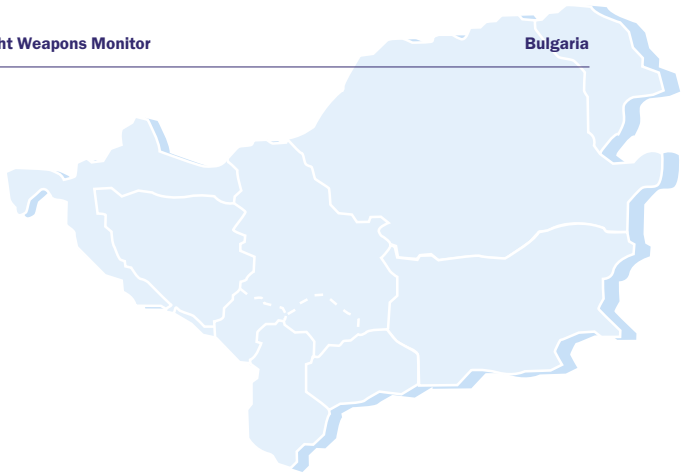


Bulgaria



1 Small Arms and Light Weapons problem

SALW issues remain highly relevant for Bulgaria even though it has not experienced internal SALW proliferation to the same degree as its Western Balkan neighbours. The country faces a number of unresolved challenges in controlling SALW, many of which can be traced back to the Communist era when Bulgaria maintained a large standing army and the defence industry was a mainstay of the national economy.

The decline of the Bulgarian defence industry and the simultaneous restructuring of the nation's security forces and administration that followed the end of Communism have meant that, while SALW production capabilities have gradually reduced, stocks of surplus SALW have grown. Further, although Bulgaria's SALW production capacity is now much reduced in comparison to a decade ago, with only 8,000 - 9,000 persons directly employed, the privatisation of defence industries has led to the emergence of many smaller companies and has placed an increased burden on the system for regulating arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

These changes have occurred against a backdrop of increasing physical and economic insecurity for the country's citizens, and have been a leading factor in producing higher levels of civilian fire arms possession. Furthermore, in 2004 there were approximately 3,000 registered private security companies operating in Bulgaria, employing close to 130,000 security guards. Most of these guards are former or current police and army officers who can easily obtain a license and purchase a firearm at a preferential price. This practice continues because the current laws do not prohibit the use of weapons licensed for personal protection by security guards.¹

At the same time, craft producers are thought to operate in the country, contributing to an overall pool of anywhere between 93,000 and 259,000 illegal SALW.² The sources for illicit weapons are thought to include re-modelling of 'gas-spray' guns and thefts from households, factories and military depots.

¹ Mol, 5 August 2004. <http://press.mvr.bg/News/news040805_01.htm>, accessed 10 August 2004.

² This figure represents an estimate of all unregistered firearms in the country and includes the Mol estimate of 40,000 units entering the black market over the past five years; as quoted in *Taming the Arsenal – SALW control in Bulgaria*, Rynn, Gounev and Jackson, UNDP, 2005, p 16.

In addition, despite significant improvements in border management in the past three years, corruption and a lack of equipment have left Bulgaria susceptible to cross-border SALW smuggling. Although the numbers of SALW being trafficked through Bulgaria's borders are comparatively low (far more stolen cars and drug consignments are intercepted), illicit shipments of SALW are continually intercepted at all crossing points.³ Outstanding border control problems include a lack of equipment at crossing points (even at major sites such as the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas) and low staffing levels in relation to the large volume of traffic.⁴ A recent report into the incidence of corruption amongst some customs officials and border guards might also contribute to an environment where SALW can be illegally trafficked.⁵

Although the Bulgarian Government has so far destroyed around 100,000 surplus SALW with the assistance of international donors, the Bulgarian Armed Forces still hold around 200,000 surplus SALW and 21,000 tons of surplus SALW ammunition.⁶ The disposal of these stocks poses an ongoing challenge given the country's international commitments. The continuing downsizing of the armed forces, in line with the requirements of NATO membership, means that surplus stocks are likely to increase further in the near future.

A final challenge faced by the Bulgarian Government is that of increasing domestic transparency with respect to the arms trade. Although government officials are generally willing to provide information, they feel constrained by the provisions of the Law on Protection of Classified Information. The effect is a serious curtailment of Bulgarian citizens' rights to obtain information relating to SALW. The long-awaited publication of the country's first ever arms export-import report, now expected in 2005, should shed welcome light in this area.

2 Small Arms policy and practice

The domestic and international dimensions of arms control in Bulgaria have evolved along two different trajectories over the last decade. The laws on civilian fire arms possession have been gradually liberalised since the early 1990s, leaving some 305,624 registered weapons in the hands of 249,882 civilians across Bulgaria as of 2003.⁷ Although hunters and businesses also now possess firearms on a significant scale, the single largest increase in ownership has been among citizens applying for 'self-defence' licenses. A sizeable internal legal market for firearms now exists and is supplied by some 269 registered gun shops situated across the country.⁸

³ 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>, accessed 13 April 2005.

