

## 4 Regional overview and conclusion

### Regional overview

Section 2 covers the progress made in various areas of SALW control by governments and other actors in the region. A summary of progress across the region by area follows.

### Legislative and regulatory issues

Legislation governing civilian weapons possession is similar in all SEE countries in that a licence is required for the possession of active firearms, and most countries have a two-tier system of application for permit to purchase a weapon, and a subsequent licence to possess and/or carry a weapon is needed. Some action has been taken in this area: Macedonia updated its possession laws recently and the BiH entities, Montenegro and Romania are planning to pass strengthened laws shortly that will greatly improve the current legislation in all countries, and in Romania, bring legislation into line with EU and international standards. However, despite reforms there are still areas of discrepancy and loopholes between countries' legislation, both in terms of the type of weapons possible to possess legally, whether these can be possessed or also carried, and the requirements for a licence.

In terms of legislation governing arms production and transfer, the situation is more problematic, and progress achieved so far is 'largely the result of increased international attention'.<sup>1305</sup> New legislation and regulations in this area have been introduced since 2000 in BiH, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova and Romania, and this has had a positive impact on the level of control exercised over SALW exports from the region. However, gaps remain and legislation in some countries is non-existent or well below international standards. Systems for licensing production and exports vary widely between countries, and regulations currently in place are a long way behind the kind of coherent system of standardised requirements for import, export and transit that will be necessary to effectively implement controls in this area. In addition, the level of implementation of legislative and regulatory controls is unclear due to the lack of information available. There is significant production of SALW, and surplus SALW holdings in the region, and it is to be hoped that initiatives such as the SEESAC Arms Law Process and bi-lateral support from countries such as the UK, Canada and the US will assist the continuing process of bringing legislation and regulatory procedure in this area up to best practice standards.

### SALW transfers

The examples of illicit arms and SALW transfers to embargoed destinations or non-state actors from the region indicate that in some cases control over exports has been weak. As noted above, legislation and implementation in this area needs to be strengthened. It also seems there are questions of capacity involved, as the rather complex area

1305 Interview with Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), 12 February 2004.

of export licensing and compliance with international standards (and commitments) requires not only a good understanding of these systems at the decision-making level, but also effective and informed control by those responsible for implementation on the ground. In addition, there are significant economic factors which need to be taken into account, as particularly in larger arms-producing countries such as Bulgaria and Romania, high levels of unemployment have the potential to influence decisions on export licensing on contracts that would provide arms manufacturing jobs. To avoid such situations, more should be done to facilitate conversion from unprofitable military production to civilian production, a process which is likely to require significant international support.<sup>1306</sup> This notwithstanding, substantial progress has been made in this area in recent years, particularly by Romania and Bulgaria. EU standards and directives have also been incorporated into some domestic legislation, and it is to be hoped that these commitments are effectively implemented in practice, both with regard to domestically-produced SALW, and also surplus SALW that may be slated for sale and export abroad. Transparency and particularly the quality of reporting is a significant problem, and it seems that a number of SALW exports may not have been reported in the appropriate international fora, despite the commitments to reporting made by all SEE countries under various international agreements.

Although SALW trafficking has in general significantly reduced since the end of 'active' conflicts in the region, arms smuggling does continue and the substantial numbers of SALW remaining 'in circulation' have the potential to fuel a further round of violence in SEE if not properly controlled. Alongside the need for more effective control of arms exports, increased capacity and co-ordination of border control agencies, and of police, is required. Steps have been taken in this area: several countries have established anti-trafficking units and regional co-operation is increasing through valuable projects such as the SECI Center SALW Task Force. However, donor funding has tended to focus on 'hot' issues such as drug or people trafficking, or trafficking of more sophisticated weaponry, such as WMD. If the impact of anti-trafficking capacity-building projects is to be maximised, it is crucial that they include components relevant to all the main commodities trafficked, including SALW.

