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14th RIEP Meeting on Arms Transfers Control Held

BUDVA – On 11 June 2015, SEESAC facilitated the 14th meeting of the Regional Arms Export Information Exchange Process (RIEP), thus continuing towards strengthening and standardization of arms transfers control systems through regional cooperation and knowledge sharing.

The 14th RIEP gathered 18 representatives from six countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

As part of discussions on the development and execution of arms transfer policies in the region, each delegation delivered a presentation on the peculiarities of their National Reports on Arms Transfers and shared their recent achievements and future plans. Serbia published its 2013 National Report earlier in May, while Montenegro and Albania are expected to publish their reports by the end of the month.

SEESAC presented the most recent updates under the ACP project, including AAERG record-keeping and reporting software development and upgrades, information gathering efforts, and the publication of the Regional Report on Arms Transfers covering 2013. This is the only such regional report besides that of the European Union, making the Western Balkans one of the most transparent regions in arms transfers control.

Participants discussed issues of joint interest, including transfer controls of new war tools and technologies, transfer control of paintball guns and ammunition, and deactivated defence industry products. An overview of goods that can be used for capital punishment, torture, and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment was also among the subjects of exchange.

Researcher from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Hardy Giezendanner led a discussion with the group regarding the options and models for harmonization of the end-use and end-user control systems.

In his closing remarks, SEESAC Coordinator Dr. Zveržhanovski stressed that “the choice and complexity of issues discussed in depth at these meetings are a clear demonstration of how relevant this process is and how much the group has accomplished over the years in terms of building capacity and bolstering arms transfer control systems in the region.”

The next RIEP meeting will be held in the autumn later this year.

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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