

4th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting

Online meeting, 25-26 November 2020

Meeting notes

BACKGROUND

The 4th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting was held online on 25-26 November 2020. The meeting was held as part of implementation of the [European Union Council Decision 2018/1788/CFSP in support of the implementation of the Regional Roadmap on Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in the Western Balkans](#).

The 4th Regional Roadmap Coordination meeting gathered representatives of the SALW Commissions in the Western Balkans, which are beneficiaries of the Roadmap, representatives of international and regional organizations engaged in arms control in the region, as well as the key donors in the area.

This meeting provided the opportunity to inform on and coordinate activities under implementation as per the specific goals of the Roadmap; discuss progress in Roadmap implementation and existing gaps based on data collected by the authorities on the Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); and discuss contributions from the international and regional organizations engaged in arms control in the region and donor support in countering the proliferation and illicit trafficking of firearms. The Regional Roadmap meetings enable not only information exchange and knowledge sharing, but also contribute to standardization of approaches across the region.

WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

Opening Session

Chaired by Ms. Bojana Balon, Head of SEESAC

Ms. Floriana Sipala, Head of Unit D.5, Organised Crime and Drugs Policy, DG Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), commended the progress in non-proliferation and arms control and the continuous commitment of the Western Balkans authorities to the Roadmap implementation. She emphasized that the newly adopted EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking integrates the substance and Key Performance Indicators of the Western Balkans Roadmap. She highlighted that the Roadmap is one of the most successful cooperation initiatives in the region, and as such, it has become a best working practice of the EU's cooperation with the Western Balkans.

Mr. Albrecht von Wittke, Director of Division, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, noted that the value of the Roadmap process lies in the fact that it is fully regionally owned, and stressed the importance of the continuity of regional cooperation. The fact that the Roadmap has been integrated into the EU Action Plan is a testimony of the importance of the Western Balkans for the EU. Furthermore, Mr. Wittke mentioned that, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Western Balkans jurisdictions have invested significant efforts into the preparation of this meeting, which is visible in the impressive inputs to the progress reports. Mr. Wittke concluded that both Germany and France will remain fully committed to the process.

H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador-at-large on transitional criminal threats and the fight against the illicit trafficking of SALW, France highlighted that the Roadmap's success is reflected in the fact that similar regional processes have been launched worldwide and that the Roadmap has inspired the EU in drafting of the new Action Plan, representing an example of how the region could work even more closely with the EU. He also underscored the importance of both local and regional coordination meetings as they represent an opportunity to take stock of the Roadmap implementation. Ambassador Brunet also reiterated France's commitment to the European perspective of the WB partners by supporting three main priorities, including the harmonization of the legal framework, increasing the seizure of illegal firearms and supporting criminal investigations and prosecutions.

Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, highlighted the strong commitment towards the implementation of the Roadmap by jurisdictions, despite the ongoing challenges and limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that this high-level engagement and ownership in the region represents a strong evidence of mutual trust and the long-lasting cooperation. Consequently, this remarkable example of cooperation further promotes transparency, confidence and stability, much needed in the region. Mr. Trogemann thanked the donors – in particular, the EU, Germany and France, as well as the UK, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands, for their contributions to the UN Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). Mr. Trogemann also thanked all the partners for their coordination that has proven to be a key precondition for success in this process.

Mr. Amer Kapetanovic, Head of Political Department, Regional Cooperation Centre, emphasized that the Roadmap process is a unique example of a regionally owned process – with the authorities in the region deepening the cooperation and measuring progress in achievement of targets with a clear set of indicators. He praised the Roadmap coordination and monitoring mechanism; its complexity and quality unlike any other in the Western Balkans. He stressed the importance of the RCC's strong political mandate, as well as the overall coordination role in the regional security cooperation and confirmed that RCC stands ready to support smooth and efficient implementation of the SALW priority agenda.

SESSION I – 4th REGIONAL ROADMAP PROGRESS REPORT – KEY FINDINGS

Ms. Juliana Buzi, Regional Cooperation Specialist, SEESAC presented the [4th Regional Roadmap Progress Report/Key findings](#) on Roadmap implementation based on KPIs and Roadmap Goals.