⁴ *Weapons Under Scrutiny*, Centre for the Study of Democracy and Saferworld, 2004, Gounev et al., Chapter 3.

⁵ US Department of State, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27830.htm>>, accessed 03 May 2005. In October 2002, Bulgarian customs officers intercepted a shipment of dual-use Bulgarian-made tractor components destined for Iraq. The police investigation uncovered that the export channel involving TEREM had been operating for about six years and also included the export of 50 tank engines to Syria. The company in question was the state-owned Targovishte branch of TEREM EAD facility. In October 2003, the current and former CEOs of the privately owned Beta-Cherven Briag were briefly detained and charged with illegal exports of parts for the 122 mm Gvozdika self-propelled howitzer to Sudan along with an unlicensed broker from RIK Co. Beta had allegedly delivered 18 howitzers to Sudan in the preceding years and had continued to export from 22–29 November 2001, seven months after the Bulgarian Government had joined the EU embargo against Sudan. *Capital*, 18 October 2003. The system's flaws were once again highlighted by the publication of the Iraq Survey Group's Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in September 2004, which drew attention to the multiple examples where Bulgarian companies had been involved in the transfer of ADGT to the Iraqi regime in contravention of a UN embargo. *Iraq Survey Group report*, p 114, 137 & 138.

⁶ *Taming the Arsenal - SALW control in Bulgaria*, 2005, p 10, 99, 100.

⁷ *Taming the Arsenal - SALW control in Bulgaria*, 2005, p 5.

⁸ Mol data, 2004.

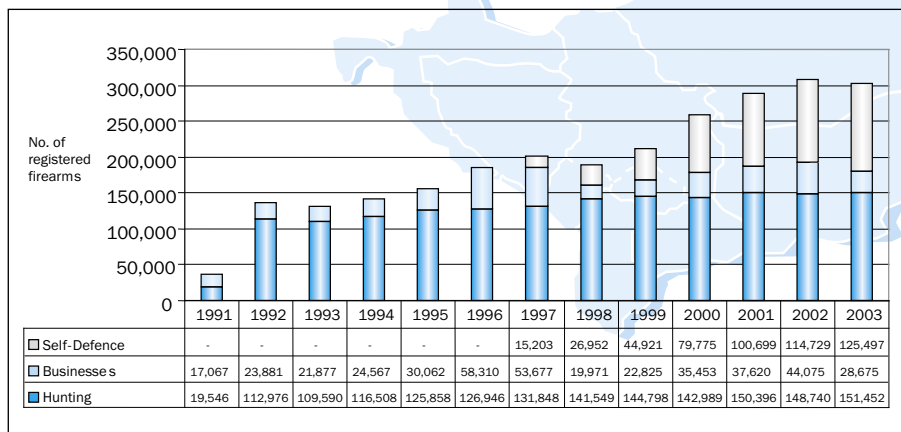


Figure 1: Number of registered firearms in Bulgaria

Source: Ministry of Interior, National Police Service.

At the same time, the country has moved from a relatively permissive arms and dual-use goods transfer control regime, which allowed arms transfers to reach highly sensitive destinations throughout the 1990s, to a framework that is broadly consistent with EU and international norms. The Government's commitment to uphold a '...consistent and responsible policy of export control'⁹ has been demonstrated by its alignment with, and participation in, the main international mechanisms for SALW control. In August 1998 Bulgaria formally aligned itself to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, thereby committing itself to abide by all guidelines, decisions and positions relating to arms transfers taken by the EU. In December 1998 a further commitment was made to the EU Joint Action on SALW.¹⁰ Bulgaria signed the OSCE Document on SALW in November 2000¹¹ and in 2002 the Council of Ministers also adopted a 'Decision for the Approval of the UN PoA', requiring government institutions to appoint a point of contact to facilitate implementation of the Programme.¹² In April 2001 a 'consolidated list' of countries and organisations to which transfers of arms and dual-use goods are prohibited or restricted was introduced.¹³ The list provides the basis for Bulgaria's adoption of EU, UNSC and OSCE resolutions and decisions on arms transfer control.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ EU Joint Action of 17 December 1998 on the EU's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons (1999/34/CFSP).

¹¹ FSC.DOC/1/00, 24 November 2000.

¹² On 07 March 2002, the Council of Ministers adopted a Government 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. Since the Programme was adopted, Bulgaria has submitted two annual progress reports to the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs. <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/salw-nationalreports.html>>, accessed 23 November 2004.

¹³ The List was established by a Decree of the Council of Ministers. List of countries and organisations, towards which the Republic of Bulgaria applies prohibitions or restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and related equipment in accordance with UNSC resolutions and decisions of the EU and the OSCE, SG 34/2001.

