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## SEESAC Convenes the Fifth SEEFEN Meeting

Over 35 firearms experts from South East Europe are meeting in Chisinau, Moldova on 27 – 28 September for the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting of the South East Europe Firearms Expert Network (SEEFEN). Funded by the European Union (EU), the meeting is gathering prosecutors, police and customs officials from the region to discuss their experiences, good practices and most effective ways in combating illicit trafficking of firearms.

“The threats we face are greater than individual capabilities and resources, that is why we in the RCC believe in shared efforts, cooperation and coordination. Exchange of knowledge and experience is increasingly important”, Ms. Stefana Greavu, Head of the Political Department in the Regional Cooperation Council told the participants in her opening remarks and advised them to use this opportunity to share knowledge, experience and practices and reinforce professional bonds that this forum is offering.

“Problem of illegal firearms and its trafficking remains high on EU agenda. We have to tackle this jointly and cooperate across borders”, said Ms. Ursula Pallasz, Head of the Political and Economic Section of the European Union Delegation (EUD) to Moldova. Ms. Pallasz emphasized that the EU's increased concern over firearms trafficking requires more swift and coordinated approach and investigations.

Mr. Oleg Graur, Head of the General Department on Analysis, Monitoring and Control of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Moldova emphasized the importance of the EU assistance received through SEESAC by highlighting last year's destruction of over 1400 surplus firearms and training of 15 police officers in Physical Security and Stockpile Management. Mr. Graur announced Moldova's 2017 priorities which include setting up of the National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons.

SEEFEN experts are tackling illicit flow of firearms through regional cooperation, knowledge transfer and information exchange. Each delegation presented their updates, developments and results achieved in combating illegal arms trade since the last SEEFEN meeting held in Sarajevo in April 2015.

Customs, prosecutors, and the police officials work in the plenary as well as in groups to discuss the issues faced and to plan ahead. The participants were joined by their colleagues from law enforcement agencies in the EU, namely SWEEDEN and United Kingdom, as well as EUROPOL and European Firearms Expert Group (EFE) to share their experiences in fighting illegal firearms trade. The Police Group discussed Joint Action Day Planning with counterparts from EUROPOL and EMPACT, while the Joint Session of the Prosecutors and Customs Groups worked on Regional Firearms Trafficking Threat Assessment. The two-day forum was concluded by agreeing on steps ahead that are to be completed before the 6<sup>th</sup> SEEFEN meeting planned for the end of this year.

SEEFEN **was created to facilitate** the exchange of information and the transfer of knowledge within the region and between the region and the EU while promoting practical cooperation in fighting the illegal possession and illicit transfer of firearms. The members of the Network are members of the Police services, Customs Administrations, and Public Prosecutors' Offices of: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova, Kosovo\*, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Network held its first meeting in Durres, Albania on 23-24 September 2014.

The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2220 on combating the “illicit transfer destabilizing accumulation and misuse” of small arms and light weapons on 22 May 2015.

### EU SUPPORT OF SEESAC DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE (EUSAC)

The European Union entrusted SEESAC with the implementation of a series of region-wide activities in the period 2014 – 2016 through **EU COUNCIL DECISION 2013/730/CFSP**. The regional course is part of Component 1 of the resulting EUSAC Project (EU Support of SEESAC Disarmament and Arms Control Activities in South East Europe) which is an integral part of the SEESAC SALW Control portfolio.

EUSAC marks a continuation of the trust placed in SEESAC by the EU since 2002. The Union previously supported SEESAC through Council Decision 2002/842/CFSP, extended and amended by Council Decisions 2003/807/CFSP and 2004/791/CFSP. Most recently, the Union supported SEESAC arms control activities through Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP.



Designed in close cooperation with national authorities, the EUSAC project works on the following five interrelated streams of activities:  
Increased security of stockpiles: through the renovation and security improvements to storages of arms and ammunition.

- Stockpile reduction: through the destruction of surplus arms and ammunition held in storages.
- Improved marking, tracing and registration of SALW: through the provision of support to the establishment or enhancement of existing weapons registration and record-keeping systems.
- Improved regional cooperation on awareness raising, information sharing and knowledge transfer: through the facilitation of regional cooperation between national institutions tasked with arms control.
- Implementation of collection and awareness raising campaigns.

\* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

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