SESSION II – IMPLEMENTATION OF GOAL 1&2 OF THE ROADMAP – PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, PLANS

This session allowed the SALW Commissions of the six jurisdictions of the Western Balkans to present the progress made under Roadmap goals 1&2, as well as the key challenges in implementation, including those brought by the COVID-19 crisis, in addition to priorities, plans and the identified needs for support. The updates were based on the inputs to the Regional Narrative Progress Report on the implementation of the Roadmap.

Chaired by Mr. Alain Lapon, Chief Technical Adviser, SEESAC

Belgrade

On behalf of the **SALW Coordination Council**, **Mr. Zoran Lazarov, Assistant Minister, the Ministry of Interior (MoI)** presented the status of the implementation of the Roadmap and the Action Plan, as per Goals 1&2. He emphasized that Serbia has submitted the 4th Regional report despite the challenges caused by COVID-19 pandemic and parliamentary elections. With regard to Goal 1, Mr. Lazarov stressed that the harmonization of the legal framework with the EU Acquis is in progress. The Law amending the Law on Weapons and Ammunition was adopted during the reporting period, as well as the Rulebook on the method of performing control during testing, marking, individual testing, homologation, ammunition type control, testing of deactivated weapons and weapons permanently converted to civilian use, and the layout of markings and stamps. A Draft Law on Explosive Substances that will regulate the production and trade in explosives for civil use has been prepared. Its adoption is planned for the fourth quarter of 2021. Regarding Goal 2, Mr. Lazarov indicated that Serbia has adopted the Strategy on SALW Control for the period of 2019-2024, and an Action Plan for the period of 2019-2020. Furthermore, the Working Group for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy was established, as well as the Team for the implementation, monitoring and exchange of all operational information related to firearms (Firearm Focal Point).

Podgorica

Mr. Mladen Markovic, President of the SALW Commission, presented the status of the implementation of the Roadmap and the Action Plan as per Goals 1&2, emphasizing that the Draft Law on amendments to the Law on weapons has been prepared and sent to the European Commission. The assessment of the Criminal Code and Law on Criminal Procedure in the field of illicit arms trade is complete. UNODC provided recommendations, and the amendments should be implemented by the end of the year. Mr. Markovic underscored that an inter-institutional task force drafted the Law on the Production, Overhaul and Marking of Weapons, and that the BAFA has provided comments regarding this draft Law. He concluded by saying that Montenegro has adopted the SALW Control Strategy for 2019-2024, as well as its Action Plan, which is in line with the Roadmap.

Pristina

Mr. Destan Mustafa, Head of the Division for Weapons, Ammunitions and Explosives, Department of Public Safety, stressed that Kosovo* remained committed to the fight against illegal trafficking of SALW, despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the process of the Roadmap implementation.

Mr. Burim Kadriu, Senior Officer, Department of Public Safety, announced that that review of the laws governing arms control had been initiated with the aim of reaching full harmonization with the EU directives. He added that Kosovo has six laws that regulate this field. Mr. Kadriu noted that some of the challenges are related to the frequent amendments to the EU Directives and regulations. For example, the Law on the Civil Use of Explosives is from 2013, while the Directive was published after that. He also noted that the Law on the Trade of Strategic Goods is approximately 80% harmonized with the EU directives. Additional difficulties relate to the inter-institutional and international cooperation regarding direct data sharing. Mr. Kadriu concluded that the SALW Control Strategy for the period of 2017–2021 and its Action Plan are fully harmonized with the Roadmap.

