

12th Meeting of the Regional Arms Exports Information Exchange Process

As a way of strengthening safety and security through regional cooperation in South East Europe, SEESAC facilitates regular meetings of authorities responsible for the development and execution of arms transfer policies in the Western Balkan countries – the **Regional Information Exchange Process (RIEP) meetings on Arms Control**.



The **12th RIEP meeting** took place on **25 November 2014** in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and participating were twenty (20) delegates from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Three experts from the EU and the region were also present at the meeting, as well as representatives of UNDP's SEESAC initiative.

At RIEP meetings, participants have the opportunity to exchange relevant experiences and knowledge. Specifically, RIEP meetings aim to facilitate the process of EU alignment in the Western Balkans region, particularly with regards to arms transfers control.

The Skopje meeting was opened by **Ms. Anastasija Ileska**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Interior of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and by **Dr. Ivan Zveržhanovski**, SEESAC Coordinator.

The session dedicated to *Updates from the Region* focused on the issue of building the region's capacities for reporting. The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia presented their recently upgraded software (AAERG Software), which allows for safe, detailed, and reliable record-keeping of arms transfer licences while also offering simple and flexible options for reporting.

Kadrija Kurpejovic of the Ministry of Economy of Montenegro and **Mirko Kukolj**, an independent consultant, each addressed the issue of national capacities for accurate reporting to the OSCE and UN.

Mr. Kukolj and **Ms. Mariann Mezey** from the Hungarian Trade Licensing Office facilitated a discussion on internal compliance programmes, while Mr. Kukolj also presented the novelties in the SALW-related EU customs tariff policies and Spain's export control legislation.

About the Regional Information Exchange Process (RIEP)

RIEP was initiated in 2009 as a platform for persons responsible for the development and execution of arms transfers control policies in their respective countries, to meet each other and regularly exchange relevant experiences. RIEP meetings are regularly attended by representatives of six (6) countries, namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition to facilitating the exchange of practices and policies among colleagues in the region, some of the important by-products of the process have been the establishment of a regional Brokering Database, as well as the jointly published Regional Reports on Arms Exports.

RIEP is a flagship activity of SEESAC's Arms Export Control project that has been generously supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway since 1 January 2010. In July 2013, the Norwegian MFA decided to continue its support through the Phase II of SEESAC's Arms Export Control Programme in the Western Balkans project, which will last until June 2015.

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