

## Western Balkan Authorities Review Roadmap Implementation Progress at Eight Regional Coordination Meeting

The Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Commissions from the Western Balkans, the international organisations engaged in arms control in the region and donors – over 105 representatives in total – attended the two-day Eighth Regional Coordination Meeting of the Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of SALW and Their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 (Roadmap) which took place in Budva, Montenegro on 13-14 December 2022.

The meeting was deliberating the key findings from the 8th Regional Report based on the Key Performance Indicators and Roadmap Goals but also the status of the Mid-term Review of the Roadmap. It was taking stock of the progress, challenges, and needs as per the specific goals of the Roadmap, discussing contributions from the international organisations engaged in arms control in the region and donor support in countering the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

**H.E. Filip Adžić**, Minister of Interior of Montenegro, **H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet**, French Ambassador-at-large on transnational criminal threats and the fight against the illicit trafficking of SALW, **Mr. Albrecht von Wittke**, German Federal Foreign Office's Director of Division, Conventional Arms Control, **Mr. Gerd Trogemann**, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub's Manager, and **Ms. Jorida Shytaj**, Senior Political Adviser at the Regional Cooperation Council, gave their introductory remarks.

This regional meeting is an opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices from within the region, **Minister Adžić** told the participants, and hailed the donors' support to the Roadmap. Reflecting on the achievements of the authorities in Podgorica in small arms and light weapons control, he pointed out the need for continuous cooperation between various public institutions and international organisations for a successful fight against illegal possession, misuse, and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the region.

Since the adoption of the Roadmap in 2018, a unique cooperation framework in the Western Balkans has been established for the Roadmap implementation, **Ambassador Brunet** highlighted, and commended the Western Balkan Small Arms and Light Weapons Commissions for their sustained commitment and continuous efforts in implementing the Roadmap. He concluded that France and other partners will continue supporting the activities related to the Roadmap as small arms and light weapons control will remain in the focus and is much needed for maintaining peace and stability in the Western Balkans but also across Europe.

Addressing the participants, **Mr. von Wittke** commended the efforts made by the Western Balkan jurisdictions despite the current situation. He added that the Roadmap is one of the most successful results of the Berlin Process and that is inspiring similar processes around the globe.

UNDP is proud to have been supporting the South East Europe authorities in implementing small arms and light weapons activities in a sustainable and efficient manner for the last 20 years, **Mr. Trogemann** told the participants, and thanked the authorities for their cooperation and leadership in this process. He also highlighted the established Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund and thanked the partners for their continuous support to the Fund.



The current security challenges in Europe are transnational and they require an EU-Western Balkans coordinated approach to be addressed, **Ms. Shytaj** underlined, and said that achieving the goals set out in the Roadmap is first and foremost vital for the region's internal security, illustrating this with the latest data on firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence.



The Roadmap was developed by the Western Balkans authorities with SEESAC's technical support, under the auspices of the Governments of Germany and France and with the support of the European Union and other relevant actors. It was adopted by the region's leaders at the London Summit in July 2018.

The Regional Roadmap Coordination Meetings are organised with the funding support of the European Union through its Council Decision 2022/1654, amending Decision 2018/1788 in support of SEESAC for the implementation of the Regional Roadmap on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans.

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