media in evaluating and developing their capacities to take part in the wider SALW debate.

A seminar entitled '*Reporting Small Arms - Opportunities and Challenges*' took place on 15 - 16 May 2003 in Skopje. The event was organised and run jointly by the UK-based NGO Saferworld and SEESAC with assistance from the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). The Skopje-based magazine/think-tank FORUM hosted the event, while UNDP offices in Skopje, Pristina, Tirana and Vranje provided essential logistical support.



The seminar gave over thirty journalists from Albania, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro (Kosovo and Southern Serbia), a chance to learn more about the problem of SALW proliferation, both globally and within the region. Such guidance is important as one of the first steps to improve information dissemination and public awareness among local communities. Although SALW problems are wide spread in the SE Europe region, they are still not widely publicised and debated as a public issue. An important dimension of the training is the establishment of a network of SALW-aware reporters who may in future co-operate and exchange information on the coverage of SALW issues.

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as Macedonia.

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Presentations, exercises and discussions took place on subjects such as 'cultures of violence', 'the impact of SALW', and 'tackling the problem'. During interactive sessions journalists were able to share experiences of reporting on SALW issues, discuss the opportunities, responsibilities and risks of such work.



At the end of the seminar journalists were given a chance to evaluate the training event using evaluation questionnaires. Interpretation of the questionnaires indicates that although most participants had never reported on SALW in the past, they felt they now had a better understanding of the issue and would therefore consider doing so. Many also noted that hearing from other journalists who had worked in the field before was beneficial. In general the 'interactive' sessions were rated as easier to follow, while presentations with a more factual, statistical or policy-related content

were less popular. While several participants left early and did not therefore submit evaluation forms, the feedback obtained was generally very positive.

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