Table 1: Arms transfer control instruments pertaining to SALW, to which Bulgaria is a party

ARMS OR SALW CONTROL AGREEMENT	BULGARIA'S COMMITMENTS
Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan	November 2001 ¹⁴
UN Programme of Action	July 2001
UN Firearms Protocol	February 2002 ¹⁵
OSCE Document on Small Arms	November 2000 ¹⁶
OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition	December 2003
EU Code of Conduct	August 1998
EU Joint Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons	December 1998 ¹⁷
Wassenaar Arrangement	July 1996 ¹⁸

2.1 S ALW production

Bulgarian defence facilities have long been associated with a range of military and civilian SALW, ranging from handguns to assault rifles, mortars, mines, rocket launchers as well as explosives and ammunition. However, with the disappearance of traditional markets in the 1990s, the SALW industry has contracted to the point where it makes up a small proportion of the national economy, earning an estimated US\$60 million in an economy worth US\$20 billion.¹⁹ The number of workers employed in the production of SALW has shrunk from around 100,000 persons (in the 1990s) to 8 - 9,000 (in 2004).²⁰ The companies that currently retain a SALW or ammunition production capacity are Arsenal, VMZ, Arcus, Dunarit, EMCO, NITI and two branches of the MoD-owned TEREM Company. Ammunition producers aside, the only three significant SALW producers at the present time appear to be Arcus, Arsenal and VMZ. Many SALW and ammunition production lines are now inactive for long periods until orders arrive.²¹

¹⁴ 'Regional Statement of Support For the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan', Budapest, 27 November 2001, <<http://www.stabilitypact.org/salw/reg-statement-support.doc>>

¹⁵ The Protocol was ratified by the National Assembly on 19 June 2002 and the instrument of ratification was deposited on 6 August 2002. 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.

¹⁶ FSC.DOC/1/00, 24 November 2000. The Council of Ministers approved the OSCE Document on 1 February 2001. See BICC/BASIC/Saferworld/SAS, Op cit, p 106.

¹⁷ EU Joint Action of 17 December 1998 on the EU's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons (1999/34/CFSP).

¹⁸ Bulgaria was an early member of the Wassenaar Arrangement, joining in July 1996. <<http://www.wassenaar.org/docs/History.html>>, accessed 15 April 2005.

¹⁹ MoE, <<http://www.mi.government.bg>>, accessed 14 April 2005.

²⁰ See for example, Kiss, October 2004, p16.

²¹ Interview with Arsenal workers following FGD, Kazanlak, October 2004.

Table 2: SALW producers²²

COMPANY	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	TYPE OF SALW PRODUCTS	TOTAL REVENUES (MILLION US\$)
Arsenal	4,465	A full range of civilian and military small arms and ammunition; a wide range of light weapons and ammunition	45.0 (2004) ²³
NITI	163	Small arms (hand-gun -SPS, hunting rifle- Mazalat), anti-tank mines, rubber-bullets	0.9 (2001)
Arcus	3,000	Pistols, revolvers, fuses for light weapons ammunition, ammunition for small arms and for light weapons.	32.2 (est. 2004) ²⁴
VMZ	3880	Artillery and light weapons ammunition, RPGs launchers, MANPADS ²⁵	22.3 (2001)
Dunarit	700	Artillery ammunition: 82 mm; 57mm-air-defence ammunition; 81mm-mortar ammunition	6.2 (2002)
Optiko-electron	786	Sights for small arms and for light weapons	2.5 (2002)
TEREM-Veliko Tarnovo Branch	383	Hunting rifle 7.62 calibre, spare parts for small arms	2.7 (2003)
TEREM-Kostenetz	118	Repair of light weapons and small arms ammunition. Manufacture of smoke grenades.	1.6 (2003)
Bendida 99	c. 20	Hunting arms ammunition	0.2
Ripelon	c. 20	Hunting arms ammunition	0.3

The Bulgarian defence sector has suffered a drastic decline over the last decade or so despite continued attempts to privatise and/or convert to alternative production lines. A lack of technical expertise, international quality standards and investment in the research and development needed to produce high-technology weapons have also left factories over-dependent on the production of low technology goods such as SALW.

3 Small Arms progress

3.1 Legislative and regulatory issues

Weapons production, acquisition, possession, use and the domestic trade in weapons are regulated by the 1999 'Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Firearms and Ammunition' (L CESFA), last amended in September 2003. According to the L CESFA,

²² Sources: MoD, 'Defence Industrial Co-operation', Sofia 2003, p 53-75; Financial data for NITI, Dunarit, TEREM-Veliko Tarnovo, TEREM Kostenetz and VMZ is taken from the official website of the Bulgarian Privatisation Agency <<http://www.priv.government.bg>>. Information on Bendida and Ripelon is based on National Statistical Institute data.

