



AR/069

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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR/069 STUDY ON GUN CULTURE IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 3 - Management Information FA 4 - SALW Awareness and Communications Strategy
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	OA 3 - Information Management and Exchange OA 8 - Research Activities

SALW control stakeholders and practitioners within South Eastern Europe (SEE) are often told that weapon registration and collection programmes are ineffective because guns are an intrinsic part of 'cultures' in the region. Moreover, international and local observers often try to explain high levels of gun ownership and use in SEE by stating there is a strong 'gun culture'. In contrast, the National SALW Surveys on the public's perception of guns suggest that 'culture' and 'tradition' are not principal reasons for gun ownership in the region. As a result SEESAC decided that the subject merited further investigation since the existence and extent of the phenomenon might impact at the operational level on SALW control interventions in SEE.

A wide variety of research tools were employed in this Study including household surveys (HHS), focus group transcripts, secondary literature searches, statistical data, anthropological field studies, the Internet, print and electronic media. The Study sought to answer the following questions:

- How do history and tradition influence the way guns are perceived in SEE today?
- What gun related behaviours are rendered acceptable by society and why (especially ones which are also illegal)?
- How does mainstream society represent guns and how does it reproduce guns as symbols? Does it reinforce culturally acceptable images of guns?
- What implication do these findings have for SALW control interventions and policymaking?

The countries that came under examination were Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia the UN-Administered Territory of Kosovo. The Study is divided into sections that include the following data:

- Historical analysis of gun ownership and use in SEE;
- Present-day civilian gun ownership and use in SEE;
 - Legal ownership and use;
 - Illegal ownership and misuse.
- Representation of guns as symbols in SEE;
 - Gender dimensions;
 - Popular figures and cultural institutions;
 - Computer games and the media; and



- Country findings and a regional overview.

To the best of our knowledge, this report is the first of its kind to be conducted. It may serve as a valuable springboard for further research into the linkages between guns and 'culture', and their interplay with other factors in SEE such as the political and social context.

For additional information about the Gun Culture Study, '*The rifle has the devil inside*' *Gun Culture in South Eastern Europe* and other SEESAC publications, please contact Anya Hart Dyke, the SEESAC SALW Awareness Officer at anya.hartdyke@undp.org. The Study is currently available to download from the SEESAC website: www.seesac.org.



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