



AR/098

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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR/098

LAUNCH OF THE WESTERN BALKANS PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 2 - Legislative and Regulatory Issues FA 3 - Management Information
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	OA 2 – Co-ordination Measures OA 3 - Information Management and Exchange Activities OA 7 – Technical Support and Assistance

On 01 November 2006, an initial exploratory meeting for a Western Balkans Members of Parliaments took place in Belgrade. The meeting was organised by SEESAC with the assistance of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms based in Sweden. Members of the European and EU member states' Parliaments, the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum for SALW, and UNDP technical advisors and project managers informed the parliamentarians from the Western Balkans about EU SALW strategies and engagement, the involvement of EU parliamentarians in SALW Control, the importance of a national SALW control strategy, and the need for co-ordinated action and increased parliamentary diplomacy, oversight and advocacy.



The outcomes of the seminar included an agreement amongst all present to establish a Western Balkans Parliamentary Forum. Therefore on 22 May 2007, the launch of the Western Balkans Parliamentary Forum took place in Belgrade. Taking part at the launch were Members of Parliaments from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia¹ and Montenegro. Unfortunately, due to a special session at the Serbian Parliament, none of the Serbian Members of Parliament could attend the launch.

The event was opened by Mr. Michael Derus, Deputy to the German Ambassador on behalf of the EU Presidency to Serbia and Mr. Lance Clark, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Serbia. The event generated considerable media attention.

During the event, the Members of Parliaments from the Western Balkans were informed on all aspects of parliamentary work in the field of SALW Control. Mr. Tomás Reyes Ortega from the Office of the Personal Representative of the High Representative on Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction presented on the EU Strategy to Combat Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition. Mr. Efraim Gomez the Legal Adviser of the Global Parliamentary Forum presented the tasks and functions of parliamentary work on SALW. Hon. Celestino Suarez, member of the Spanish Parliament and a Board Member of the Global Parliamentary Forum spoke about future Parliamentary Work on SALW in Europe: the priorities, exchanges and challenges.

¹ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Finally, Dr. Maja Kostic Mandic, a Member of the Republic of Montenegro Parliament gave a brief introduction and an overview of the impact of SALW on women and the relevant statistics that make this a major issue of concern.

During the meeting it was also agreed that various mechanisms used for the exchange of information amongst the members themselves and the Forum would need to be upgraded in the future. It was also agreed that information such as research documents on SALW in the region, such as the *Analysis of National Legislation on Arms Exports and Transfers in the Western Balkans* would need to be made available in local languages in order to stimulate more local action.



The Members of Parliament were urged to use the forum and its staff in meeting their SALW Control related needs such as sourcing information, getting legal advice and training on European legislation relating to SALW.

For more information please contact the SEESAC Communications Officer (who is also the Western Balkans Parliamentary Forum Coordinator) Ms. Ana Martinovic: ana.martinovic@undp.org or visit the Forum website: <http://www.seeparliamentaryforum.org/>

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