

AR/059

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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR 59

DEFENCE CONVERSION - THE DISPOSAL AND DEMILITARIZATION OF HEAVY WEAPON SYSTEMS

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 3 - Management Information FA 6 - Destruction Programmes
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	SG 3 - Information Management and Exchange Activities SG 8 - Operational Research Activities

At the South Eastern Europe Cooperation Process (SEEC) ¹ Ministers of Defence meeting in Bucharest on 31 March 2005, the Ministers of Defence reaffirmed ² their commitment to enhance cooperation and dialogue in SEE, and also with international partners, on specific defence conversion related processes. This included an exchange of views on the conversion of redundant military facilities. A necessary precursor to the conversion of military facilities is the disposal of the equipment contained within those facilities, including heavy weapons.

The Ministers emphasized that the challenges associated with defence conversion are an integral part of overall Security Sector Reform (SSR) in countries concerned. Defence and Security Sector Reform remains a key component for some countries to move closer towards the EU and NATO. The need for increased regional cooperation on the destruction of redundant stockpiles of major conventional weapon systems was also noted.

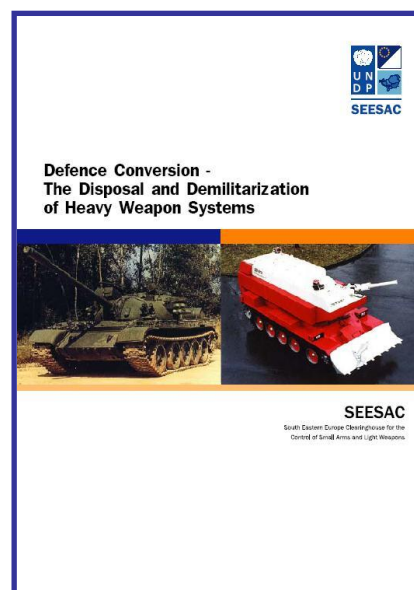
The Ministers of Defence also requested that SEESAC provide its technical and managerial know-how on weapons destruction programs with international support in order to develop national programs for the destruction of surplus military weapons and ammunition, with international technical and financial support. The Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) ³ has been tasked to act as a regional clearinghouse for defence conversion information and has also established three working groups. SEESAC has produced this paper at both the request of the Stability Pact and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in order to; 1) provide the background information necessary for deeper Stability Pact engagement and support for defence conversion in SEE; and 2) as part of the knowledge generation and management process within UNDP to assist them in their development of Security Sector Reform strategies.

The study suggests that demilitarization by dismantling and recycling should be the preferred disposal option for the majority of heavy weapon systems. The market for conversion to civilian use is very limited and strong competition already exists. Sale is a proliferation risk and reputable end users are rare. The risks of diversion to the 'grey' and then 'black' markets are real. The financial viability of demilitarization is

¹ <http://www.stabilitypact.org/seecp>

² See text of declaration at <http://www.stabilitypact.org/wt3/050331-declaration.pdf>.

³ www.racviac.org





dependent totally on the cost recovery possible from scrap sales. A full analysis of the regional scrap market, combined with a detailed analysis of the exact types, grades and quantities of scrap that can be recovered by vehicle type is necessary for accurate financial modelling; and hence realistic project development.

The report will shortly be available for download from the SEESAC website. For further information, or to obtain an electronic copy, please contact Ms. Ana Martinovic, SEESAC Communications Officer, ana.martinovic@undp.org. The report will be update on a regular basis as more information becomes available.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Wilkinson', is positioned above the contact information.

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