## SALW collection programmes and capacities

Much has been done in this area and efforts undertaken by national governments and international organisations such as the UNDP are significant. Collection in Albania continues, indicating the Government's long-term commitment to addressing the problems of SALW diffusion among its population. SFOR is in the process of handing over responsibility for collection to local authorities or other appropriate institutions in BiH, a very positive move bearing in mind that future responsibilities will lie with the national government, but one that will require substantial capacity-building if it is to be effective and successful. Croatia's amnesty and collection programme ended in 2002 after several years. Although the 'Farewell to Arms' initiative was extremely successful it is to be hoped that the Government will consider further programmes or awareness-raising to address remaining problems with illicit SALW possession. The 45-day amnesty in Macedonia in 2003 was successful in avoiding an increase in inter-ethnic tension and collecting a reasonable number of weapons, also laying the foundations for future work on collection, which it is to be hoped the Government will undertake.

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<sup>1306</sup> 'Managing Defence Industries in Transition: Ensuring Compliance with Export Controls', presentation by Bernardo Mariani, Saferworld, at the Fifth International Conference on Export Controls, held in Budapest, Hungary, 15 - 17 September 2003.

A one-month amnesty in Montenegro in 2003 collected a relatively small total, but put the issue on the Government and public agenda; Serbia also held an amnesty and collection in 2003, and, aided by the political context, the Government collected a substantial number of weapons. It is to be hoped that both republics will undertake more action on collection. In Kosovo, three weapons amnesties have been held since 2001, and KFOR continues to collect weapons through search and seizure activities. The most recent amnesty in 2003, supported by UNDP development incentives, produced very disappointing results, indicating, among other factors, that the political and inter-ethnic tensions related to the unresolved status of the entity continue to pose problems and feed perceptions of insecurity that affect not only Kosovo but the broader sub-region. With all these activities, it must be noted that voluntary collection programmes require long-term commitment in order to be fully successful, and that the results in terms of collected weapons totals are not the only indicator of success: heightened awareness of the dangers of SALW and the steps forward in post-conflict confidence-building are other important areas addressed by weapons collection. It is to be hoped that further weapons collections will be undertaken, based on proper needs assessments and planning, and that they will be supported by effective SALW awareness raising, at the community as well as national levels.

## SALW destruction programmes and capacities

Substantial progress has been made on destruction of SALW and ammunition in SEE and this is an area identified as one where the most progress has been made so far.<sup>1307</sup> Destruction is vitally important both in terms of stockpile safety and in preventing further proliferation through theft from storage sites. It is also a crucial aspect of weapons collection, reinforcing confidence in collection initiatives by permanently removing weapons from circulation. Destruction of SALW continues in Albania, and further funding and international support is required given the size of SALW and unstable ammunition stocks that need to be destroyed. A similar situation exists in BiH, where the large stocks of unsafe ammunition and SALW requiring destruction pose a challenge to relatively limited SFOR personnel resources, which will diminish with scheduled troop reduction. Destruction of collected or seized weapons and ammunition in Kosovo is undertaken by KFOR on an ongoing basis. Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania have made very positive progress on destruction, particularly important due to the countries' large surpluses of SALW and other weapons. It is to be hoped that efforts will continue in these countries to address remaining and increasing surplus resulting from military downsizing. Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro have undertaken limited destruction, primarily of weapons collected through the recent amnesty initiatives. Croatia has also undertaken limited destruction, but it seems that not all the weapons collected through amnesty programmes have been destroyed; it is to be hoped that Croatia will undertake further destruction and increase transparency on activities in this area.

Although substantial action has been taken in the area of SALW destruction, more will be needed as SEE military forces restructure and downsize with the aim of NATO accession. Destruction facilities and at least limited personnel capacities exist in all countries of the region, and it is to be hoped that more emphasis will put on supporting long-term, comprehensive projects and the development of national capacity by the donor community.

<sup>1307</sup> Interview with Dr Vladimir Bilandzic, CSBM Officer, OSCE Mission in Belgrade, 12 February 2004.

