

2 Country assessments

This report presents progress towards the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) by country. Each country sub-section includes two background sections: 'Small Arms Problem', which details the SALW-related problems in each country, and 'Small Arms Policy and Practice', which gives an overview of current policy and practice on SALW.

These two sections are followed by a third section, 'Small Arms Progress', which gives a detailed assessment of progress made to date. In order to facilitate analysis of the wide-ranging areas in which progress towards the RIP and combating SALW proliferation has been made, a number of sub-sections have been used to categorise and present information for each country (largely based on the functional areas defined by SEESAC). These sub-sections of SALW control activities are:

- Legislative and regulatory issues – this section details countries' current legislative and regulatory control measures and progress made in the context of other agreements on arms control, such as the 2000 OSCE Document on Small Arms, 2001 UN Programme of Action, etc. (For more detail, see Annex H). In order to ensure consistency, all analysis and referencing of legislation in the report is based on English language translations of laws obtained from SEESAC.
- SALW transfers – this section provides an overview of each country's current and recent SALW transfers (exports, imports, transit, transshipment and re-export), focusing on exports, in as far as public information is available, and also details available information on SALW trafficking.
- SALW collection programmes and capacities – this section provides an overview of SALW collection initiatives in each country.
- SALW destruction programmes and capacities – this section provides details of SALW and SALW ammunition destruction projects in each country.
- SALW stockpile management programmes and capacities – this section provides an overview of the stockpile security and management situation in each country.
- SALW awareness activities – this section presents the awareness-raising activities and public information campaigns implemented in each country. (Seminars, conferences and other meetings are not generally included in this section, which concentrates on direct SALW awareness-raising or information campaigns).
- SALW survey activities – this section presents the results of any SALW or related survey conducted in each country. (Research reports, policy reports, needs assessments, small-scale surveys, opinion polls, etc, have not been included in this section as they do not fully correspond with a 'SALW Survey' as defined by SEESAC's regional standards).
- Civil society involvement in SALW interventions – this section provides an overview of civil society and NGO activities on SALW in each country, including a brief note on overall capacity.
- Cross-border SALW control initiatives – this section provides an overview of the situation in terms of border control and cross-border co-operation on SALW trafficking in each country.

- SALW management information and exchange systems and protocols – this section provides an overview of SALW-relevant information systems, both public and confidential; it should be noted that it is not possible to make any assessment of the value and efficacy of confidential information exchange mechanisms.
- Additional SALW-related activities – this section presents any additional activities that may be relevant to a country's efforts to combat SALW, for example, community-based policing initiatives or the development of national SALW action plans.

Bulgaria



Small arms problem

Bulgaria has remained outside of the instability and conflicts affecting much of the Western Balkan region in the last decade. Being a large producer and exporter of SALW, the SALW dynamics in Bulgaria are different from those of some of its neighbouring countries. In contrast to the mainly political rationale of the SALW problem in the Western Balkans, in Bulgaria SALW issues have also a clear economic dimension. This explains why in recent years, in addition to the focus placed on arms export controls and the international community's worries about weapons sales to countries of concern, the debate has also concentrated on the challenges Bulgaria faces while restructuring and downsizing its once mighty defence industry.

The roots of the current problems relating to Bulgarian production and trade in SALW can be traced back to the days of communist rule, when the defence industry was one of the pillars of Bulgaria's national economy.³⁰⁷ Notwithstanding the important progress that Bulgaria has achieved so far in tightening up legal controls on SALW and improving enforcement practice, there are areas that continue to pose some challenges.³⁰⁸ Presently, Bulgaria has a developing economy with low competitiveness and a high level of unemployment.³⁰⁹ Such an environment strengthens the dependence on arms production as a means for preventing the rise in unemployment. The trend is particularly manifest in the areas where defence companies are the mainstay of the job market. These are the areas around the towns of Kazanlak, Sopot and Karlovo, Veliko Tarnovo, Lyaskovets and Gorna Oryahovitsa. Many of the current producers are afraid to lay-off more workers and many defence companies, such as Arsenal, Beta-Cherven Briag or some units of Terem, work only a few days a week.³¹⁰

Although the privatisation of the defence industry has been extensive, conflicts of interests in state regulation have not been completely removed, as a number of production, trade, and repair companies remain state-owned. At the same time the state institutions that oversee these companies, such as the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of the Economy, also participate in the decision-making process on arms

307 'Arms Production, Exports and Decision Making in Central and Eastern Europe', Bernardo Mariani and Chrissie Hirst, Saferworld, June 2002, p 19.

308 'Weapons Under Scrutiny – Implementing Arms Export Controls and Combating Small Arms Proliferation in Bulgaria', (hereafter 'Weapons Under Scrutiny'), CSD/Saferworld, March 2004, Executive Summary.

309 12.9% according to government statistics, with trade union claims that it could be as high as 30%. See also , Defence Economics [in Bulgarian], T Ivanov, Sofia, University Publisher Stopanstvo, 2002, pp 182–184.

310 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 3.

transfers. This merging of control activities with production and trade may put control bodies in a position of possible dependence on business.³¹¹

Another challenge is posed by the large quantities of arms, including SALW and ammunition, which the process of military modernisation and streamlining have made surplus to requirement. According to the latest military plans, the peacetime strength of the Bulgarian army will be reduced by half in 2004 and will total 45,000 personnel. Moreover, military reservists have been reduced from 500,000 to 100,000.³¹² It is unclear whether the huge quantities of SALW that will become surplus due to the restructuring of the armed forces will be destroyed or put out for sale on the international market.