²³ Sega, 12 October, 2004.

²⁴ Dnevnik, 30 April, 2004.

²⁵ The company has ceased production of MANPADS for the time being due to the risks that these weapons pose. Interview with company employee, 26 May 2004.



VIP Trading Gun Store in Sofia.

production and internal trade may only be conducted by legal business entities that have obtained a permit from the Ministry of Interior. Civilians are required to obtain separate permits for the possession and carriage of weapons. Handguns are permitted for 'self-defence' and rifles for those who obtain a hunting licence. Although the permit application system is complex - including training, testing and the requirement to submit a range of documentation - the standards are much more relaxed for current and former employees of the MoI and MoD, who account for a substantial number of gun owners.

The legal foundation for Bulgaria's arms and dual-use goods transfer control system is the 1995 'Law on Control of Foreign Trade Activity in Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies' (LCFTADGT), which was last amended in July 2002. The LCFTADGT provides for a two-tier control system whereby companies, brokers²⁶ and shipping companies must first obtain a licence to trade before applying for permits for particular transfers. Trading licences are issued by an Interministerial Council – the Interministerial Council on the Issues of Military Industrial Complex and the Mobilisation Preparedness of the Country – chaired by the Minister of Economy and by the Minister of Defence. Arms and dual-use goods permit applications are considered on a case-by-case basis by a second body - the Interdepartmental Commission on Export Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Interdepartmental Commission) – chaired by the Minister of Economy. Since there is no legal basis for pre- or post-scrutiny of licensing decisions by the National Parliament, the Interdepartmental Commission has the final say on issuing transfer permits. Additional controls include the following:

- Companies licensed to trade in arms and dual-use goods must designate a senior employee to take responsibility for each transaction's compliance with the law and must keep a register of their transactions;
- All transfers require an additional permit from the Control on Hazardous Devices Office of the National Police Service;
- Those companies owned by the MoD are obliged to obtain personal approval for all transactions from the Minister of Defence;
- Intelligence agencies within the MoI and the MoD monitor the activities of companies trading in arms and advise the Interministerial Council;
- The National Border Police Service and the Customs Agency may inspect particular shipments at border crossings.

²⁶ In July 2002, the National Assembly passed major amendments to the LCFTADGT introducing controls over arms brokering and new provisions to improve the identification of end-users.

Table 3: Features of Bulgaria's legislative and regulatory framework

FEATURES OF LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	BULGARIA
NATIONAL	
National Co-ordinating Agency on SALW	Partial (coordination of arms transfers only) ²⁷
National Point of Contact	Yes ²⁸
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	
Diversion risk	Yes
End User Certificate	Yes ²⁹
Re-transfers	Yes
Verification (pre/post)	Yes, post-shipment ³⁰
Brokering Controls	Yes
DOMESTIC POSSESSION, TRADE AND STOCKPILING	
Manufacture	Yes
Marking and Tracing	Yes ³¹
Possession	Yes
Stockpiling	Yes
Trade	Yes

²⁷ 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, the 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'.

²⁸ The Director of the NATO and International Security Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 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.

²⁹ Every transaction requires an end-user certificate. The exporting company or broker needs to provide a certificate obtained by the end-user from its own national authorities. This certificate is verified by the Ministry of Economy, the MFA, the MoI and the MoD.

³⁰ The Commission requires a certificate (Delivery Verification Certificate - DVC) 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 due to limited resources.

³¹ 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 compliance with Bulgaria's NATO compatibility requirements, all arms and ammunition of the Bulgarian armed forces will need to bear the standard marking for NATO armaments. This is likely to become the standard for the production of all Bulgarian defence companies.

3.2 SALW transfers

According to a public statement by the Deputy Minister of Economy, Bulgarian arms exports earned the country €90 million in 2003.³² Judged by global standards, this makes Bulgaria a small player in the estimated US\$4 billion annual world market for SALW.³³ The only two companies known to be exporting SALW and ammunition at the present time are Arsenal and Arcus. A review of publicly available information on Bulgaria's recent SALW exports reveals that the country's biggest trading partners currently include India, Iraq, Afghanistan and Jordan.³⁴

The contemporary Bulgarian arms transfer control regime is a considerable improvement on that of the 1990s, when the country was identified as the source of a series of arms transfers to sensitive destinations including conflict zones such as Angola, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Burundi. These transfers constituted a sufficiently grave infringement of international arms control norms to attract heavy criticism from a UN Panel of Experts.³⁵ Although past practices fell far short of international standards, a recent SALW Survey, 'Taming the Arsenal – SALW control in Bulgaria', has concluded that the occurrence of large-scale (official) illicit SALW transfers appears to be a thing of the past.³⁶ Nevertheless, a number of potentially problematic sales may have occurred from 2001-2003 to destinations such as Colombia, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Saudi Arabia³⁷. In August 2004 a sale of 2,500 boxes of mortar shells to Georgia was authorised despite there being a number of unresolved internal conflicts in that country.³⁸ However, it is not possible to make a definitive judgement on these cases without the type of detailed information that might be included in a national arms export report (e.g. on types of weapons transferred and end-use guarantees received).