## SALW stockpile management programmes and practices

Overall, there is very limited information available on this area across the region and a definite lack of transparency. It does, however, appear that despite some recent improvements, in many countries stockpile management practices are not in accordance with international security and safety standards and that substantial amounts of weaponry are stored in potentially unsafe and insecure conditions.<sup>1308</sup> Governments across the region should begin to take more comprehensive action in this area. In addition to political will and prioritisation, if progress is to be made, more support, both technical and financial, will be needed from the international community.

## SALW awareness activities

To date, awareness-raising on SALW has been undertaken in all SEE countries except Moldova, although only on a limited basis in Romania and Bulgaria. Campaigns and activities to raise awareness of the dangers of SALW and the procedures for voluntary surrender have supported amnesty initiatives in various countries, involving a wide range of actors including NGOs. While the majority are believed to have been successful, it is however hard to assess accurately the impact of the majority of these activities, as no 'baseline' research was conducted before, or after, the awareness raising or public information campaigns.<sup>1309</sup> In addition, the vast majority of the awareness-raising projects undertaken in the region have been associated with SALW collection activities, and therefore time-limited to collection periods. It should be noted that more sustained effort, and mainstreaming of SALW risk education (into education for example), is required to effect real change in perceptions amongst gun owners, as well as their families, and wider society law enforcement agencies, who in some cases do not prioritise strict implementation of laws on possession.

## SALW survey activities

A number of surveys have been carried out in the region recently, adding to the body of knowledge and research on SALW and related problems, and providing a more comprehensive and statistics-based picture of the situation. The Geneva-based NGO the Small Arms Survey has undertaken all of the comprehensive national SALW surveys in the region so far, in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. In co-operation with the Small Arms Survey, SEESAC has also developed standardised SALW survey protocols, which will be used in a forthcoming survey in BiH, to be undertaken by the Bonn International Center for Conversion. Smaller-scale, localised surveys, opinion polls, needs assessments, evaluations and policy-oriented research have also been carried out by a number of other organisations, both local and international, primarily NGOs. It is to be hoped that SALW survey activities will continue to increase the body of knowledge on SALW problems, and progress made, with the aim of better informing SALW control project design and implementation.

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<sup>1308</sup> Sorin Sterie, Representative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, noted at a 2002 workshop, 'we need to improve the management and security of our stockpiles'. Sorin Sterie, Representative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 'Final Report - Regional Workshop on Human Security and Weapons Control in the SEE Countries, Tirana, 4 - 5 April 2002', Rapporteur: Sami Faltas (BICC).

<sup>1309</sup> In 2003, SEESAC developed a standardised approach to SALW awareness-raising, the SALW Awareness Support Pack (SASP), a handbook setting out the principles and procedures for conducting safe and effective SALW awareness campaigns, which is available for use by all actors undertaking awareness-raising, from local NGOs to international organisations and peacekeeping forces.

## Civil Society involvement in SALW interventions

Since 2000, when NGOs and media were primarily only active on SALW control initiatives in Albania, there has been a substantial increase in civil society activity on SALW, and at least limited activities have been undertaken by local media, NGOs or think tanks in all SEE countries, with several continuing to date. The amnesty and collection initiatives in several countries have provided opportunities for NGOs to undertake supporting action, mainly awareness-raising activities, and the media have been crucial to publicising campaigns and providing vehicles for public debate and discussion of SALW collection and proliferation issues. In Bulgaria and Romania, local NGOs in collaboration with Saferworld are playing an important part in promoting a culture of government accountability and transparency on small arms exports. In addition, a number of local NGOs or think tanks have undertaken research, small-scale surveys or assessments on SALW, an important development towards increasing domestic capacity in this area.