Sarajevo

Mr. Ermin Pesto, Head of SALW Coordination Board, presented the status of implementation of Roadmap Goals 1&2, emphasizing that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the activities during the reporting period. However, Mr. Pesto stressed that the harmonization of the laws with the EU legal framework is currently in process. He underscored that the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Una-Sana Canton has adopted a new Law on Weapons, harmonized with all the EU directives. He noted that it was agreed that this law will be a model for the development of the laws on weapons for other ministries of internal affairs. He further emphasized that Brčko District is drafting the new Law on Weapons. Mr. Pesto also announced that the SALW Coordination Board is working on the development of the new SALW Control Strategy and accompanied Action Plan that would be completely in line with the Roadmap Goals. In addition, he highlighted that four workshops were held, and added that the Strategy is in the proposal phase, and after the approvals are collected from the relevant institutions, it will be sent into the parliamentary procedure. Mr. Pesto concluded that the proposal for the composition of the new SALW Coordination Board will be developed and sent into the parliamentary procedure.

Skopje

Ms. Lidija Petrova, National focal point for SALW, noted that the harmonization of legislation with the EU directives is ongoing. She added that the Rulebook on the technical specifications for firearms deactivation has been prepared and submitted to the Assembly for adoption. Furthermore, Ms. Petrova informed that the working group for drafting the Law on Explosive Substances was working on its harmonization with the EU's legislation. The Law is to be submitted in governmental procedure and expected to be promulgated in 2021. Moreover, a Draft Law on the Development, Production and Trade of Military Goods has been prepared. It has been submitted to the competent institutions for their opinions in which is followed by the governmental procedure and expected to be promulgated in 2021. Ms. Petrova also noted that the work on drafting the Law on Explosive Substances is ongoing and that the final text should be ready by end 2020. Ms. Petrova emphasized that a SALW Control Strategy and Action Plan are in place and valid from 2017-2021. A working group for the development of the new SALW

* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

Control Strategy has been established and a request has been made to SEESAC to support the development process.

Tirana

Mr. Besfort Lamallari, Deputy Minister/Chair of SALW Commission, emphasized that the harmonization of legislation with the EU Acquis is ongoing. Mr. Lamallari added that a working group has prepared the amendments to the Law on Weapons, with the aim of harmonizing it with the EU firearms Directive. He further stated that the Ministry of Defence is working on the Law on the civil use of explosives, while the Ministry of Justice has been working on the Criminal Code referring to trafficking of firearms, in cooperation with UNODC. He also informed that the Strategy for SALW Control of 2019-2024 and the Action Plan of 2019-2021 are in place and fully harmonized with the Roadmap.

Comments:

Mr. Emmanuel Valens, Policy Officer, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission reminded the SALW Commissions not to hesitate to write directly to the Firearms Task-Force of DG Migration and Home Affairs, especially with respect to draft legislation, since the Task-Force is in charge of the firearms directives.

Mr. Fausto Octavio Brindis Abraham, Programme Officer, Parliamentary Forum on SALW, inquired on SALW Commissions' cooperation with the parliaments in the region.

In response, **Mr. Ermin Pesto** explained that the SALW Coordination Board submits annual reports on Strategy implementation to the Council of Ministers and Parliament – Committee for Security. Furthermore, each competent institution submits the draft law to the parliamentary procedure and draft law goes through the work of several parliamentary committees. Public discussions also represent an integral part of this procedure.

Mr. Miodrag Lazic, Head of the Department of European Affairs and Planning, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, informed that there is a regular procedure regarding the cooperation with the Parliament. He noted that regular consultations are conducted during the adoption of strategic documents, for which invitations are also sent to the representatives of the Parliament.

Ms. Jasmina Roskic, Head of Department, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication of the Republic of Serbia (MoTTT), added that when the Government adopts the annual report on arms exports, MoTTT also submits it to the Parliament. Afterwards, MoTTT representatives invite members of the Parliament and present the report in detail to the Committee on Economy and the Committee on Security.

SESSION III – IMPLEMENTATION OF GOAL 2 (Cont.) & 3 OF THE ROADMAP – PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, PLANS

This session allowed the SALW Commissions of the six jurisdictions of the Western Balkans to present the progress made under Roadmap goals 2 (Cont.) and 3, as well as the key challenges in implementation, including those brought by the COVID-19 crisis, priorities, plans and the identified needs for support. The updates were based on the inputs to the Regional Narrative Progress Report on the implementation of the Roadmap.

