

## THE THIRD FORMAL REGIONAL MEETING OF SALW COMMISSIONS

Pristina, Kosovo\*  
28 – 29 October 2014

**Day 1,  
Tuesday, 28 October 2014**

### BACKGROUND

The Third Formal Regional Meeting of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Commissions took place on 28 – 29 October 2014 in Pristina, Kosovo\*. The meeting took place within the framework of the **EU Support of SEESAC Disarmament and Arms Control Activities in South East Europe (EUSAC)** project's component dedicated to Improved Regional Cooperation on Awareness-Raising, Information Sharing, and Knowledge Transfer.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the SALW Commissions or the relevant responsible bodies for SALW control from Albania, Kosovo\*, Moldova, Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (See ANNEX – List of Participants). Serbia and BiH did not take part.

This 3rd Regional Meeting focused on furthering regional cooperation and information exchange as well as on common challenges and ways to overcome them.

### OPENING REMARKS

Opening the meeting, **Dr. Zveržhanovski**, SEESAC Coordinator, welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of this process in promoting increased levels of standardization in the area of SALW control.

**Mr. Bajram Rexhepi**, Minister of Internal Affairs of Kosovo\*, expressed the pleasure of holding this regional meeting for the first time in Pristina. He reaffirmed the willingness of the institutions in Kosovo\* to prevent the proliferation of SALW and emphasized the importance of the inter-sectoral approach in this regard. He thanked SEESAC, the RCC, UNDP and the EU for their support and encouraged the regional cooperation efforts and exchange of technical knowledge in this area.

**Mr. Gazmend Turdiu**, Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), congratulated SEESAC for its essential contribution, in line with the RCC mandate, in promoting safety and security through regional cooperation, as a key instrument and pre-requisite for sustainable development in South East Europe. He thanked the European Union for its support and commended the strong partnership with UNDP,

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

in the efforts to tackle the threat posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW. Mr. Turdiu emphasized the fact that despite the significant progress, problems still remain to ensure an effective control of SALW, including: the illicit proliferation of SALW, lack of accurate data on the size of the problem, deficiencies in securing the military stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, etc. which require effective national control mechanisms, adequate legislation to ensure an effective exercise of control and the required expertise to tackle these problems. Lastly, he expressed the confidence of the RCC that this regional process will be a strong contribution to improved regional cooperation in the area of arms control, by strengthening the professional relationships among technical experts.

**Mr. Thomas Gnocchi**, Head of Political, Economic and EU Integration Section in the EU Office in Kosovo\*, stressed that the European Union is among the first regional organizations to recognize the negative impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons on security and development and as such, is a leading international actor in the fight against illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW. He stressed the strong and substantial bond of EU with UNDP's SEESAC initiative over the course of its existence by providing political and financial support to the activities implemented by SEESAC. This regional project, complements the EU integration requirements and in line with the EU SALW Strategy, aims to further strengthen national control systems and to continue to foster multilateralism and regional mechanisms fighting the spread of SALW.

**Mr. Andrew Russell**, UN Development Coordinator in Kosovo\*, congratulated the representatives of the SALW Commissions on the laudable efforts to prevent and reduce the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW. He thanked the EU for the financial support to the project, the RCC for the strong partnership in the past decade and SEESAC for the regional leadership in this issue and its assistance to the KOSSAC project. He emphasized UNDP's significant role over the last decades in assisting governments to effectively and comprehensively address the proliferation and trafficking of SALW. In order to ensure that the support is sustainable and given the multi-sectoral approach required in combating SALW proliferation, UNDP actively promotes national ownership of SALW control mechanisms and places a heavy focus on capacity building.

## **SESSION I: CHALLENGES AND IDENTIFIED GAPS – PRESENTATIONS BY SALW COMMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVES**

Following the introductory remarks, **Ms. Juliana Buzi**, SEESAC Projects Specialist, opened the floor for the SALW Commissions' representatives to present challenges and identified gaps in their area of work.

### *Albania*

**Mr. Saimir Repishti**, Head of UN and Security Policies Section at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **the Republic of Albania**, informed that the SALW Commission in Albania is in process of being established and a working group has been created involving experts from all relevant agencies and institutions. The Commission will consist of representatives of a number of ministries, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and other relevant bodies.

Mr Repishti provided also an overview of the SALW control activities in Albania. The destruction of 70,000 pieces of SALW will be completed in November 2014 and the MoD estimates that there are currently no

more weapons categorized for destruction. The light-weight armour of the Armed Forces will be replaced gradually. The use of old AK-47 will be discontinued and replaced by M4. Issues of concern remain the weapons in the hands of the civilian population and their registration as well as improving physical conditions and safety of the military warehouses. A new law "On Arms" has been approved by the Albanian Parliament in July and is partly aligned with the EU Council Directive 91/477 / EEC of 18 June 1991 "On the control of purchases and possession of weapons". The new law sanctions the private ownership of guns, which was prohibited under the previous legislation.