Although the absolute number of registered firearms is much smaller than in neighbouring countries, the last few years have seen a notable increase in the number of firearms owned by civilians and public security firms. In 2003, there were 302,366 registered firearms in Bulgaria.³¹³ This has been explained by the increased sense of insecurity among private citizens and the growth of private security companies. Today there are 301 private security firms in Bulgaria, whose growth is usually ascribed to the stark increase in crime in the 1990s.³¹⁴ Traditional and organised crime, and the accumulation of illegally acquired funds are factors which contribute to SALW trafficking. Although the rise in the number of illegal arms has to do mainly with the circulation of weapons within Bulgaria, there is naturally a correlation between the availability of firearms within Bulgaria and the regional market for illicit arms.³¹⁵ The number of illegally owned firearms is largely unknown and the police have no firm estimates. The relatively strict and lengthy procedure for obtaining arms permits encourages many, especially criminals, to obtain arms illegally. A large number of firearms are produced in illegal workshops around the country, or smuggled into Bulgaria from parts of the Western Balkans.³¹⁶

The wide distribution network of over 100 stores that offer low-priced domestically produced handguns also exacerbates the spread of firearms in Bulgaria. An Arsenal-made Makarov pistol can be bought for US\$130 and Arcus-made pistols cost around US\$250. Black market prices for Kalashnikov assault rifles are as low as US\$120.³¹⁷ Another factor, which may contribute to the increased circulation of weapons, is that new amendments to the Law on Control of Explosives, Firearms and Ammunition have placed fewer restrictions on private ownership of firearms.³¹⁸

Despite Bulgaria's important progress in improving border control, there are several outstanding issues, which continue to provide favourable conditions for the illicit trafficking of SALW.³¹⁹ The most acute problem is the security of border facilities and the need to upgrade equipment for border control. Of particular concern is the security around airports and seaports, from where most of the export of Bulgarian arms takes

311 Ibid, Executive Summary.

312 Ibid

313 Ibid

314 National Police Service Directorate, <http://www.dnsp.mvr.bg/ohranfirmi.htm>, accessed 16 October 2003.

315 Ibid

316 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 3.

317 The quoted prices are based on investigation by CSD.

318 Information drawn from Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 3.

319 '2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession', EU Commission, p 104-106, http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2003/pdf/rr_bg_final.pdf

place, in particular in the towns of Varna and Burgas, the two biggest ports on Bulgaria's 320-kilometre Black Sea coastline.³²⁰ Sofia Airport also generates concerns because it has multiple entry and exit points with lax security. It is alleged that goods have been stolen or removed without Customs authorisation from the airport's cargo facilities.³²¹

Another problem in combating arms trafficking is the lack of equipment and lax controls over small boats. Although Bulgaria's Black Sea coast has numerous small fishing ports, only two Border Police boats patrol the entire coastline.³²² The Bulgarian Customs Agency does not have its own boats and is dependent on the Border Police. The Border Police is in the process of building radar stations along the coast but there are still sections of the coast that are not covered by radars. There are concerns that small boats coming from neighbouring countries can load illicit cargoes at Bulgarian ports or from Bulgarian small boats without being detected.³²³

Small arms policy and practice

Bulgaria's official policy on SALW was outlined at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York in July 2001.³²⁴ Acknowledging the urgent need for collective international efforts, Bulgaria called for 'an integrated and holistic spectrum of measures designed to address manufacturing and implementation of an effective regime of export control, marking and tracing, security and safe management of stockpiles, destruction of excess arms, enforcement of arms embargoes, organised crime, border control, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration'.³²⁵ Bulgaria is committed to ensuring the conduct of a responsible national policy with regard to transfers to sensitive states and regions. The Bulgarian Government is also committed to a consistent and responsible policy of export controls³²⁶ and maximum restraint when evaluating applications for the export of SALW, as well as of other arms and sensitive dual-use goods to destinations where risks are judged greatest, in particular to regions where conflict is occurring or is threatening. Bulgaria regularly updates the list of countries and organisations towards which it applies prohibitions or restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and related equipment in accordance with UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and decisions of the EU and the OSCE.

Bulgaria is also committed to arms transfer restraint in the context of regional and international control regimes, including the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, the EU Joint Action on SALW and the OSCE Document on SALW. On 03 August 1998, Bulgaria formally aligned itself to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and has

320 Reportedly, the security of the cargo areas at both ports is lax. Neither port's customs facilities has x-ray equipment for inspecting cargos. Nor does either port have examination sheds in which to inspect containers in adverse weather conditions. At the Kapitan Andreevo border crossing with Turkey, Customs conduct thorough inspections on about 2% of the entering trucks, and an even smaller proportion of those exiting the country. This inspection ratio is achieved because the crossing's facilities include x-ray equipment. In Varna and Burgas, where no such equipment is available and where the total amount of cargo is significantly higher, the percentage is probably even lower. Weapons under scrutiny, Chapter 3.

321 Interviews with Customs officials, October – November, 2003.

322 Two more boats have been donated by the EU PHARE project but they are not yet in use.

323 Ibid

324 Bulgaria participated in the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects and has made a political commitment to implement the Conference's Programme of Action.

325 Statement by Ambassador Vassily Takev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, New York, 12 July 2001.

326 Welcoming address by HE Dr Solomon Passy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria at the opening of the First Preparatory Seminar of the 11th OSCE Economic Forum, Sofia, 11 – 12 November 2002.

committed itself to abide by all guidelines, decisions and positions related to arms transfers adopted by the EU. In December 1998, Bulgaria made a political commitment to the EU Joint Action on SALW and in November 2000 it signed the OSCE Document on SALW.

In recent years, the Bulgarian defence industry has been heavily hit by recession. The country's current weapons output is at about 10 percent of its mid-1980s peak and employment in the defence industry has fallen from 110,000 – 115,000 at the end of 1980 down to around 25,000 in 2003.³²⁷ The difficult transition to democracy and a market economy, characterised by financial and economic crisis, a weakening of state control, and political instability, had a substantial impact on the Bulgarian arms industry. Bulgaria's defence exports declined rapidly for a number of reasons. Firstly, the loss of state subsidies and military downsizing across Europe meant the loss of many traditional clients; secondly, some traditional markets outside Europe were also lost because of international restrictions and UN embargoes; thirdly, many arms importers, especially those from former communist countries, shifted demand to weapons produced to NATO standards, thus reducing the demand for old soviet-style weaponry.³²⁸

In the 1990s, the Government tried unsuccessfully to implement a number of conversion policies. There were two approaches to conversion.³²⁹ The first tried to use the existing facilities and production lines.³³⁰ The second approach involved the purchase of new technologies and production lines. However the lack of an adequate financing instrument proved a significant obstacle.³³¹ This problem was further compounded by the lack of marketing or research and development resources, as well as insufficient technological expertise in the production of civilian products. Moreover, the conversion process lacked clarity over which companies needed to preserve their capability to convert back to arms production. Consequently, parallel defence and civil production capacities were retained at great expense.³³²

After what has been described as an inconsistent and long-winded policy process, which deterred potential foreign investors and reduced the financing opportunities of the industry,³³³ most of the arms industry has now been privatised. The privatisation process, however, has not been an immediate economic success. According to defence experts, most of the defence companies can hardly survive.³³⁴ The social and economic effects on towns like Sopot, Kazanlak, and Karlovo has been markedly severe.³³⁵

327 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 1.