Chaired by: Mr. Emmanuel Vallens, Policy Officer, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

Belgrade

Mr. Miodrag Lasic, Head of Department of European Affairs and Planning, Ministry of Interior, emphasized that the Firearms Focal Point (FFP) has been formally established, while the process of operationalization is ongoing. Mr. Lasic added that the establishment of a “virtual” FFP would be the best option. This would entail an appointment of a member of the Team who would perform duties within already established organizational unit and would not require creating a new organizational unit.

Mr. Lasic stressed that the application “Stolen and Missing Weapons” was launched in May 2020, within the MoI’s information system. The application will enable the search for missing and stolen weapons. He also announced that Serbia has had a total of 232 tracing requests in the iARMS during the reporting period, out of which 230 have been answered, whereas 2 were being processed. Mr. Lasic added that Serbia participated in the Joint Action Days. He also highlighted the cooperation with UNDP CO with respect to the support and implementation of the project “Advancing the Capacities of the Serbian Ministry of the Interior in the Field of the Custody Chain, Crime Scene Investigations and the Ballistic Laboratory in the Field of Operations and Investigations in the Trafficking of Firearms and Firearm Criminality”.

Mr. Milan Tkalac, Public Prosecutor, Appellate Public Prosecutor’s Office, reported on the cooperation with the EUROJUST. He stressed that 32 new cases of criminal offences were being processed, that four coordination meetings were held and that, currently, three joint investigation teams are operational during the reporting period. Mr. Tkalac stressed that there were 1252 cases of the illegal possession of firearms addressed in the reporting period, 167 of which were dismissed (charges against individuals), while 329 of which were solved with a conviction – adjudicated, and 109 of which were solved in another way.

Podgorica

Mr. Mladen Markovic stressed that the FFP is placed in the Criminal Intelligence Department due to the functions of data processing and analysis. Furthermore, he added that data analysis applications are linked to the data on registered weapons, operational duty service (seized weapons), and tracing service (traced weapons). He also noted that a temporary database of weapons under expert examination at the forensic center has been created. Mr. Markovic reminded that the ballistic laboratory has not been accredited yet. However, certain actions are being taken in this regard; such as the donation of the Evofinder system by the Government of France. **Mr. Markovic** stressed that, during the reporting period, there were 14

records, 25 searches, 0 hits and 18 submitted trace requests in the iARMS. Moreover, within cooperation with SELEC, there is active participation in two operational projects, SIRAS (strengthening the capacity to combat firearms trafficking) and FAIT (strengthening the capacity to combat the trafficking of excise goods). Mr. Markovic presented data from the prosecutor's office, emphasizing that there were 141 cases of the illegal possession of firearms addressed in the reporting period, 20 of which had been dismissed (charges against individuals), while 98 cases of which were pending.

Pristina

Mr. Burim Kadriu reported that the FFP has been established in 2016, and that it is fully operational. He also added that the weapons tracing is in place. He noted that Kosovo does not have direct access to iARMS, but frequently sends information for inspection and registration of stolen/lost firearms through the UNMIK INTERPOL Liaison Officer. He added that data on 12 lost/stolen firearms has been sent for the purpose of their registration in iARMS; 36 requests have been sent for verification to Interpol and iARMS, while 35 requests have been accepted for verification at the national level. Mr. Kadriu emphasized that Kosovo did not participate in JAD in September 2020. Furthermore, he underscored that the ballistic laboratory was accredited, and that this year, it has extended its accreditation by 4 more years, until 2023. Regarding Goal 3, **Mr. Kadriu** informed that 2 cases of firearms trafficking have occurred during the reporting period. In addition, 105 risk profiles for control purposes have been submitted and 7,122 second line checks have been performed, thus preventing 11 cases of forbidden goods, including weapons, ammunitions and parts of weapons. He further added that the border authorities (police and customs) have conducted 6 Operational actions at the local level in order to strengthen border control. Mr. Kadriu also announced that 5 dogs have been purchased for the K9 Unit within Kosovo Police. These dogs would be trained in sniffing and detecting firearms manufactured from polymer. He concluded by providing information about two trainings: on the CIRAM 2 model for 43 border police officers, customs officers and those working at the National Centre for Border Management was conducted, as well as on risk profiling at the Border Crossing Points, based on the factors leading to such profiling for 30 border, customs and NCBM officers.