Main challenges identified by Albania in the area of Arms Control include:

- Finalizing the related bylaws in compliance with the new law "On Arms" and passing a new law on the practical implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT);
- Complete the establishment of the national coordination and monitoring body on SALW.
- Collecting current and comprehensive data on the scale of illicit spread and ownership of SALW;
- Obtaining surveillance equipment for trafficking of SALW and fighting organized crime;
- Improving the conditions and security of weapons and ammunition storage facilities;
- Strengthening the partnership with civil society and engaging NGOs in tackling the threats posed by SALW;
- Required expertise and equipment for marking of weapons.
- Increasing the awareness among institutions and the population, and providing space on the subject of SALW threat in the education system.

**Mr. Selaudin Korkuti**, Head of Arms Control, General Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania, explained further that a new procedure of stamping Category C and Category D weapons at the border has been initiated, which is expected to give positive results in tackling the illicit spread of SALW. The electronic registration database in process of establishment with SEESAC support will also contribute to these efforts.

*Kosovo\**

**Mr. Mensur Hoti**, Director of the Department of Public Safety of Ministry of Internal Affairs of **Kosovo\*** informed of the new legislation on SALW in Kosovo\*, as well as of the updated SALW Strategy adopted for the period 2013-2016. All new legislation has been developed in accordance with the EU framework. He briefed on activities carried out by the SALW Commission during this period and informed that on 9<sup>th</sup> July – International Gun Destruction Day destruction activities took place in Kosovo\*, where 776 weapons and 1363 parts were destroyed. The police is confiscating about 1,600 weapons per year. The authorities are using a sophisticated database to register all weapons.

Challenges identified by the Kosovo\* authorities in the area of SALW Control include:

- The large estimated number of illicit weapons in circulation (350,000 – 450,000)
- Registration – legalization of weapons
- The weapons amnesty

- Adoption of amended legislation by the Parliament

In response to a question on any specific cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Mr. Hoti explained that Kosovo\* authorities receive information on incidents involving weapons, from the University Clinical Centre or through reports from the Kosovo\* Police. However, challenges in collecting information and providing correct statistics still exist, in particular in acquiring information on the type of weapons used.

#### *Moldova*

**Mr. Gheorghe Leuca**, Deputy Director of General Direction for Multilateral Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the **Republic of Moldova**, continued with a presentation on the challenges that the relevant SALW control bodies in Moldova are facing in this regard. Moldova has signed but not yet ratified the ATT. New legislation on SALW has been passed, in particular Law No. 130 Regarding the Regime of Weapons and Ammunition for Civilian Purposes, and the efforts are now focused on the practical implementation of the laws. Moldova has a centralized database to record all weapons in country which also includes a lost/found section.

Mr. Leuca stated Moldova's willingness to share information as well as its need for assistance and identified as main priorities the following:

- Implementing UN/OSCE/EU projects, which will require further assistance;
- Invigorating the establishment of a SALW Commission and defining, and coordinating responsibilities between ministries;
- Obtaining information and best practices guidelines for developing mechanisms for tracing of weapons;
- Obtaining information and best practices for marking of imported weapons;
- Developing a national strategy for the control of SALW.

#### *Montenegro*

**Ms. Mira Radović**, Member of the SALW Commission from the Ministry of Interior of **Montenegro**, presented Montenegro's efforts in SALW control, and in particular in strengthening the policies and capacities of tracing and marking of weapons. A strategy has been developed and a coordination body has been established in order to monitor the progress of the programmes. Ms. Radović also provided an overview of Montenegro's activities for 9th July – International Destruction Day, and thanked SEESAC for the financial support in destroying the weapons. A draft law on weapons has been submitted to the relevant bodies and is currently awaiting approval and adoption. All amendments and new legislation are in line with the EU regulations and will contain an amnesty provision as well as the EU Firearms Pass. It is expected that marking of weapons provisions will be fully implemented only upon joining the EU while standards on deactivation of weapons will be introduced through SOPs.

#### *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

**Dr. Duško Ivanov**, State Counsellor for Legal Affairs and National Focal Point for SALW from the Ministry of Interior of **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, listed as main priorities of the SALW Commission, the following:

- Harmonizing domestic legislation with the EU regulations;
- Implementing in practice the new amendments of the Law on Weapons and of the Law on Production and Trade of Arms and Military Equipment;
- Creating conditions for implementing Article 4 of Directive 51/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of acquisition and possession of weapons, according to which, a record-keeping database needs to be established and be operable by 31 December 2014;
- Regulating the process of brokering and trans-shipment;
- Undertaking measures and activities for practical implementation of the legal acts and by-laws, covering upgrading of the existing software for keeping evidence of the weapons licenses in the community;
- Raising awareness of the state authorities and the citizens of the threats posed by SALW, and the link between the availability of weapons and the scale of violence in the society;
- Destroying found, seized and confiscated weapons collected from the Basic Courts on the territory of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- Continuing the practice to destroy weapons every 9<sup>th</sup> July.