328 'Managing Defence Industries in Transition: Ensuring Compliance with Export Controls', a presentation by Bernardo Mariani, Saferworld, at the Fifth International Conference on Export Controls, held in Budapest, Hungary, on 15 – 17 September 2003.

329 Restructuring and Conversion, D Dimitrov, BICC 2002, p 75.

330 This process proved difficult, because facilities and equipment often had narrow, defence-oriented technical specifications. Most factories were built with a high level of specialisation and with a capacity for civilian production not surpassing 10 – 20% of total output. 'BICC Conversion Survey 2001: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization', Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlag, 2001, p 68.

331 'Lessons learned from Conversion in Russia and Western Europe', K Gonchar and H Wulf, *Journal of Defense and Peace Economics*, vol 9 (4), 1998, pp 339–367.

332 As described in Weapons Under, Chapter 1.

333 G Georgiev, T Ivanov, T Tzvetkov, D Dimitrov, *Common European Defence: Economic Aspects*, [in Bulgarian], University Publishing House 'Stopanstvo', Sofia, 1998, p 196.

334 'The Bulgarian Defense Industry Strategic Options for Transformation, Reorientation & NATO Integration', J Bialos, The Atlantic Council of the United States, Policy Paper, July 2001, p 12.

335 *Ibid*, p 11.

The Bulgarian defence industry continues to produce a range of weapons, munitions and related military equipment, especially SALW, which are the country's main defence export items.³³⁶ Although most of the small arms produced in Bulgaria are of old Soviet design, in the 1990s the country began moving towards production of NATO-standard equipment. The industry's average is US\$100 million per year.³³⁷

Often criticised in the past for violating international arms trade restrictions and for its willingness to supply arms to countries in conflict and human rights crisis areas,³³⁸ Bulgaria has made important progress towards improving its arms controls and the disposal of surplus small arms and ammunition.³³⁹ A new political will combined with the country's aspiration to join the EU and NATO and sustained pressure from the international community have resulted in serious actions to improve arms export policy and practice.³⁴⁰

Bulgaria has also taken important steps to control SALW proliferation within its borders. The Law for Control on Explosives, Firearms and Ammunition (LCEFA) and its Regulations allow private individuals and companies to possess, store and use non-military style firearms³⁴¹ and ammunition for protection, self-protection, production, hunting, sport and cultural purposes.³⁴² An important development has been the establishment of a Central Registry of Firearms at the National Police Headquarters. According to the Government of Bulgaria all confiscated or collected illicit small arms are usually destroyed as soon as possible, subject to any legal procedures associated with criminal prosecution.³⁴³

In its 2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession, the European Commission noted the progress made by Bulgaria in updating its Schengen Action Plan, whose implementation has led to 'positive changes in Bulgaria's policy towards the establishment of a high level of control at the external borders'.³⁴⁴ In particular, the former practice of employing conscripts in the border police has been discontinued, while specialised border police training courses started in April 2003 for newly appointed officers. It was also reported by the European Commission that Bulgaria was in the process of upgrading its high-tech equipment for border control, with priority being given to the external borders with Turkey and the Black Sea Coast.³⁴⁵ Bulgaria is also increasing the capacity of its Customs officers to deter and detect customs offences. Mobile customs teams are being trained and between 2002 and 2003 five new teams were added to the existing five. Crucially, amendments to the legislation in 2003 introduced the legal framework for undercover operations.³⁴⁶

336 Bulgaria's main SALW manufacturers are: Arsenal Joint Stock Company (JSC) in Kazanlak; NITI JSC in Kazanlak; VMZ JSC in Sopot; Arkus Co. JSC in Lyaskovets; Dunarit JSC in Rousse; and two branches of the MoD Terem Company in Veliko Tarnovo and Kostenez. 'Disposal of surplus small arms – a survey of policies and practices in OSCE countries', A joint publication by BICC, British American Security Information Council, Saferworld and Small Arms Survey, January 2004, p 98.

337 Data provided by the Bulgarian MFA.

338 'Money Talks, Arms Dealing with Human Rights Abusers', Human Rights Watch, April 1999, vol 11, No 4 (D).

339 'Short mission report – SEESAC Consultation in Bulgaria, 08 – 10 July 2002, SEESAC, www.seesac.org/about/bulg.htm

340 Op cit, 'Disposal of surplus small arms – a survey of policies and practices in OSCE countries'.

341 Revolvers, self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines only. Op cit, 'Disposal of surplus small arms – a survey of policies and practices in OSCE countries', p 98.

342 Ibid

343 Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 7.

344 '2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession', p 99.

345 Ibid, p 99–100.

346 Ibid, p 103.

Table 14 – Bulgaria's commitments to arms or SALW control agreements

ARMS OR SALW CONTROL AGREEMENT	BULGARIA'S COMMITMENTS
Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan	November 2001
UN Programme of Action	July 2001 ³⁴⁷ Letter Report in 2003
UN Firearms Protocol	15 February 2002 ³⁴⁸
OSCE Document on Small Arms	November 2000 ³⁴⁹
OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition	December 2003
EU Code of Conduct	August 1998
EU Joint Action on SALW	December 1998
Wassenaar Arrangement	July 1996 ³⁵⁰

Small Arms progress

Legislative and regulatory issues

Bulgaria's normative framework is rather comprehensive. The 1995 Law on the Control of Foreign Trade Activity in Arms and in Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, last amended in July 2002 (SG No 102/1995, as amended in SG 75/2002), and a Government Regulation on its Implementation (SG No 115/10.12.2002) constitute the legal foundation of Bulgaria's arms export control system. The amendments to the above Law and Regulation, which became effective in the second half of December 2002, include comprehensive provisions to control the activities of middlemen or brokers, requirements to improve the identification of end-users and prevent diversion of weapons shipments and increased penalties in case of violation.³⁵¹

Crucially, brokering activities carried out in and from the territory of Bulgaria are now treated as direct arms trade activities and, as such, they fall under relevant legislative provisions. This has resulted in the introduction of a licensing regime for brokers and the establishment of a register of companies and persons performing brokering activities in arms and dual-use goods and technologies.³⁵² Several other amendments

347 On 07 March 2002, the Council of Ministers adopted a Decision for the approval of the United Nations Programme of Action on SALW, which tasks different government institutions with the implementation of the principles, norms and requirements contained in the PoA. 'All involved institutions have designated an authorised point of contact, thus creating an effective mechanism for its implementation'. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 2.

