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The First Meeting of Regional Firearms Experts held in Durres

Providing greater insight into the potential of illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition originating from or transiting through South East Europe (SEE) is a strategic priority for the European Union. In order to address this regional concern, SEESAC has initiated the creation of the **South East Europe Firearms Expert Network (SEEFEN)**. The aim of the network is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information in the region, and to promote cooperation in fighting the illegal possession and trafficking of firearms. The first meeting of SEEFEN was held in Durres, Albania, on 23-24 September 2014.

SEEFEN members consist of representatives of the Police services, Customs Administrations of the Ministries of Finance, and Public Prosecutors' Offices of: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova, Kosovo,* Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. SEESAC has been tasked with serving as the network's Secretariat. The first regional meeting gathered more than 30 experts from the region, as well as experts from Spain's Guardia Civil, Croatian USKOK, PAMECA IV, Arquebus Solutions, EUROPOL, and UNODC.

The meeting was opened by **Mr. Ilir Mustafaraj**, Deputy Minister of Interior of the Republic of Albania; **Mr. Clive Rumbold**, acting Head of Delegation of the European Union to Albania; **Ms. Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun**, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Albania; and **Dr. Ivan Zveržhanovski**, SEESAC Coordinator.

The discussions focused on such topics as improving information exchange, existing challenges and obstacles, and regional cooperation as a prerequisite for curbing the illicit possession and trafficking of SALW.

Managed by SEESAC, the Network and its activities are conducted under the EU Support of SEESAC Disarmament and Arms Control Activities in South East Europe (EUSAC) project supported by the EU through its **Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP dated 9 December 2013**. Four meetings of **SEEFEN** are planned to take place over the next two years until December 2016 – with several planned research and knowledge products to follow.

ABOUT EUSAC

EUSAC builds directly upon SEESAC's decade-long SALW Control work, particularly achievements made through the previous EU-funded SALW Control project, conducted during the 2010-2012 period under the Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP. The new project, which was designed in close cooperation with national authorities, will work 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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South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)

Bulevar Zorana Đinđića 64
11000 Belgrade
Serbia
Telephone:
(+381) 11 415 5300
Fax: (+381) 415 5499
E-mail: seesac@undp.org

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