



AR/080

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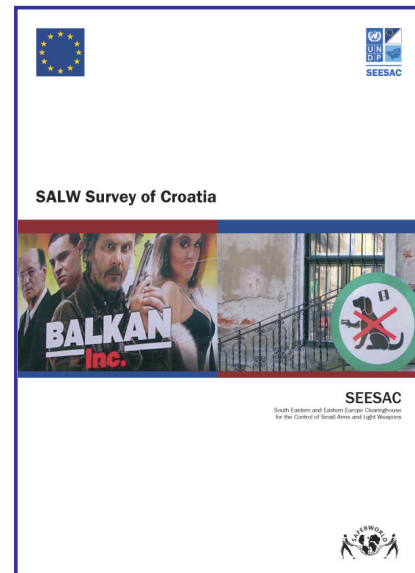
SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR/080

SALW SURVEY OF CROATIA

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 3 - Management Information
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	SG 2 - Co-ordination Measures SG 4 - Project Support SG 8 - Operational Research Activities

The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) has been conducting a comprehensive survey of the SALW situation in Croatia over the last six months. The survey was based on the SALW Survey Protocols,¹ and the research was supported by the Zagreb based PULS (Marketing, Media and Public Opinion Research) organisation. A consultation process began in April 2006 allowing the Government of Croatia and UNDP Croatia to review and contribute to research findings. The comments received as a result of these processes are reflected in the relevant sections of the Survey. Some key findings of the Survey include:

- It is estimated that there are approximately 968,000 weapons in civilian hands, comprising 371,000 registered and **597,000 unregistered weapons**. The estimated number of unregistered weapons presents significant public safety threats as evidenced by a comparatively high number of armed assaults, murders, robberies and suicides, and a challenge to state and regional security through the ongoing activities of serious and organised crime.
- There is also a very significant SALW (weapon and ammunition) surplus stored in an excessive number of storage facilities. The MoD and MUP between them continue to control **approximately 250,000 surplus weapons and 6,500 metric tonnes of shelf-life expired SALW related ammunition**. As part of the Long Term Development Plan for the Croatian Armed Forces these SALW have been designated as surplus, however, no definitive decision has yet been taken on how to dispose of them. The maintenance of effective security provisions at each of the 40 storage sites involves an unnecessary financial burden and assistance should be made available to facilitate destruction.
- Overall, the level of reported and investigated crime in Croatia has not changed significantly over the course of the previous four years; however, the **level of serious and organised armed crimes has increased by more than 50% over five years** with armed assault, armed robbery, armed murder all rising year on year with one exception. More than 95% of organised armed crime is committed with unlicensed handguns.



¹ www.seesac.org/index.php?content=41§ion=6.

- There continues to be a high and disturbing level of armed domestic assaults, often involving people suffering from PTSD. No conclusive statistics exist on the exact number of such incidents, however, a sample period in early 2006 revealed an average of 12 incidents per month involving firearms used against family members or neighbours.
- The **majority of the public support a future weapons collection and amnesty**, which is envisioned in the draft of the Weapons Law. The only criticisms were that previous programmes were too short and that, since 2003, there was no longer an option to turn in illegal weapons without fine or punishment resulting in an increased number of 'abandoned' firearms.
- **Croatian legislation on production, customs, and private security providers is generally in line with EU and international standards.** However, the absence of controls on brokering represents a serious and unaddressed deficiency in the overall legislative architecture. Furthermore, enhanced transparency in export decisions would ensure greater confidence in the overall effectiveness of the export licensing process and is in line with the EU Code of Conduct.
- **Private security companies play an important role in commercial security** and are well regulated with only limited instances of 'abuse of position'.
- The **lack of an integrated criminal justice data system accessible for all law enforcement agencies is a major shortcoming to tackling serious and organised crime.** There is an awareness of this problem and the MUP, supported by external actors, is attempting to address this.

A comprehensive SALW Survey should be the first stage of any SALW related intervention by the government or international community. Functional analysis of a SALW programme identifies that initial data has a major influence on programme success. It is also important that a SALW Survey be considered to be a distinct operational task with the aim of determining the nature and extent of SALW proliferation and impact within a region, nation or community in order to provide accurate data and information for a safe, effective and efficient intervention by an appropriate organisation. The information contained within a SALW Survey serves as a basis for monitoring the SALW situation in a country or measuring the success of any future SALW control intervention. The results from this Survey are now being used in the development of an integrated SALW strategy for Croatia.

The English language edition of the survey can be downloaded from the SEESAC website (www.seesac.org) from 01 September 2006. Printed copies of the report will also shortly be available in English and Croatian languages, upon request from the SEESAC Communication Officer, Ana Martinovic, who can be contacted on (+381) (11) 344 63 53 or by email at ana.martinovic@undp.org.



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