A final issue of concern is the incomplete implementation of the LCFTADGT's requirement for companies transporting arms and dual-use goods, or providing financial or consulting

³² See SALW Monitor, 23 August 2004. Government officials have previously stated that the country's SALW exports earned US\$ 30m in 2002. Hirst *et al.*, 2003, p 71. Reference to interviews with government officials, 05 October 2003.

³³ The Small Arms Survey estimates the global value and volume of small arms production for the year 2000 at US\$7.4 billion (SAS, 2002, p15) This figure includes military small arms, commercial firearms and ammunition for both of these. This estimate is presented as a 'very tentative' approximation, and has not been improved upon in subsequent yearbooks. See also SAS, 2003, p 97.

³⁴ See for example, <<http://82.199.164/nisat1/publicquery.aspx>>, accessed 10 April 2005; and <<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/comtrade/default.aspx>>, accessed 10 April 2005.

³⁵ 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'. '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. 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. 'Final Report of the Monitoring Mechanism on Angola Sanctions', S/2000/1225, <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanction/angola/0012rprt.htm>>, paragraph 54. The weapons were supplied on the basis of end-user certificates listing Togo as the country of final destination. See also Chasa, 23 March 2000 (in Bulgarian) and Human Rights Watch, 1 April 1999 <<http://hrw.org/press/1999/apr/bulg0401.htm>>, accessed on 27 October 2004.

³⁶ Gounev *et al.*, Chapter 3.

³⁷ Report of the Interdepartmental Commission on Export Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (2002-2003); Published in Zoya Dimintrova, "Arms Exports Fall by 18 million euros in One Year", *Politika*, 18-25 March 2005.

³⁸ 'Bulgaria and US brought into Georgian conflict', *Novinite*, 6 August 2004; 'Bulgarian officials confirm arms supplies to Georgia', *BNN*, 7 August 2004.

services to other firms to obtain a trading licence.³⁹ In early 2005 only a small number of transport companies involved in the arms trade (Bulgaria Air, Bulgarian Maritime Company and Bulgaria State Railways) were registered to do so. Other omissions apparently include road haulage firms and forwarding, financial and consulting companies since no licences had been issued for these activities at that time.

3.3 S ALW collection programmes and capacities

In 1990 an amnesty law was passed allowing anyone possessing unregistered firearms, ammunition or explosives to hand them in without fear of prosecution.⁴⁰ Since that time, regional police departments have administered two temporary weapons collections during periods of political tension (1992 and 1994). After these apparently successful collections, the weapons were subsequently returned to their owners. In June 2002 Nonka Matova, a Member of Parliament, submitted a draft law proposing a further amnesty for those holding unregistered weapons. The proposal did not meet with success and was never voted on. Ms Matova renewed her attempt to introduce an amnesty law in late 2004, but as government agencies argued that an amnesty would need to be accompanied by a large and possibly costly collection and awareness campaign, the draft law stalled again.

3.4 S ALW destruction programmes and capacities

As noted above, Bulgaria has sizeable stocks of surplus SALW and ammunition (approximately 200,000 weapons and 21,000 tonnes of SALW ammunition), held primarily by the army. Following an agreement reached with the US Government in 2001, the Bulgarian armed forces have destroyed around 96,000 SALW and 6,700,000 rounds of ammunition.⁴¹ The MoD has since destroyed a further 4,500 AK-74 rifles, 750,000 rounds of 5.45mm small arms ammunition and 2,475 rounds of high explosive anti-tank ammunition in July 2003 with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).⁴²

The Bulgarian Government signalled a particular interest in questions surrounding the disposal of ammunition surpluses by tabling a UN General Assembly Draft Resolution on 'Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus' in October 2004.⁴³ On 4 March 2004 Bulgaria's Council of Ministers approved a MoD document entitled 'The National Programme for Recycling and Destruction of Surplus Ammunition on the Territory of Republic of Bulgaria.'⁴⁴ The document sets out a national plan for the destruction of around 50% of surplus ammunition stocks on grounds of age or a possible safety hazard. In addition to detailing existing surpluses, the document lists nine separate defence facilities that are capable of destroying surplus ammunition by various means. A number of gaps are identified in the programme document's survey of national destruction capacities, including an inability to meet current environmental standards, the

³⁹ *Taming the Arsenal*, p 35.

⁴⁰ Amnesty Law, from March 28, 1990, State Gazette No. 30 from 13 April 1990.

⁴¹ Gounev *et al.*, p 46.