A number of capacity-building activities have taken place, including training on SALW for women in Albania in 2003 by a local NGO, training for local NGOs in Kosovo and Macedonia by Saferworld in co-operation with UNDP in 2002 and 2003, training for local NGOs in Montenegro by UNDP in 2003, and for the national Red Cross society in BiH by SEESAC in 2002. In addition, capacity-building of NGOs for SALW work has taken place at the regional level through three seminars organised in 2002 and 2003 by Saferworld. Saferworld, the Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR) and SEESAC have also been active in building the capacity of media to report on SALW in a constructive manner, with training events held in Belgrade in 2002 (SEESAC), Skopje (Saferworld, IWPR and SEESAC) and Sarajevo (Saferworld and IWPR) in 2003. Both media and NGO capacity building programmes are ongoing and further training events and workshops are planned by Saferworld and SEESAC.

At the regional level, great progress has been made in terms of developing co-operation between local NGOs working on SALW issues. A Saferworld-funded meeting in 2002, held under the auspices of the Szeged Small Arms Process, led to the establishment of the SEE NGO SALW Network, now comprising around 50 NGOs. The Szeged Small Arms Process (SSAP), an informal dialogue process or forum focusing on SALW in the region, and including government officials, representatives of international organisations and agencies and local NGOs, has provided opportunities for civil society to discuss these issues with SEE governments through its annual meetings and events held under the SSAP framework since its first meeting in 2000.<sup>1310</sup> Plans are being developed for a fourth annual SSAP meeting focussing on the collaborative mechanisms used by governments and NGOs to work together on SALW in the region.

Regional co-operation continues to develop, both through the SEE NGO SALW Network and through international mechanisms such as IANSA. However, this progress represents the results of coherent efforts over only a few years, and overall civil society capacity to work on SALW, as with other issues, remains low in the region. Limited sources of funding for NGO projects is also a problem; NGOs need to develop greater capacity for project design and proposal-writing, and donors need to become more aware of the need for local civil society action on SALW and allocate resources accordingly. SALW is still largely seen an issue in the 'security sphere', where traditionally civil society action has been extremely limited; the reluctance of many governments to co-operate with

<sup>1310</sup> See Section 1 - Introduction, for more detail.

NGOs on SALW suggests that these views persist and much more work needs to be done to assist governments and civil society to work together.<sup>1311</sup>

The role and value of civil society as a legitimate partner in the process of change, and a vital bridge between state and communities, is still poorly understood by governments and other actors. Although civil society capacity in the region is limited in many ways, some NGOs are developing skills in areas such as policy development, and their contributions should be recognised at the planning as well as implementation stages of SALW control. The nature of the SALW problems in the region requires action by both government and civil society if they are to be successfully addressed.

## Cross-border SALW control initiatives

The recent history of conflict and secession in the region inevitably means that co-operation between many SEE governments on border control has been problematic. There has however been significant progress in this area, and many governments have established positive co-operation on a bi-lateral as well as regional level. The SECI SALW Task Force, as noted above, is a very positive example of co-operation between countries to combat SALW trafficking, and it is to be hoped that the Task Force develops further initiatives and maintains its successes so far. The Ohrid Border Management conference in 2003 also represented an extremely positive step forward, and all actors involved must ensure that the momentum achieved is not lost and that countries do fulfil commitments made in the Way Forward document. Much remains to be done, however, and in many countries the challenges of cross-border co-ordination are made more difficult by a lack of internal co-ordination between different ministries and departments responsible for border control and security.<sup>1312</sup> More attention needs to be paid to this issue, and genuine political will to co-operate will be needed from governments, both at central government and field levels.

## SALW management information and exchange systems and protocols

Although some progress has been made in this area, a great deal remains to be done. All countries co-operate to a certain extent through law enforcement related mechanisms: all have seconded officers to the SECI Regional Center in Bucharest, all are members of Interpol, and all have at least begun negotiations on co-operation agreements with Europol. In terms of actual reporting, progress has been less positive. The first vehicle for regular information exchange on SALW in the region was the OSCE Document, and while all SEE countries have submitted reports to the confidential information-exchange mechanism (including both one-off policy and practice reports and annual reports on exports, imports and number of weapons destroyed), some annual reports due for 2002 are still to be submitted. OSCE sources note that while SEE governments have been generally responsive, there is a 'mixed picture' in terms of quality of reports, as

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<sup>1311</sup> This need has been identified by regional actors, and Saferworld's programme strategy for 2004 includes assistance for the development of improved linkages and co-operation between governments and civil society as a key objective for the NGO's work in SEE.