Current SALW activities were mentioned as follows:

- Improving the physical security at the 'Orman' ammunition storage. The SALW Commission is expecting support from SEESAC for the works on this warehouse;
- Upgrading the existing software for evidence of weapons licenses and developing component "B" of this software;
- Monitoring the work of trade companies via software and putting an obligation on companies for keeping a registry for monitoring of production, repair and transportation of goods.

**Col. Tomislav Rizeski**, Head of Arms Control Centre at the Ministry of Defence of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, explained the initiative of the authorities to include articles from the ATT into national legislation, and the efforts of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to join the Wassenaar Arrangement.

## **SESSION II: REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

**Ms. Danijela Žunec-Brandt**, Regional Advisor at SEESAC, opened the floor to all participants for a discussion on how to improve cooperation further and the expertise each commission could offer in specific areas.

**Mr. Hoti** stressed that there are already good links established between the SALW Commissions representatives in the region and expressed his belief that the SALW Commissions Meetings initiative will

help strengthening these further and will facilitate the communication between the parties. Mr. Hoti suggested as a topic for future discussions the approximation and unification of the SALW legal framework in the region in particular for cross-bordering countries. At the same time, he offered Kosovo\*'s expertise and support in developing an online database for the registration of SALW, since theirs has proved to be very efficient and useful.

**Mr. Gjergji Methoxha**, Acting Head of NATO Section at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Albania, said that the Government of Albania is strongly committed to the regional initiatives aiming at exchanging information, knowledge, expertise in this area and reiterated the need for better coordination regionally between different forums and organizations, as well as internally, among institutions and ministries. Furthermore, Mr. Methoxha stressed that the Ministry of Defense of Albania stands ready to strengthen and deepen the defence cooperation in the demilitarization area. As an example of regional cooperation, he brought the recent agreement with Montenegro for the destruction of 17 tonnes of ammunition and that the project could be a starting point for future joint activities in the area of SALW Control.

**Maj. Veton Elshani**, Director of Directorate for International Cooperation (ILECU) at the Kosovo\* Police, proposed an exchange programme with representatives of different Commissions and discuss all practical issues of common interest. The meetings could be followed by training according to identified needs. In response, **Dr. Zveržhanovski** explained that SEESAC has already offered to facilitate such exchange programmes. To this purpose, SEESAC requested the Commissions to formulate both specific needs and areas of expertise they could offer, so SEESAC could match these and facilitate the study visits accordingly. Dr. Zveržhanovski encouraged also the participants to share their experience on better coordination among bodies working in the same Commission. Dr. Zveržhanovski informed the participants that all information, including the identified needs and areas of expertise collected after the Meeting, will be uploaded onto the secure area of the [SEESAC Knowledge Exchange Platform](#).

**Mr. Leuca** noted the importance of spreading the information to other and new members of each Commission, who might require training on development of projects or other practices, and that it would be beneficial if some of the representatives can provide such expertise. Mr. Leuca mentioned also the importance of exchanging information regarding funding for current and future projects.

**Lt. Col. Alexandru Tonu**, Head of Arms Circulation Surveillance Section, at the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, offered expertise in developing the online weapons registration system, as the one currently used in Moldova has proved its usefulness.

Following these discussions, **Dr. Zveržhanovski** presented the **Regional Implementation Plan** that is the main document providing the operational framework of SEESAC's activities, as well as the overall strategy of SEESAC. The strategy includes continued support to governments for developing and implementing their SALW national strategies; support the increase of transparency on SALW policies; sharing of information on best practices; continuing in cooperation with the RCC to encourage donors to consider funding projects in the region; and paying attention to the gender perspectives in all activities.

**Ms. Buzi** reminded the participants of SEESAC's initiative to compile and publish a new SEE Regional Arms Laws Compendium. Some commissions have already sent to SEESAC their updated legislation. However, there is still missing information. Ms. Buzi encouraged the members to log into the Knowledge Exchange Platform, review the uploaded legislation and provide comments or additions where necessary.