⁴² Georgiev, 3-4 November 2004.

⁴³ The resolution, 59/515 (A/C.1/59/L.48), was adopted without a vote on 14 October 2004. < <http://disarmament.un.org:8080/vote.nsf>>, accessed 17 May 2005.

⁴⁴ The programme was submitted on 9 March to the National Parliament. Since it was first considered on 18 March by the Foreign Relations, Defence and Security Committee, the programme has been retained for further consideration by the Committee.

use of out of date technology, inappropriate destruction techniques and limited recycling capacities.

Although no national programme for SALW destruction currently exists, the Government of Bulgaria continues to seek funding for further destruction from foreign donors on a bilateral basis.⁴⁵ In December 2004 a joint delegation from the UK's Joint Arms Control Implementation Group (JACIG) and SEESAC made an assessment visit to MoD storage sites.⁴⁶ Yet, despite commitments made under the OSCE Document on SALW,⁴⁷ the Bulgarian Government has declared a preference for the sale rather than destruction of surplus weapons, whether on the national or international market.

3.5 SALW stockpile management programmes and capacities

The army's storage standards are set out in military regulations, which are in turn informed by those of NATO and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). These include standards for the location, construction, maintenance, security and record keeping of stockpiles. Although reserve and surplus weapons are stored at seventeen depots across the country, current Army policy is to move all SALW surpluses to the 137th Central Storage and Technical Maintenance Base (CSTMB), under the supervision of the General Staff's Logistic Command in the city of Veliko Tarnovo.⁴⁸ The Army General Staff has been overseeing the introduction of 'Integrated Alarm Systems' in arms warehouses and stores since 1997 and hopes to have all stores electronically monitored by 2007.

Although security at the CSTMB appears satisfactory,⁴⁹ periodic thefts from active military units have shown that other stores are not managed as effectively. The problem appears to have been at its worst several years ago at the height of military restructuring when SALW were regularly being moved to new military bases around the country without close supervision or detailed inventories.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the number of thefts reported by the military has fallen fairly consistently from 1996 (22 cases), to 2002 (5 cases).⁵¹

The Military Police and the MoD's Military Counterintelligence Service are jointly tasked with preventing stockpile thefts.⁵² The problems facing these agencies in their work include the lack of a centralised electronic accounting system, low salaries and chronic corruption

⁴⁵ Reference on the Main Projects for the Modernisation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, <http://www.mod.government.bg/_bg_/docs/spravka_prj_15_07.htm>, accessed 21 July 2004. Also, interviews, Lowder, 23 September 2004; Broid, 21 September 2004.

⁴⁶ Interview, Adrian Wilkinson, Head SEESAC, 06 December 2004.

⁴⁷ The Document states that destruction rather than sale is the preferred method of disposal for all member states.

⁴⁸ This site was designated in accordance with the requirements of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty as the facility to which surplus SALW will be transported for storage and destruction.

⁴⁹ Interview, Wilkinson, 03 December 2004, based on information provided during a visit to the CSTB from 30 November to 01 December 2004 by a joint SEESAC/JACIG delegation.

⁵⁰ Comments by the Chief of the General Staff, General Kolev, quoted in Dnevnik, 23 December 2004.

⁵¹ SEE SALW Monitor, 11 January 2003. Reports indicate that most of the stolen weapons in these cases were 9mm Makarov pistols and 7.62mm Kalashnikovs. In one case however, the security service also reported fifty pistols, seven sub-machine-guns and twenty-two hand-held anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs) (ten of them stolen from a military unit in the town of Strajitzta), as being among the stolen items. Sega, 18 January 2003.

⁵² 'Defence and Armed Forces Law', last amended SG 119/2002, Article 40.

among army conscripts.⁵³ In September 2004 in an attempt to prevent stolen military equipment being smuggled out of the country, the Customs Agency signed an agreement on information exchange with the Military Counterintelligence Service to regularly share information on stolen or missing military equipment and arms.⁵⁴

3.6 S ALW 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 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 destroyed Kalashnikov rifles.⁵⁵ 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.

A number of NGOs have also engaged in public awareness activities (see 'Civil Society involvement in SALW interventions' below). Of particular note are the publications, media work, courses and seminars undertaken by the Bulgarian Red Cross since 2000 as part of its wider campaign against armed violence.

3.7 S ALW survey activities

Following the 'expert group' assessment of Bulgaria's arms transfer controls system in 2003, which was coordinated, by CSD and Saferworld in 2004,⁵⁶ the two organizations jointly conducted a comprehensive SALW Survey of the impact and distribution of SALW in Bulgaria. The survey also covered the public's perceptions of SALW issues and the capacities of national agencies to achieve SALW control. The report, entitled 'Taming the Arsenal – SALW in Bulgaria' published by SEESAC, was launched by CSD in March 2005, attracting considerable media interest and generating a number of requests for information from government agencies involved in SALW control.