348 The Protocol was ratified by the National Assembly on 19 June 2002 and the instrument of ratification was deposited on 6 August 2002. *Ibid.*

349 'On 01 February 2001, the Council of Ministers approved the OSCE Document and its nationwide implementation', *Op cit*, 'Disposal of surplus small arms - a survey of policies and practices in OSCE countries', p 106.

350 Bulgaria became a founding member of the Wassenaar Arrangement in July 1996.

351 A person who illegally manufactures, processes, repairs, develops, keeps stockpiles, trades in, transports or exports explosives, firearms, chemical, biological or nuclear weapons or ammunition may be imprisoned for one to six years. If the person is an official who abused his or her position, or if the person is a repeat offender (in cases other than a minor), he or she may be imprisoned for two to eight years. Depending on the magnitude and severity of the crime, the offender may be imprisoned for up to fifteen years. Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. http://www.research.ryerson.ca/SAFER-Net/regions/Europe/Bul_JY04.html

to the basic legal framework on SALW have recently been introduced.³⁵³

According to the Law, companies are first required to obtain a licence to perform foreign trade activities in arms and dual-use goods. The licence is issued by the Interministerial Council on the Issues of Military Industrial Complex and Mobilisation Preparedness of the Country within the Council of Ministers. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy chairs the Interministerial Council and members include the Deputy Ministers from several government departments.³⁵⁴

The request by licensed companies for permits to export, import, re-export, or transit are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Interdepartmental Commission on Export Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction within the Ministry of Economy. The Commission is chaired by the Minister of Economy and also includes representatives from the Ministries of Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs. The assessment of export licence applications is in compliance with restrictions imposed by UN Security Council resolutions, the decisions of the EU, the OSCE, the Wassenaar Arrangement and other multilateral and regional instruments of non-proliferation.³⁵⁵

Companies are subject to a number of additional controls and permits that include:

- A permit from the Control of Hazardous Devices Office of the National Police Service.
- An inspection by the Customs Agency and National Security Service at specific border crossings.
- Monitoring of the export by the export control specialist that every licensed company is required to have.
- The cargo shipping company also needs to be licensed by the Interministerial Council to transport arms to and from the territory of Bulgaria.
- Defence and arms trade companies under the MoD are obliged to obtain personal approval for all transactions from the Minister of Defence.

An analysis conducted in 2003 by a Bulgarian expert group concluded that despite the evolution of Bulgaria's arms export controls, there remains scope for improvement.³⁵⁶ In particular, the report calls for improving the work of the Interdepartmental Commission through the introduction of appropriate mechanisms that would help resolving conflicts of interest, diminish the concentration of discretionary powers held by single individuals,³⁵⁷ counteract the risks of corruption and devote more attention

352 Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of UN General Assembly resolution 57/72 entitled 'The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 3.

353 These include: Amendments in 2002 to the Penal code of the Republic of Bulgaria; Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Firearms and Ammunition (SG No 133/1998 as amended in SG 85/2000) and the Regulation on its implementation (SG 78/1999 as amended in SG 58/2001, 1/2002); Amendment to the Decree No 91 of 09 April 2001 on the approval of a list of countries and organisations with regard to which the Republic of Bulgaria, in accordance with resolutions of the UN Security Council and with the decisions of the EU and the OSCE, applies prohibition or restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and related materiel (SG 37/2001, 70/2002, 22/2003); a number of procedural regulations and internal standards issued by the competent authorities.

354 The Council standing members are the Deputy Ministers of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, Interior, Transport and Communications, Regional Development and Public Works, the Head of the National Intelligence Service and the Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Bulgarian Army. The Prime Minister designates the Secretary of the Council who is responsible for controlling the implementation of the Council's decisions. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 4.

355 Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 5. In April 2001, the Bulgarian Government adopted a list of states and organisations that are placed under embargo according to the resolutions of the UN Security Council, or decisions by the EU and the OSCE. This list is updated on a regular basis. See Weapons Under Scrutiny, Appendix IV.

to the impact of arms transfers on conflict, instability, human rights and development goals.³⁵⁸ The report urges the Bulgarian Government to consider the creation of a National Agency responsible for co-ordinating all aspects of the control of trade in arms and dual-use goods and technologies.³⁵⁹

The possession of firearms and ammunition is regulated primarily through the *LCEFA* and the *Regulation on its implementation*. In July 2003, the Bulgarian Government amended the Law in order to relax some of its restrictive provisions. Applicants for firearms permits are no longer required to pass mental health tests. Moreover, the reasons for denying such a permit no longer include 'misuse of drugs and alcohol', 'systematically disturbing the peace' or 'putting national security in danger'.³⁶⁰

Table 15 – Features of Bulgaria's legislative and regulatory framework

FEATURES OF LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	BULGARIA
National	
National co-ordinating agency on SALW	No, however relevant points of contact exist. ³⁶¹
National point of contact on SALW	Yes ³⁶²
Laws & Procedures on Production, Export, Import and Transit	
Legislation	Yes
Production	Yes
Export	Yes
Import	Yes
Transit	Yes
National System of Export & Import Licensing or Authorisation	
System	Yes
Diversion risk	Yes
End-user certificate	Yes ³⁶³
Retransfers	Yes
Verification (pre/post)	Yes, post-shipment ³⁶⁴
Brokering controls	Yes
Domestic Possession, Trade and Stockpiling	
Legislation	Yes ³⁶⁵
Manufacture	Yes
Marking and tracing	Yes ³⁶⁶
Possession	Yes
Stockpiling	Yes
Trade	Yes

356 Ibid, Chapter 5.

357 In particular, the Secretary of the Commission.

358 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Executive Summary.