<sup>1312</sup> Vladimir Bilandzic, an OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues for several years, notes that in general in SEE 'there is no co-ordination among government ministries, and no co-ordinated approach within governments' on SALW issues. Interview with Dr Vladimir Bilandzic, CSBM Officer, OSCE Mission in Belgrade, 12 February 2004.

some include a good level of detail and others only rather 'patchy' information.<sup>1313</sup> SEE countries' reports to the UN DDA within the UN PoA framework have exhibited a similar range of quality, and some countries did not submit 'formal' reports, merely statements or letters. Although all countries have provided some level of information on SALW to the UN or OSCE, as noted above, it is clear that there are still gaps in reporting, and that many SALW exports go unreported, despite commitments to the contrary.

Progress on public transparency has to date been poor, and substantial problems still exist. Official information on SALW is difficult to find, no governments have full parliamentary oversight on SALW policy development and export decision-making, and Romania was the first, and only, SEE country to publish an annual report on arms exports in 2003. There is a great need for increased transparency on SALW and this should be a key priority for countries in the region. There is equally a need for NGO and parliamentary lobbying for increased transparency on SALW from governments, as such activities have been only minimal so far.<sup>1314</sup> As Stability Pact officials note, 'transparency is of key importance in SALW control',<sup>1315</sup> more support and capacity-building for reporting is needed, and more official information on SALW should be made public. There is for example, a strong case for publication of the OSCE information exchange submissions,<sup>1316</sup> and for increased transparency on SALW production. Exports are a 'key issue' and 'we must be aware who is producing what as this is not [currently] obvious – a lot more transparency is needed'.<sup>1317</sup>

## Integration of SALW into broader justice and development programmes

The multi-faceted problems related to SALW proliferation require a variety of measures and approaches if they to be effectively combated. The integration of SALW into broader processes and programmes of security sector reform and governance is vital in this regard, and in general, only very limited attempts to do this have been undertaken so far in the region. The main project linking SALW to these areas is ongoing in Albania, where the UNDP's current SSSR project is building on its previous SALW projects to support improvement of security and arms control through community policing.<sup>1318</sup> Despite the many opportunities to incorporate SALW issues into current judicial, border control and community policing reform projects, little integration has been achieved so far in SEE, and this is an area which requires much more attention, both from governments and the international community.

1313 Kate Joseph, former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues, states: 'SEE governments have been generally responsive in providing their submissions, but there is substantial variation within the region. Some states report regularly and in full, while others have only submitted patchy responses which are a bit thin in places. It is also important that momentum and political attention is maintained, in spite of the fact that the OSCE Document is now over three years old'. Interview with Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), 12 February 2004.

1314 Interviews with Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), and Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader, 12 February 2004.

1315 Sorin Sterie of the Stability Pact noted at the a SALW workshop in 2002, 'transparency is of key importance in SALW control. SALW should be added to the UN register of Conventional Arms - we need to improve our ability to trace arms to their source and in doing so to expose any unlawful dealings... even sales of government stocks can cause problems'. Sorin Sterie, Representative of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe, 'Final Report - Regional Workshop on Human Security and Weapons Control in the SEE Countries, Tirana, 4 - 5 April 2002', Rapporteur: Sami Faltas (BICC).

1316 Interview with Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), 12 February 2004.

1317 Interview with Jiri Kalashnikov, Expert - Working Table III, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 13 February 2004.

1318 See Section 2 - Albania for more details.

## Conclusion

The assessment of SALW control activities undertaken in SEE confirms that there has been some good progress in many of the areas detailed in the Stability Pact RIP since its adoption in November 2001. The agreement of the RIP and establishment of SEESAC, alongside other developments and actors in the region, have had a very positive impact on SALW control activities in SEE and much has been achieved in recent years.

