

*Check against delivery*

***Regional Cooperation Council Annual Meeting***  
**Statement delivered by Slobodan Bošković, SEESAC Project Officer/Advisor**

*Bucharest, 19.06.2014*

Mr. Secretary General,  
Distinguished representatives of RCC participants,  
Dear colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the people of the region under the joint mandate of the Regional Cooperation Council and the United Nations.

As the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), SEESAC continues to demonstrate the commitment, dedication and results in reducing the threats posed by the uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking of SALW.

With respect to the core mandate of SEESAC, in the field of arms control, based on our decade long reliable delivery and a long lasting relationship with the European Union, in December 2013, SEESAC has been granted yet another regional program which will be implemented throughout the South East Europe. Namely, this program provides 5.1 million EUR for the activities of strengthen safety and security through regional cooperation in South East Europe. Accordingly, we continue our great working relations with the authorities in Tirana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Pristina, Podgorica, Belgrade and Kishinev. In the forthcoming 3 years we will contribute to the further increase of the security of stockpiles, support the efforts of stockpile reduction of surplus arms and ammunition; support the establishment or enhancement of existing marking, tracing and registration systems for SALW; continue our commitment to enhancing regional cooperation on awareness raising, foster information sharing and knowledge transfer as well as support the regional authorities in implementing the Collection and Awareness Raising Campaigns.

As the recognition of the quality and impact of activities we are implementing SEESAC's mandate was broadened in order to address the challenges of the security sector reform more broadly, focusing in particular on the gender equality dimension. In introducing the gender perspective in security sector reform, SEESAC is proud of two distinct achievements. First, the support to the creation of the Women Police Officers Network and second the creation of the regional network of representatives of gender equality mechanisms in the Ministries of Defense and the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans. These truly regional advocacy and knowledge sharing platforms

through which police services and armed forces in our region have significantly improved the position of women in the security sector.

Success of both initiatives is to be attributed not only to the devoted gender advocates within the respective services, but also due to the nature of the regional processes – sparked by the vibrant cooperation, knowledge sharing and information exchange. Through the assistance offered by our two flagship projects in this domain we have helped position institutions in South East Europe on the global map as best practice examples of practical implementation of [United Nations \(UN\) Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security](#) and the [UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#).

Nevertheless, despite the significance of the achievements made throughout the region please allow me to use this opportunity to inform you about the issues which from the perspective and mandate we believe require your attention.

SEESAC would like draw your attention to the need for a strong ***renewed commitment towards regional cooperation on the reduction of surplus stockpiles of weapons and ammunition as well as improved stockpile management***. All of us should be aware of the fact that significant, tangible and measurable progress has been achieved in this area by all countries in South East Europe. However, the recent unfortunate events of unprecedented flooding in the region demonstrated important lessons how the unfinished business of reduction of stockpiles and unfinished business of adequately addressed remnants of war threaten to resurface at the most unexpected events threatening to invoke tragedy at any given moment.

That is why we at SEESAC believe that it is of utmost importance that the momentum is kept and that all of us persist in keeping this item a priority until it is addressed in an adequate and sustainable manner. Against that backdrop, we invite you to encourage a joint renewed commitment of all participants to a regional approach in resolving the problem of surplus stockpiles of weapons and ammunition as well as the security of those stockpiles.

On our part, in order for all of us to continue maintaining a strong focus and persist to perform in an effective, accountable, comprehensive and inclusive way the SEESAC, based on the inputs from the National Focal Points we have revised the 2006 Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The revised document maintains the well established structure and focus on stockpile control and reduction while reflecting the new regional realities as well as further developed policy priorities relevant for this subject matter. Accordingly, after several months of drafting and consultations SEESAC has prepared the revised 2014 Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons which would be sent to the Regional Cooperation Council for review and official adoption.

Mr. Secretary General,

SEESAC as a joint UNDP and RCC regional initiative in itself represents a stern commitment to the principles of cooperation, effectiveness and efficiency in contributing towards making our region more secure and delivering coordinated and focused assistance and support. We thank you again for the opportunity to address the Annual meeting and contributing to your work.