359 Ibid, 'Recommendations to the Bulgarian Government', Chapter 5.

360 'Bulgaria Banned Guns in Entertainment Clubs', Novinite, 16 July 2003.

361 All relevant institutions have designated an authorised point of contact, thus creating a network of experts competent on different aspects of SALW, such as export control, customs control, stockpile management and destruction of surplus and control over manufacture and record keeping. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of UN General Assembly resolution 57/72 entitled 'The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects'.

SALW transfers

In contrast to the mainly political rationale for Bulgarian SALW exports in the Soviet era, the motives for arms sales in the country's post-Cold War experience have become purely economic. In 2002 Bulgaria exported around US\$30 million worth of SALW.³⁶⁷ The state-owned arms trading company Kintex, and the less active Teraton, as well as close to 70 smaller brokering companies are involved in exporting Bulgaria's arms and dual-use goods.³⁶⁸ It is not clear, however, how many of them are specialised in SALW. Kintex is the only broker authorised to export to India, which appears to be Bulgaria's biggest client.³⁶⁹

In 2000, there were reports claiming that Bulgaria had concluded one of the largest SALW deals in recent years, a contract to supply India with 200,000 Kalashnikov rifles.³⁷⁰ It is unclear whether or not this deal has been completed, as no additional information has been made public.³⁷¹ Despite a dubious history of arms transfers to conflict regions, Bulgaria's new and strengthened export controls do seem to have resulted in improvements in arms control practice. In the past two years no cases of significant illicit trade in SALW have been detected.³⁷² In May 2002, there were reports that the Bulgarian authorities had discussed revoking the licence of a defence company following its alleged involvement in arms transfers to Sudan.³⁷³ Bulgaria's restraint seems to have been rewarded with small but symbolic contracts, such as a contract in 2002 to supply 400 AK-47s and other SALW and ammunition to the Afghan National Army, as part of the US-run training programme.³⁷⁴

During the 1990s, there were frequent accusations that Bulgarian SALW exports had found their way, through unscrupulous international brokers, into countries in conflict or regions of instability. Whether knowingly or not, this would have provided Bulgarian exporters a means to stay in business when traditional markets were lost and the country became incapable of competing with other arms exporters on a global scale.³⁷⁵ The long transitional period that Bulgaria experienced contributed to the 'criminalisation of weapons sales', with an increase in the number of brokers and

362 The Director of NATO and International Security Directorate at the MFA has been designated as the National Point of Contact. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of UN General Assembly resolution 57/72 entitled 'The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 3.

363 Every transaction requires an end-user certificate. The exporting company or broker needs to provide a certificate that the end-user has obtained from its own national authorities. This certificate is verified by the MoE, the MFA, the Mol and the MoD.

364 The Commission requires a certificate (Delivery Verification Certificate) to confirm that each delivery has taken place. The certificate is issued by the respective authority of the end-user country. When considered necessary, the Commission is authorised to do on-the-spot delivery verifications in the end-user country. Such inspections are rarely carried out as resources are quite limited.

365 Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Firearms and Ammunition (SG No 133/1998 as amended in SG 85/2000) and the Regulation on its implementation (SG 78/1999 as amended in SG 58/2001, 1/2002).

366 Civilian and military SALW produced in Bulgaria are marked according to OSCE requirements. The markings provide information indicating: the year of manufacture, country of manufacture, manufacturer's name and a serial number. In line with Bulgaria's compatibility with NATO all arms and ammunition of the Bulgarian armed forces will need to bear the standard marking for NATO armaments. This is likely to become standard for the production of all Bulgarian defence companies.

367 Interviews with government officials, 05 October 2003.

368 'Who is Trading with Arms in Bulgaria,' [in Bulgarian] 24 Chasa, 04 December 2002.

369 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 3.

370 Small Arms Survey 2001, p 158.

371 Ibid, p 108.

372 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 3.

373 Small Arms Survey 2003, p 108.

374 Ibid, p 109.

375 'Light Weapons, Long Reach: Bulgaria's Role in the Global Spread and Control of Small Arms', Suzette R Grillot and Dessie Apostolova, February 2003.

middlemen focussing in particular on African markets.³⁷⁶ A 1999 report by Human Rights Watch³⁷⁷ denounced Bulgarian exports to war-torn countries such as Angola, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Burundi. A report published by the UN Security Council in March 2000 stated that the evidence collected by a UN Panel of experts overwhelmingly pointed 'towards Bulgaria as the source of origin for the majority of the arms purchased by UNITA – at least since 1997'.³⁷⁸ The final report of the UN Monitoring Mechanism on Angola Sanctions issued in December 2000 provided further evidence of large supplies of Bulgarian weapons, mainly SALW, to UNITA forces between 1996 and 1998.³⁷⁹ The weapons were supplied on the basis of end-user certificates listing Togo as the country of final destination. In addition to the large quantities of SALW reaching UNITA rebel forces, Bulgaria was repeatedly involved in transfers to regions of instability, which were often facilitated by foreign individuals acting as arms brokers or transportation agents. In November 1999, a British cargo company transported 42 tons of Bulgarian SALW, including surface-to-air missiles, from Burgas to Harare in Zimbabwe. Allegedly, the weapons were later transferred to the Democratic Republic of Congo.³⁸⁰ In February 1998, a British private military company shipped several tonnes of small arms from Bulgaria through Nigeria to Sierra Leone, in possible violation of an existing UN arms embargo.³⁸¹

SALW collection programmes and capacities

There have not been any government programmes for the collection of illicitly held arms or any amnesty laws. In 2002 MP Nonka Matova proposed an amnesty law for illegally owned firearms. However, this initiative struggled to gather political support and there was no follow up to it.³⁸²

SALW destruction programmes and capacities

Bulgaria has vast surpluses of SALW and the adopted Programme for Restructuring the Bulgarian armed forces will result in additional surpluses. Consequently, the Ministry of Defence Logistic Command is working on determining the requirements for SALW. The surplus weapons will be located at the 137th Central Base for Storage and Technical Maintenance and Repair (CSMRB) in the town of Veliko Tarnovo awaiting destruction.³⁸³

In accordance with a Decision of the Interministerial Council at the Council of Ministers, an interagency group for the coordination of SALW destruction has been established.³⁸⁴ The MoD is the main authority responsible for the disposal of surplus SALW and, as such, it has a leading role in the identification of surpluses, registration, storage,

376 Ibid

377 'Bulgaria: Money Talks - Arms Dealing with Human Rights Abusers', New York, Human Rights Watch, 1999.