3.8 C Civil Society involvement in SALW interventions

A number of Bulgarian NGOs now have an established track record in researching SALW related issues, raising awareness and advocating policy change. They include the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC), the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD). From 1999 onwards, these organisations have worked to improve understanding of SALW issues in Bulgaria by publicising research reports and organising seminars for policy-makers and academics.

⁵³ See the annual publication of Bulgaria's anti-corruption initiative for an assessment of levels of corruption in various public institutions, <<http://www.anticorruption.bg/eng/coalition/car2003.htm>>

⁵⁴ Customs Agency, October 2004.

⁵⁵ *From Small Arms to Peace in Bulgaria*, UNDP, <http://www.undp.bg/en/homepage_files/salw/monument_of_peace.pdf>

⁵⁶ This resulted in a report, *Weapons Under Scrutiny*, Centre for the Study of Democracy and Saferworld, 2004, Gounev et al.

Table 4: SALW seminars held in Bulgaria, 2002 – 2004

ORGANISERS	EVENT	DATE
Bulgarian Red Cross Saferworld	Controlling Small Arms Proliferation: the View from Bulgaria	May 2002
Atlantic Club in Bulgaria Centre for the Study of Democracy Saferworld	Developing a Bulgarian National Programme to Implement Arms Export Controls and Combat Small Arms Proliferation	May 2003
Atlantic Club in Bulgaria Bulgarian MFA NATO Information Centre	Modern Control of Arms Export in the Process of Bulgaria's Accession to NATO	September 2003
Centre for the Study of Democracy	Export Control on SALW in Bulgaria	March 2003
Bulgarian Red Cross	'Non-proliferation of SALW'	November 2004

The BRC and the think-tank CSD have been the two most consistently active NGOs. In addition to hosting periodic national seminars on SALW, some BRC volunteers address questions of weapons possession and use in the course of their work during anti-violence campaigns or in tutorials on International Humanitarian Law, which they convene for military and police personnel, students, public authorities and BRC staff. Primarily a think-tank, CSD has completed two major research reports on SALW, one of which, a national SALW survey, is discussed further below. Following a roundtable discussion entitled 'Export Control on SALW in Bulgaria' held on 28 March 2003, CSD convened an 'expert group' of specialists from the MoD, MFA, MoI, MoE and the University of National and World Economy to analyse the Bulgarian arms export control system and make recommendations for its improvement. The resulting report, 'Weapons Under Scrutiny – Implementing Arms Export Controls and Combating Small Arms Proliferation in Bulgaria', was launched on 5 April 2004.⁵⁷ At the time of writing, CSD is beginning a nine-month programme of follow-up work to pursue some of the findings of the national SALW survey and improve SALW controls in the country. Planned activities for 2005 include policy briefings, newsletters and roundtables with government officials. CSD also hopes to enlist the support of other NGO partners in this work.

3.9 C Cross-border SALW control initiatives

With a target of 2007 for accession to the EU, Bulgaria has shown a keen interest in improving border control capacities and standards, particularly following EU-sponsored reports in 1999 and 2000 that identified operational deficiencies.⁵⁸ Bulgarian law enforcement and border control agencies participate in a number of regional initiatives with a border control dimension (see below). In addition a number of specific programmes are under way to enhance the country's capacity in this area. Since 2002 the Customs Agency's Investigations Directorate has been reformed with the help of British consultants. The Directorate now has field officers at almost all border posts and has begun developing a risk profiling and analysis system. The agency has been gradually introducing an 'Integrated Bulgarian Customs Information System' since 2000, which has apparently facilitated faster information exchanges and risk analysis. Other beneficial changes include: decisions by

⁵⁷ See <http://www.saferworld.co.uk/publications/weapons_under_scrutiny.pdf>, accessed 02 February 2005.

⁵⁸ 'Strengthening Control of the Bulgarian Black Sea Maritime Border: Phase 2 of a Multi-annual strategy to enhance the future external borders of the EU', <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/fiche_projet/document/bg0012-02-seamaritime.pdf>, accessed 13 April 2005.

the Agency to designate 23 specific customs posts for the passage of all ADGT shipments and to allow the preparation of customs documents at sixteen specific customs posts;⁵⁹ the passage of legislation in 2003 allowing undercover operations; the phasing out of conscription in the border police service; the introduction of specialist staff training courses;⁶⁰ and an increase in the number of mobile customs units (from five to fifteen).⁶¹ As part of the EU's Pre-accession assistance programme for Central and Eastern European countries (PHARE), two new patrol boats were launched in December 2003 to help update security along the Black Sea coast.⁶² In 2003 the European Commission praised the progress being made by Bulgaria in updating its Schengen Action Plan and its efforts to improve border control.⁶³

