

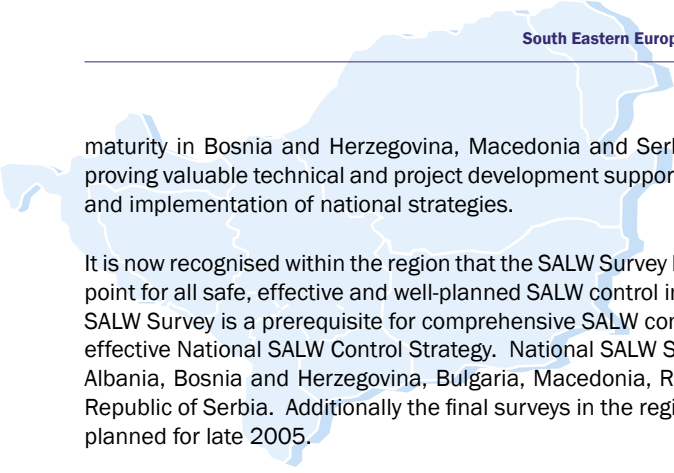
## Executive Summary

The uncontrolled proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a serious problem in South Eastern Europe, fuelling crime and insecurity, and undermining conflict prevention and peace-building efforts in the region. The past collapse or weakness of many state institutions in SEE has been an additional cause of instability and uncertainty in a region that has suffered successive conflicts over the last ten years. The resulting SALW proliferation and diffusion among the region's population remains a serious problem and is compounded by weak border control, organised crime and trafficking, inconsistent implementation of legislation on both arms export and possession, poor transparency on SALW issues and a lack of capacity in many countries' governments and civil society to tackle SALW issues effectively.

The situation is however gradually improving, and the last few years have seen regional and international initiatives on SALW, such as the OSCE Small Arms Document and UN Programme of Action, which have given a valuable spur to action on SALW. A particularly relevant and region-specific initiative on SALW, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe's Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) Combating the Proliferation of SALW, has provided a framework for the implementation of various SALW control measures. Recognising and building on previous commitments and initiatives on SALW in a wide range of areas, the RIP was agreed in November 2001 by the countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro.

Over the last three or four years, much progress has been made. National authorities are now more aware of the relevance of SALW to their security and stability, and can more clearly see the advantages of taking positive action on the problem. In addition to governments, international organisations and agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are now more active on the issue, and a variety of activities have been undertaken to combat the proliferation of illicit SALW.

The Albanian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian Governments all developed draft National SALW Control Strategies during 2004, and collection activities continued in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo under the auspices of SFOR and KFOR respectively. Thousands of surplus and collected SALW and ammunition have been destroyed, and virtually all countries have passed new, improved legislation on SALW possession and arms production and export, including positive steps to reform practice in this area by the larger arms producers in the region, Romania and Bulgaria. Substantial progress has also been made in terms of regional co-operation on the issue of SALW, and the last three years have seen the implementation of region-wide projects on border control, legislative reform and SALW trafficking. International organisations have also improved the level of co-ordination on SALW control activities: the South Eastern European Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), established to facilitate and inform activities under the RIP framework, and the UNDP have been particularly active in helping to facilitate co-ordination and make concrete progress in terms of projects on the ground. NGOs have also linked up across the region and internationally, establishing new networks (SEENCA), co-operation and partnerships and undertaking capacity-building that have helped to build on the previously very limited SALW work undertaken by civil society, with the result that in 2004, local NGO-implemented SALW projects ranging from research to awareness-raising and campaigning were undertaken in every country in the region. UNDP SALW Control projects have moved from their preparatory assistance phases to full project



maturity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. They are proving valuable technical and project development support to the continuing development and implementation of national strategies.

It is now recognised within the region that the SALW Survey has become the accepted entry-point for all safe, effective and well-planned SALW control interventions. As such a national SALW Survey is a prerequisite for comprehensive SALW control and the development of an effective National SALW Control Strategy. National SALW Surveys have now taken place in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia. Additionally the final surveys in the region, of Croatia and Moldova, are planned for late 2005.