378 'Letter dated 10 March 2000 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993) concerning the situation in Angola addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/203)', paragraph 41.

379 'Final Report of the Monitoring Mechanism on Angola Sanctions', S/2000/1225, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanction/angola/0012rprt.htm>, paragraph 54.

380 Ibid, p 28-29.

381 Ibid

382 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 5.

383 'Stockpile Management and Security of Small Arms and Light Weapons', Republic of Bulgaria - Ministry of Defence, United Nations Sub-Regional Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in South-East Europe, 10 - 12 March 2003.

384 Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 6.

transfer, transportation, record keeping and site inspections.³⁸⁵ These activities are also monitored by military counter-intelligence and the military police.³⁸⁶ In December 2001, the Council of Ministers prepared a 'National Programme for the Utilisation and Destruction of Surplus Ammunition on Bulgarian Territory'.³⁸⁷

Bulgaria has made important progress towards the destruction of its SALW surpluses with the support of the international community. The first destructions of surplus SALW started in 2001 when Bulgaria signed an agreement with the US Government for the destruction



June 2003, 4,500 weapons awaiting destruction by cutting and hydraulic deformation at the Veliko Tarnovo industrial facility of TEREM SHC in Bulgaria. The resultant scrap metal was converted into approximately 16 tonnes of molten steel.

of 150,000 small arms. So far, Bulgaria has destroyed around 96,000 SALW and nearly 6,700,000 rounds of ammunition under this agreement.³⁸⁸ From 20 – 27 June 2003, 4,500 AK-74s, 750,000 rounds of ammunition and 2,474 rounds of light weapons were destroyed in a project implemented by the Government of Bulgaria in co-operation with UNDP and SEESAC.³⁸⁹ This project was deemed very important given that the weapons were new and had a clear market value.³⁹⁰ The Veliko Tarnovo branch of Terem, the company being appointed to perform the actual destruction of surplus SALW, has developed technologies for destroying weapons of all kinds, including the whole range of SALW. The process is based on crushing some SALW components through plastic deformation and oxy-fuel or saw-cutting others. Usually, small components are crushed and large or heavy components are cut. Detailed process steps have been developed for each type of weapon.³⁹¹

It is expected that significant stocks of SALW will be rendered surplus as part of the process of restructuring and downsizing of the army. The Bulgarian Government is seeking financial assistance for additional surplus destruction projects.³⁹² Bulgaria has also expressed its readiness to become a regional centre for the destruction of surplus SALW from throughout South Eastern Europe.³⁹³

Table 16 – Summary of SALW destruction in Bulgaria 2000 – 2004³⁹⁴

DESTRUCTION ACTIVITY	SALW	AMMUNITION (TONNES)	REMARKS
Bulgarian MoD, UNDP, SEESAC	4,500		(AK-74 assault rifles) 10 October 2002 – 27 June 2003
Bulgarian MoD	97,593		(Various) 10 October 2002 – 27 June 2003
TOTAL	102,093		

385 Op cit, 'Disposal of surplus small arms - a survey of policies and practices in OSCE countries', p 103.

386 Ibid

387 Council of Ministers' Decision 842/20.12.2001.

388 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Chapter 3.

389 'Activity Report: Support to Republic of Bulgaria Weapons Destruction', SEESAC, 27 June 2003, <http://www.seesac.org/reports/ar008.htm>.

390 'Summary of Regional SALW Projects - Bulgaria', SEESAC, <http://www.undp.org.yu/salw/reports/Projects1h1nczi45jcsy3245aoy0bmbv.doc>.

391 Op cit, 'Stockpile Management and Security of Small Arms and Light Weapons'.

392 Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Bulgaria, 08 - 10 July 2002, <http://www.seesac.org/about/bulg.htm>.

393 'Controlling small arms proliferation: the view from Bulgaria', 07 - 08 March 2002, Seminar report compiled by Chrissie Hirst, Saferworld/Bulgarian Red Cross.

394 Statistics taken from the SEESAC SALW Database, www.seesac.org, referenced 17 February 2004.

SALW stockpile management programmes and capacities

A system of stockpile management and security of SALW has been in operational use in Bulgaria for more than 40 years. According to the Bulgarian authorities, the system has proved reliable.³⁹⁵ However, the system is being constantly developed and elaborated, especially with regard to safe storage, inventory control and security.³⁹⁶

Bulgaria is committed to promoting and ensuring security of SALW stocks by means of:

- Constantly reviewing current practices;
- Establishing effective management and accountability systems;
- Ensuring adequate and detailed standards and procedures, good record-keeping and regular stocktaking;
- Ensuring that any losses are properly reported and investigated and the weaknesses are rectified;
- Regularly reviewing holdings to ensure timely identification and disposal of surpluses; and
- Developing SALW destruction technologies and capacities.³⁹⁷

All significant SALW stockpiles in Bulgaria are operated by the MoD. According to the MoD, international inspections conducted by a joint group of American and Norwegian experts in October 2000 concluded that the Ministry's SALW storage facilities were secure and that all arms were accounted for. Another visit conducted in Summer 2002 by the SEESAC noted that the Bulgarian Government has informed them that 'the Bulgarian Army has introduced an effective system for safe storage and record-keeping of SALW, preventing thefts and uncontrolled movement of arms and ammunition'.³⁹⁸ However, some cases of theft persist, while the security of stockpiles during transportation to different warehouses has also caused concerns.³⁹⁹ Such transportations have been more frequent during the past years of reorganisation of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.

No information is available on the current levels of Bulgaria's stockpiles of SALW.