3.10 SALW management information and exchange systems and protocols

Bulgaria has made good progress during the last decade in lifting the veil of Communist secrecy from its arms production and trade. Cooperation with international organisations and involvement in arms control initiatives is now fairly routine. Bulgaria was an early member of international initiatives such as the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme and the Wassenaar Arrangement. Bulgaria has also expressed its support for adding SALW reporting requirements to Wassenaar's stipulations. Following its acceptance of the OSCE Document on SALW,⁶⁴ Bulgaria has, as required, made timely submissions to the OSCE on SALW transfers within the OSCE area.⁶⁵ Also, since adopting the UN Programme of Action on SALW, Bulgaria has submitted two annual progress reports to the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (a two-year version, covering 2004/2005 is planned for 2005).⁶⁶

Bulgarian officials are active within, or represented at, a good number of regional initiatives currently operating in South East Europe to combat organised crime or cross-border trafficking. These include the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol),⁶⁷ the European Police Office (Europol),⁶⁸ the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (via the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of SALW, or 'SEESAC'), the Black Sea

⁵⁹ Decree no 51/15.04.2003 of the Director of the Customs Agency at the Ministry of Finance, first published SG 39/25.04.2003, amended SG 70/08.08.2003.

⁶⁰ Tolev, op cit.

⁶¹ Official correspondence with Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2005

⁶² 'Simeon Saxe-Coburg: Bulgaria contributes to strengthening the security within the European Union', 9 December 2003, <<http://www.government.bg/English/Priorities/PublicOrder/2003-12-09/1861.html>>

⁶³ *2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession*, p 99.

⁶⁴ FSC.DOC/1/00, 24 November 2000.

⁶⁵ Bulgaria has made three submissions to the OSCE secretariat since the document's adoption. Correspondence with Anton Martynyuk of the OSCE Secretariat, 23 September 2004.

⁶⁶ <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/salw-nationalreports.html>>, accessed 23 November 2004.

⁶⁷ According to public statements by government officials, the Bulgarian Customs Agency periodically receives information on stolen firearms from the Interpol National Bureau, thereby enhancing its capacity to prevent illicit arms trafficking. 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.

⁶⁸ On 17 June 2003 Bulgaria signed a co-operation agreement with Europol in connection with the fight against international organized crime. The agreement allows Bulgaria to appoint a liaison officer to work at Europol headquarters in The Hague. Europol press release, 17 June 2003.

Economic Cooperation (BS EC), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the South East Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI) Centre for Combating Trans-Border Crime. The Bulgarian police, customs and intelligence agencies cooperate with several of these initiatives on the basis of bilateral agreements.⁶⁹ The most influential and important of these are probably SEESAC and the SECI Centre to which Bulgaria has two nationals on the staff.

Table 5: Information and exchange progress

INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE SYSTEMS AND PROTOCOLS	BULGARIA
INTERNATIONAL	
Reporting to the UN DDA on the Programme of Action (PoA)	Yes
Reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms	Yes
Reporting to other international regimes, if appropriate (eg Wassenaar)	Yes
INTERPOL/EUROPOL	Yes/ Yes
REGIONAL	
Information exchange with OSCE	Yes
Annual reporting to EU (if relevant)	_70
SECI Regional Centre intelligence exchange	Yes
NATIONAL	
Transparency – on SALW imports, exports and decision-making	No
Publication of national reports on arms / SALW transfers	No
Publication of SALW national strategy	No

⁵⁹ Decree no 51 /15.04.2003 of the Director of the Customs Agency at the Ministry of Finance, first published SG 39/25.04.2003, amended SG 70/08.08.2003.

⁶⁰ Tolev, op cit.

⁶¹ Official correspondence with Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2005

⁶² 'Simeon Saxe-Coburg: Bulgaria contributes to strengthening the security within the European Union', 9 December 2003, <<http://www.government.bg/English/Priorities/PublicOrder/2003-12-09/1861.html>>

⁶³ 2003 *Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession*, p 99.

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⁶⁵ Bulgaria has made three submissions to the OSCE secretariat since the document's adoption. Correspondence with Anton Martynyuk of the OSCE Secretariat, 23 September 2004.

⁶⁶ <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/salw-nationalreports.html>>, accessed 23 November 2004.

⁶⁷ According to public statements by government officials, the Bulgarian Customs Agency periodically receives information on stolen firearms from the Interpol National Bureau, thereby enhancing its capacity to prevent illicit arms trafficking. 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.

⁶⁸ On 17 June 2003 Bulgaria signed a co-operation agreement with Europol in connection with the fight against international organized crime. The agreement allows Bulgaria to appoint a liaison officer to work at Europol headquarters in The Hague. Europol press release, 17 June 2003.

⁶⁹ Co-operation between customs authorities takes place on the basis of: Protocol No 6 on Mutual assistance in Customs activity, in accordance with Article 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', p 7-8.

⁷⁰ 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.