A number of SEE governments have made important progress in terms of SALW control, and have given increased prioritisation to SALW-related problems. Civil society is now also much more aware of the possibilities and opportunities for contributing to SALW control initiatives, and many are now focusing and active on the issue. The establishment of SEESAC in the region, with a mandate to work actively in the region, is seen as 'a big success story',<sup>1319</sup> and has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to practical progress on SALW in SEE. While the OSCE Document and UN PoA helped to focus attention on the small arms issues on a broader level, the RIP 'brought home to the local actors that this is indeed a problem in the region',<sup>1320</sup> and governments are now aware that SALW is an issue which needs to be on their agenda. The SEESAC Team Leader notes that since the RIP and establishment of SEESAC, there has been an increase in 'political sensitisation' and that knowledge of SALW issues is much greater among governments, international organisations and agencies and the general public.<sup>1321</sup>

One of the key areas where SEESAC has assisted progress is in terms of co-ordination between governments and the numerous SALW actors in the international community. However, a review of activities and informed sources confirm that much could still be improved in terms of co-ordination.<sup>1322</sup> BICC notes that given the close historical links between the countries of the region 'initiatives to control the proliferation of SALW must have a regional dimension', but that this does not happen enough. While 'political initiatives – often originating from outside the region – are plentiful, there seems to be a lack of regional coordination among grassroots initiatives'.<sup>1323</sup> Particularly in terms of anti-trafficking and border control activities, co-ordination is essential as independent reforms and improved implementation will not have maximum impact without corresponding and harmonised measures being taken by neighbouring states; the same applies to export and transit controls on arms. As Macedonian Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski commented in relation to efforts to combat organised crime, 'We can confront the criminals only with a successful coalition of governments'.<sup>1324</sup>

Although SEE governments have to take responsibility for this lack of co-ordination, fault also lies with the international community, which needs to invest more time and effort into developing more co-ordinated responses and more strategic allocation of funding and technical assistance.<sup>1325</sup> There is also a lack of linkage with other initiatives in

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1319 Interview with Jiri Kalashnikov, Expert - Working Table III, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 13 February 2004.

1320 Interview with Dr Vladimir Bilandzic, CSBM Officer, OSCE Mission in Belgrade, 12 February 2004.

1321 Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader, 12 February 2004.

1322 Interview with Dr Vladimir Bilandzic, CSBM Officer, OSCE Mission in Belgrade, 12 February 2004.

1323 BICC Conversion Survey 2002, pp 141-2.

1324 At the Ohrid Border Management Conference, 22 - 23 May 2003. 'Balkan Border Issues Tackled', Evridika Saskova, Balkan Crisis Report No 433, 30 May 2003.

1325 Interviews with Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), and Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader, 12 February 2004.

related areas, such as organised crime and anti-terrorism activities,<sup>1326</sup> and a need to integrate SALW properly into broader post-conflict and development programmes. As contacts noted, in light of the key role and leverage the EU has in SEE, the EU in particular should devote more attention to including SALW into their discussions with countries on achieving accession standards, including SALW in training packages for customs and providing more specific standards and assistance for legislative reform on arms control laws.<sup>1327</sup> In addition, SALW initiatives need to be integrated into the substantial judicial and home affairs programmes, such as CARDS, being undertaken by the EU. There is a need for 'much greater regional coordination both within the EU and between the EU member states and the countries of South-eastern Europe', as although some governments have endorsed EU policy, 'actual measures to combat proliferation of SALW in the region vary from country to country'.<sup>1328</sup>