SALW awareness activities

The final initiative in the destruction process of 4500 SALW in 2003 (see above) was the unveiling on 27 October 2003 of a monument dedicated to peace, which now stands outside the Information Centre of the Bulgarian MoD. The winning design was



24 October 2003: Bulgaria proudly unveils its 'Bird of Peace' monument outside the Defence Ministry's Information Centre. The sculpture was made from weapons and ammunition destroyed in summer 2003.

395 Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 7.

396 Ibid

397 Op cit, 'Stockpile Management and Security of Small Arms and Light Weapons', p 4.

398 Short Mission Report: SEESAC Consultation in Bulgaria, 08 - 10 July 2002, H Van der Graaf, C Rutherford, SEESAC 2002, <http://www.seesac.org/about/bulg.htm>, referenced 06 October 2003.

399 Weapons Under Scrutiny, Executive Summary.

determined via a competition between students at the Bulgarian National Academy of Fine Art. The monument took the form of a sculpture of a dove made from the destroyed Kalashnikov rifles.⁴⁰⁰ The aim of the project was to draw public attention to the destruction initiative in line with the doctrine that symbolic demonstration of destruction efforts is a major element in building public perceptions of personal security.

Since 1999, the Bulgarian Red Cross has undertaken different activities related to SALW awareness. As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's involvement in the issue of non-proliferation of SALW and addressing the humanitarian aspects of misuse of SALW, the Bulgarian Red Cross has integrated the SALW issue in its campaign against violence. Through publications and media activities, the Bulgarian Red Cross has contributed to raise public awareness about the heavy humanitarian cost, both at home and abroad, of the misuse of SALW. SALW concerns have also been integrated into the Bulgarian Red Cross Programme for Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), involving all aspects of IHL training, including courses and seminars, with and for the Bulgarian military and police forces, military and police missions abroad, public authorities, students, and Red Cross members and staff. With the active participation of the Bulgarian Red Cross, the issue of SALW was addressed at the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross in Geneva in 2003 and was included in the Resolutions adopted by the Conference.

Table 17 – SALW awareness activities

CAMPAIGN AND IMPLEMENTER	DURATION	TARGET GROUP	METHODS	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	DONOR
Bulgarian Red Cross	1999 - ongoing	Bulgarian military and police forces, public authorities, students, Red Cross membership and staff, the general public.	Publications, seminars, roundtables, as part of the Red Cross' Anti-violence campaign.	There are no exact figures on the number of persons reached by this awareness initiative and no evaluation has been carried out.	External donors, including the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, and Bulgarian Red Cross funds

SALW survey activities

A national assessment of existing arms export controls was undertaken by a team of Bulgarian experts from governmental institutions and non-governmental groups from January to May 2003. Building on previous NGO research work on Bulgaria, this new assessment, which was co-ordinated by the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) in collaboration with Saferworld, provided in-depth analysis of the key challenges posed by the Bulgarian arms control system and outlined ways to overcome such problems. The assessment focused on a range of issues, including the implementation of policy and legislation on arms export controls, the mechanisms, routes and circumstances involved in proliferation, trafficking and transport of SALW and the economic impact of stricter

400 'From Small Arms to Peace in Bulgaria', UNDP, http://www.undp.bg/en/homepage_files/salw/monument_of_peace.pdf.

arms export controls on the regions where SALW production is an important source of income. The project was based on continuous partnership between governmental and non-governmental sectors. CSD formed a working group that included experts from the MoD, the MFA, the Ministry of the Interior (Moi), the Ministry of the Economy (MoE), and the University of National and World Economy.⁴⁰¹ However, the assessment of the small arms problem in Bulgaria and policy responses have not included efforts to map the perceptions of key actors, such as the law enforcement community and the general public, nor to shed light on the distribution or impact of SALW in Bulgaria.

Civil Society involvement in SALW interventions

There has been some involvement of civil society in the SALW field, thanks mainly to the work of the Bulgarian Red Cross and the more recent involvement of the Center for the Study of Democracy and the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria. All of these organisations have been involved in organising seminars and roundtable discussions on various aspects of SALW.

On 01 – 02 October 2000, with the assistance of the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT), the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, the Bulgarian Red Cross hosted a regional conference of the Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies from South Eastern Europe on the proliferation of small arms. The meeting discussed the role of the Red Cross Movement as a key driving force in highlighting the humanitarian impact of SALW.⁴⁰² On 07 – 08 March 2002, the Bulgarian Red Cross and Saferworld co-organised a seminar in Sofia on 'Controlling Small Arms Proliferation: The View from Bulgaria'. The seminar was attended by 50 governmental and non-governmental experts from Bulgaria, other European countries and the United States who discussed Bulgaria's official policy on SALW and reviewed amendments to the arms export law and their implications in combating the excessive accumulation and trafficking of SALW. The seminar helped to generate momentum for advocacy, coalition and network building in Bulgaria, in addition to awareness-raising and media coverage.⁴⁰³

On 14 May 2003, a strategy seminar on developing 'A Bulgarian National Programme to Implement Arms Export Controls and Combat Small Arms Proliferation' was hosted by the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria and Saferworld. The meeting highlighted some of the challenges associated with the development and implementation of effective arms export controls in Bulgaria. Participants also discussed the feasibility of a Bulgarian National Action Programme.⁴⁰⁴

On 05 April 2004, the CSD and Saferworld will co-host a seminar in Sofia to coincide with the launch of the research report 'Weapons Under Scrutiny – Implementing Arms Export Controls and Combating Small Arms Proliferation in Bulgaria', which is based on the findings of the national assessment conducted in 2003 (See SALW survey activities above). The meeting will bring together governmental and non-governmental experts, parliamentarians, and practitioners from the law enforcement community.

401 The findings of the national assessment, on which this chapter has drawn significantly, are scheduled for publication by CSD and Saferworld in March 2004. See Civil Society Involvement in SALW interventions below.

402 <http://www.redcross.bg/news.html>

403 Op cit, 'Controlling small arms proliferation: the view from Bulgaria'.

404 'Implementing Arms Export Controls and Combating Small Arms Proliferation in Bulgaria' seminar conclusions, 14 May 2003.