**Dr. Zveržhanovski** closed the Session by providing an overview of the destruction activities in the region to mark 9<sup>th</sup> July and commending at the same time the efforts of the participating governments.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- SALW Commissions would provide to SEESAC **at least three areas** where each Commission or the relevant authorities can offer **technical expertise** and/or identify **three areas of need** on SALW Control.
- SALW Commissions need to review the uploaded legislation for the SEE Regional Arms Laws Compendium at the **SEESAC Knowledge Exchange Platform** and provide comments and/or any additions by **30 November 2014**.
- SEESAC will look into the possibility of creating a discussion space on its **online Knowledge Exchange Platform** where Commissions can upload information and discuss issues of common concern;

#### **SESSION III: SALW DATA – AVAILABILITY, USEFULLNESS, STATUS**

Session III focused on collection of data related to SALW and on SALW surveys. **Dr. Zveržhanovski** stressed the need to conduct a new regional SALW survey. Most of the surveys carried out in the SEE are outdated and therefore policy making lacks the necessary data that would enable the development and implementation of targeted and more efficient approaches to tackling the SALW problem in the region. Dr. Zveržhanovski highlighted the importance of surveys as useful tools for providing a better understanding on the progress and the remaining threat.

**Ms. Mihaela Racovita**, Associate Researcher at **Small Arms Survey (SAS)**, continued with a presentation on best practices in SALW data collection by providing practical advice on designing surveys, collecting information, and making a final evaluation out of the collected responses.

Several discussions followed the presentation and **Maj. Elshani** explained that a survey is needed in Kosovo\* and it will serve also in terms of reporting statistics to the EU. Still, he emphasized that it would be necessary to identify the type of survey that will best suit the purpose, considering that Kosovo\* needs to perform also a risk assessment survey and the relation between the two should be defined. Maj. Elshani further suggested designing a regional framework so that all members provide the same type of data. In this regard, the survey should not contain sensitive questions, which cannot be answered by all participants.

**Ms. Žunec-Brandt** reminded the participants of the SALW Survey Methodology that Croatia has developed, and that is uploaded onto the **Knowledge Exchange Platform**. She informed though that Croatia decided to not implement the survey and therefore stressed on the importance of convincing governments that such surveys are not condemning but rather aim to provide a comprehensive picture of the status of policies, planning and implementation.

**Mr. Kukaj**, Chief of the Ballistic Laboratory at the Kosovo\* Agency for Forensics, informed the participants that all the surveys carried out in Kosovo\* as to date have been conducted by international organizations and bodies, such as UNDP, but no surveys have been conducted by the local institutions. Such surveys will be beneficial for developing new strategies based on real actual data.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- The possibility of trying to conduct a new regional SALW survey, taking into consideration resource constraints is to be discussed by the SALW Commissions.

**Wednesday, 29 October 2014**

#### **SESSION IV: PRESENTATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SMALL ARMS CONTROL STANDARDS (ISACS) AND ITS ASSESSMENT TOOL**

The second day of the meeting of SALW Commissions started with a presentation by Mr. Himayu Shiotani, Projects Manager (ISACS) at UNIDIR, who explained the framework and the foundation of the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) as important tool for policy makers and practitioners in planning, monitoring and assessing various interventions in the area of SALW control. Even though ISACS are voluntary, they are recommendable and can serve as a reference guide on where partners stand in complying with the international requirements.

At the moment, ISACS includes only guidance on weapons and not on ammunition, however, UNIDIR is working to include by next year reference to both.

Mr. Shiotani proceeded with introducing the ISACS Assessment Tool (ISACS-AT) that incorporates the whole process of SALW control, starting from production, to marking and tracing, collection, disposal and border control practices. Mr. Shiotani provided a briefing of the tool and showed its different options to the participants. The Tool can be used to easily produce assessment surveys for the specific needs of each body working on SALW and can be used internally for identifying gaps and subsequently for policy making.



Mr. Shiotani proceeded with a practical exercise focused on developing surveys with the help of the ISACS-AT which took place during **Session V: ISACS/Practical Demonstration of the Assessment Tool** of the Meeting. The participants recognized the usefulness of the Tool and expressed interest to install and test it.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- Participants are to test the ISACS-AT and where needed send comments or questions to SEESAC and/or to UNIDIR;
- SEESAC in response to a request from the participants is considering the translation of ISACS into local languages and will provide feedback to the participants on the development of the project.

#### **CONCLUSIONS:**

The Third Regional Meeting of SALW Commissions was officially closed by Ms. Buzi who thanked participants for their attendance and valuable contributions. As follow up steps, Ms. Buzi suggested that:

- SALW Commissions respond to the request for sending to SEESAC a list with at **least three areas of identified needs and three areas of expertise**;
- SALW Commissions review the collected legislation for the SEE Regional Arms Laws Compendium and provide comments to SEESAC **by 30 November 2014** , and send additional legislation where relevant;
- Participants log into the **SEESAC Knowledge Exchange Platform** and provide their feedback about the overall functionality of the database and suggestions for improvement;
- Participants share with SEESAC if they would require further training on ISACS-AT or any other need in this regard;
- SEESAC to provide feedback on the issue of translating ISACS into local languages;
- Next SALW Commissions Meeting scheduled to take place in Mid-February 2015.