This second 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. Clearly the agreement of the RIP and the establishment of SEESAC, alongside other developments and actors in the region, have had a positive impact. Having started from a very low base, the capacity of SEE governments and civil society organisations to work on SALW has consistently improved as a result of local actors' efforts to work collaboratively on practical projects and the efforts of donors and international organisations to provide training and resources.

However, although all SEE governments have made important progress in terms of SALW control and many have given increased prioritisation to the issue, SALW must compete with numerous other priorities on the agendas of donors, governments, NGOs and international organisations alike. Maintaining enough momentum to see through the required changes to SALW policy and practice is an ongoing challenge for which non-governmental actors and key international organisations should shoulder much responsibility. The EU in particular should devote more attention to SALW in the accession and stabilisation processes which apply to SEE states. In this light and in order to avoid government and donor fatigue on the issue of SALW control in SEE, it may prove wise for the Stability Pact to either review the RIP or provide supplementary guidelines, which contain specific timelines and benchmarks for implementation.

Priorities for action on the part of governments include: the destruction of remaining SALW surpluses in accordance with commitments made under the OSCE Document on SALW of 2000, rather than the sale or indefinite storage of such stocks; the establishment and adoption of mechanisms, such as national commissions, strategies, actions, and plans that enhance intra-governmental work on SALW control and provide a means to improve information exchange nationally and internationally; the strict adherence to those international agreements, which they are bound by or aligned with; and full participation in processes such as the UN PoA review and the Biennial Meeting of States in July 2005, information exchanges via INTERPOL and the SECI Centre Task Force. SEE governments should also work to further enhance transparency in line with EU standards through detailed annual reporting by governments of their arms transfer practices, supplementing this where possible by the publication of existing report formats such as OSCE submissions.

In this regard, undertakings by civil society aimed at encouraging government action on SALW and holding governments to account, can prove vital in moving the SALW agenda forward in the region. Although SEE civil society has made extremely valuable contributions by conducting awareness raising among the public and research to aid implementation, policy level work and advocacy remains an underdeveloped area which will be key to creating longer-term indigenous commitment to combating SALW problems.

Despite the fact that international donors and institutions have invested significant resources into stabilising the security situation in South Eastern Europe, remaining problems related to SALW continue to pose a threat to economic and social development, and in some cases to peace building. The international community should therefore continue to support SALW control programmes in the region, provided such programmes meet with the best international practices, represent a well targeted response to problems, are based on sound operational research and support a national SALW control strategy. A commitment by all agencies that implement SALW control projects in the region to use existing best practice guidelines and build provisions for baseline research, monitoring and evaluation would provide a welcome boost to programme effectiveness and transparency. For their part, international donors and implementing agencies should also give ongoing consideration to questions of sustainability and local capacity building, whilst continuing the regionalization of operational resources such as the UNDP SALW projects and SEESAC. International technical support is still required, although this should be scaled down as local capacity is developed.

This report has therefore been undertaken with the objective of providing an overview of how the countries of South Eastern Europe have progressed towards fulfilling their commitments. The Stability Pact's RIP, as both the most inclusive, and regionally relevant, document representing governments' commitments in the area of SALW control is used as a benchmark against which to gauge countries' progress so far. The report does not represent a technical verification system or a formal inspection report – its role is to collect and present relevant information to facilitate monitoring, discussion and assessment of progress towards the implementation of the RIP. The report consists of four main sections: an introductory section; analysis of each country's progress in each of the areas of activity covered by the RIP; an overview of donor support for SALW projects in the region; a concluding section; and annexes containing relevant documents and additional information.

Funded by SEESAC, the research and writing of the report was undertaken by Saferworld, an independent non-governmental organisation based in London and working on SALW and security issues in the region and elsewhere. The contents therefore reflect an independent and objective presentation of factual information on SEE countries' responses to SALW problems within the RIP Framework based on available evidence; there has been no SEESAC influence in the research direction, formulation or contents of this report. Research for the report was conducted by Saferworld staff from February 2005 to May 2005; through their National SALW Focal Points, Governments in the region were given an opportunity to comment on the final draft of the report and thanks go to those who gave feedback and provided additional information.