Cross-border SALW control initiatives

Bulgaria participates in a number of regional initiatives tackling cross-border illicit trafficking and organised crime, including Interpol, the European Police Office (Europol), the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, BSEC, the CEI and the SECI Center for Combating Trans-Border Crime. On 17 June 2003, Bulgaria signed a co-operation agreement with Europol in connection with the fight against international organised crime. The agreement will allow Bulgaria to appoint a liaison officer to work at Europol headquarters in The Hague.⁴⁰⁵ Like most of the other agreements between Europol and non-EU countries, the agreement allows for the exchange of personal data and the improvement of strategic links through the appointment of a national contact point and liaison officers.⁴⁰⁶

International and regional co-operation between the police force, the intelligence services and the customs authorities aimed at combating the smuggling of SALW is based on multi- and bi-lateral agreements.⁴⁰⁷ The Bulgarian Customs Agency periodically receives information on stolen firearms from the Interpol National Bureau and this allows the Agency to improve the performance of its duties to combat and prevent illicit arms trafficking.⁴⁰⁸ Bulgarian law enforcement officers exchanged intelligence data on illicit arms trafficking with neighbouring countries during 'Operation Ploughshares', the SECI Center's initiative to tackle SALW trafficking in South Eastern Europe.⁴⁰⁹

There is high-level co-operation between the governments of Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia & Montenegro, Romania and Macedonia on measures to improve border control. Such efforts have led to the creation of a Regional Joint Commission for Border Policing.⁴¹⁰ In April 2003, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers approved new Agreements with Greece and Romania based on the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement.⁴¹¹ The Bulgarian government and the EU have been increasing their focus on security of EU and non-EU borders and border crossings in light of Bulgaria's expected accession to the EU in 2007. Some European governments and the EU have donated equipment and have worked with the MoI in improving the capabilities and the quality of the Border Police. A forthcoming training initiative with the Bulgarian and Macedonian border police forces, supported by the German Bundesgrenzschutz aims to improve services along this crucial border.⁴¹²

405 Europol press release - 17 June 2003.

406 House of Commons, the United Kingdom, European Security, Fifth Report, 09 January 2003.

407 Co-operation between customs authorities takes place on the basis of: Protocol No 6 on Mutual assistance in Customs activity, in accordance with Art. 93 (3) of the Europe Agreement establishing association between the European Commission and the Member States on the one part and the Republic of Bulgaria on the other part (SG No 33/1993, in effect since 01 February 1995); Bi-lateral agreements on international co-operation and mutual assistance in customs activities between Bulgaria and the governments of Austria, Turkey, Greece, Romania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Macedonia, Mongolia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and a MoU with the UK Government. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', pp 7-8.

408 Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 8.

409 According to the data provided to the SECI Center, November 2002 - May 2003, Bulgarian law enforcement authorities seized the following weapons: 46 pistols, 37 hunting guns, 5 small calibre rifles, 21 assault rifles, 3 RPGs, 19 hand grenades and significant quantities of landmines and explosives. Data provided by the SECI Regional Center, June 2003.

410 Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Bulgaria, 08 - 10 July 2002, <http://www.seesac.org/about/bulg.htm>.

411 '2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession', European Commission, p 100.

412 IbidHYPERLINKHYPERLINK

SALW management information and exchange systems and protocols

Bulgaria participates in international information exchange and transparency mechanisms relating to conventional weapons, including the UN Register on Conventional Arms, the Wassenaar Arrangement and information exchanges on SALW within the OSCE. The Law on the Control of Foreign Trade Activity in Arms and in Dual-Use Goods and Technologies provides for an annual report on the implementation of the Law to be submitted by the Council of Ministers to the National Assembly. However, there are no reporting mechanisms that provide the public with information on the authorisation of arms exports and their consignments.⁴¹³ Any information on weaponry, military preparedness, arms deals and defence industrial capacity is classified according to the new Law for the Protection of Classified Information (April 2002).⁴¹⁴ There is very limited publicly available information on sales and exports of SALW and therefore public accountability and monitoring in this field is severely eroded.

Table 18 – Information and exchange progress

INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE SYSTEMS AND PROTOCOLS	BULGARIA
International	
Reporting to the UN DDA on the Programme of Action	Yes
Reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms	Yes
Reporting to other international regimes, if appropriate (eg Wassenaar Arrangement)	Yes
Interpol/Europol	Yes
Regional	
Information exchange with OSCE	Yes
Annual reporting to EU (if relevant)	.415
SECI Regional Centre intelligence exchange	Yes
National	
Transparency – on SALW imports, exports and decision-making	Yes, but quite limited
Publication of national reports on arms/SALW transfers	No
Publication of SALW national strategy	No

Additional SALW-related activities

Developing and implementing a National Action Programme to address comprehensively the small arms problem and assist Bulgaria in developing actions across a range of areas remains high on the agenda for discussions with the Bulgarian Government. Such a programme would boost Bulgaria's credentials as a reliable producer and exporter of arms while joining NATO and seeking membership of the European Union. It

413 According to Dimitar Dimitrov, an Economist at Sofia's University of National and World Economy, 'The spirit of secrecy regarding military and security affairs inherited from the communist era is still strong'. Op cit, 'Disposal of surplus small arms - a survey of policies and practices in OSCE countries', p 98.

414 The lack of regulations on the implementation of the Law is seen as further complicating the matter. Ibid.

415 In March 2003, the Bulgarian Government submitted a report to the EU Working Group on Conventional Arms (COARM) on Bulgaria's progress in implementing its export control system.

would also put Bulgaria at the forefront of the Stability Pact's efforts to tackle SALW in South Eastern Europe. It is envisaged that the main elements of an Action Programme would cover areas including:⁴¹⁶

- Furthering normative and regulatory requirements;
- Strengthening the operational capacity of the government departments and law enforcement agencies to implement and enforce arms controls;
- Overcoming the economic challenges;
- Combating illicit arms trafficking;
- Enhancing public transparency;
- Destruction of surpluses;
- Improving domestic dialogue on export controls;
- Strengthening international co-operation to enhance Bulgaria's capacity to implement and enforce the new arms control policy and normative provisions.

⁴¹⁶ 'Bulgaria's Achievements and Challenges in Implementing Arms Export Controls and Combating Small Arms Proliferation' a seminar organised by Saferworld/Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, in collaboration with the Bulgarian MFA and the UK FCO, Sofia, 14 May 2003, seminar's conclusions.