Part of the problem appears to be the lack of consistency of individuals in key appointments responsible for SALW, as staff changes in both international organisations and government are relatively frequent. A parallel problem is the fact that there is often a lack of knowledge of the issue, and 'higher-level decision-making with a fundamental lack of understanding of SALW problems in countries or the region'.<sup>1329</sup> The system of National SALW Focal Points established by the Stability Pact for example, is described as a 'weak point' in the RIP framework<sup>1330</sup> and has proved problematic, with many focal points changing, or comprising whole departments rather than individuals. The result is inconsistent attendance at Regional Steering Group meetings and a poor level of participation from the focal points who do attend.<sup>1331</sup> The organisation of a high-level review conference for the RIP was suggested as a step which might go some way in helping to address this problem.<sup>1332</sup> Whatever action is taken, participating governments must be alerted to the need for more consistent and active input to the RSG, and the general need for continued progress towards meeting their commitments under the RIP.

It seems that some governments have yet to fully prioritise the issue, and challenges to committed action remain when governments are faced with multiple priorities or are overly reliant on the international community to initiate action. Contacts note that there is still a lack of genuine political will at senior levels in SEE countries, as well as a lack of coherent political direction and strategic policy making, and this obviously has a negative impact on effective action to combat SALW problems.<sup>1333</sup> In addition to more efforts on the part of the international community, including key actors such as SEESAC, UNDP and OSCE, to fully engage with SEE governments on SALW issues, the governments themselves must take responsibility to fulfil the commitments they have made under the Stability Pact, OSCE and UN frameworks. In this regard, the increasing activities of civil society aimed at encouraging government action on SALW, and holding governments to account, represent a vitally important role in moving the

1326 Interview with Jiri Kalashnikov, Expert - Working Table III, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 13 February 2004.

1327 Interview with Dr Vladimir Bilandzic, CSBM Officer, OSCE Mission in Belgrade, and Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), 12 February 2004.

1328 BICC Conversion Survey 2002, p 141.

1329 Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader, 12 February 2004.

1330 Interview with Jiri Kalashnikov, Expert - Working Table III, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 13 February 2004.

1331 This is in marked contrast to other regions - including for instance, the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, where national focal points have been key to the development and implementation of successful sub-regional action to address SALW problems.

1332 Interview with Dr Vladimir Bilandzic, CSBM Officer, OSCE Mission in Belgrade, 12 February 2004.

1333 Interviews with Kate Joseph, Regional Liaison Specialist, UNDP/BCPR SADU (former OSCE CSBM Officer responsible for SALW issues), and Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader, 12 February 2004.

SALW agenda in the region forward. As well as significant achievements so far in areas such as awareness-raising and research, local civil society work on the policy level, still at an early stage of development, will be key to creating longer-term, indigenous commitment to combating SALW problems. Donors such as NATO, the OSCE, UNDP and EU as well as bi-lateral governments, have provided substantial assistance for government-implemented, and to a lesser extent NGO-implemented, SALW projects and helped to realise important progress that would very likely have been impossible without their support; however, increased support is needed if this progress is to be maintained and built upon.

In general, it is crucial that momentum is maintained to ensure that the SALW issue is a priority for regional governments and civil society and international donors and organisations alike. Paul Eavis, the Director of Saferworld notes, 'the key goal for South Eastern Europe must be keeping the momentum for action on SALW firmly on the agenda. This will require strengthened capacities nationally and regionally, improved ways of working across governments, and the development of programmes integrating small arms work into the broader governance and peace building agendas'.<sup>1334</sup> SALW cannot be tackled as a 'stand alone' problem: while efforts to reduce weapons trafficking are fundamental to enhancing security, successful collection processes, combined with effective destruction and stockpile management policy are also crucial to reducing trafficking and illegal SALW circulation. Equally, decommissioning and SALW awareness-raising and education, properly integrated into peace-building, post-conflict recovery and security sector reform processes, will be necessary to reduce the 'demand side' of SALW problems in the region. The integration of SALW into wider processes of development, governance and security will be vital if long-term and holistic measures to combat the problem are to be developed and implemented.

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<sup>1334</sup> Correspondence with Paul Eavis, Director, Saferworld, 15 February 2004.