Sarajevo

Mr. Ermin Pesto reported on the challenges in establishing the FFP in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to its decentralized institutional system. He added that the decision to establish a working group for the establishment of a FFP has been returned twice from the session of the BiH Council of Ministers. Furthermore, Mr. Pesto stressed that the Directorate for the Coordination of Police Bodies (Department for Cooperation with EUROPOL), uses the SIENA for the exchange of information related to firearms, while the NCB INTERPOL Sarajevo Department has access to the iARMS database. Access to this database is provided to all the police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the reporting period, the Directorate has processed several requests related to firearms. A total of 83 cases were opened, as follows: 50 new cases related to the illegal arms trade were opened at the request of INTERPOL member states, 10 new cases were initiated at the request of domestic police agencies, and 23 new requests were received through Europol's secure SIENA communication system related to the illegal arms trade. Mr. Pesto highlighted that the priority would be to enhance cooperation with the prosecution.

Skopje

Ms. Lidija Petrova stressed that an FFP has been established in the Division for Firearms and Ballistics in OKTIV. The MoI has appointed two persons/analysts tasked with the operation of the FFP. Furthermore, the Ballistics laboratory is accredited and an Evofinder system has been offered by the French Government. Ms. Petrova underscored that, with the support of UNDP, an ongoing project aims to improve the national SALW-related data collection practices through the following: introducing an electronic system for weapon registration and tracing, and improving and harmonizing the information management system in the Ministry. In addition, Ms. Petrova noted that OSCE supports the connection between the department of International Police Cooperation and Joint Contact Centers for Police and Customs Cooperation. She further stated that no cases of diversion of arms exports have been reported. Ms. Petrova highlighted that information has been exchanged on six cases with EUROPOL and on 26 cases with INTERPOL. She further added that North Macedonia participated in the regional operation “Bosphorus”, organized within the EMPACT programme for fighting against firearm-related crime. She announced that an increase in K9 capacities for SALW detection at the borders was agreed with OSCE.

Tirana

Mr. Ilirjan Balla, Head of FFP, Albanian State Police, stated that the FFP is comprised of six members (specialists) and a director, and that it is led by the Chief of Sector Against Trafficking in the Criminal Police Department. He added that the FFP operates as a working group that enables the management, gathering, analysis, exchange and use of information (criminal and ballistic) related to legal and illegal firearms. He reported that all seized weapons have been registred, and stated that there were seven records for lost/stolen weapons entered in the iARMS system, while 62 searches took place during this period, and two actions were organized in the second half of 2020. Mr. Balla said that the data for the distribution of SALW could be extracted from the Weapons Management Information System (WMIS), and highlighted that the data could be extracted by age and gender, though not automatically, but manually. Mr. Balla noted that the Forensic laboratory has not been accredited yet. Furthermore, he stressed that six criminal offenses of trafficking in weapons and ammunition have been identified and are under investigation. He also added that Albania continuously exchanges information with Europol regarding the investigations performed by the State Police, as well as by the counterparts from the member states and the Western Balkans. Mr. Balla noted that Border police structures have an ongoing cooperation with Frontex at the Border Crossing Points to prevent firearm trafficking. During the reporting period, two cases of firearms trafficking were identified at two border crossing points upon exiting Albania.

Mr. Kujtim Luli, Chief of Sector/Prosecution, General Prosecution Office, reported that, based on the statistical indicators for the first half of the year, it could be observed that there was a decrease in the number of proceedings filed, i.e. 50% for the criminal offence of “Firearms and ammunition trafficking” and 21.1% for the criminal offence of “Illegal possession and manufacture of weapons, explosives and ammunitions”, as well as a decrease by 10.9% in the number of cases which fall under these criminal offences, sent for adjudication, compared to the second half of 2019.

Comments:

Mr. Diman Dimov, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, UNODC Global Firearms Programme, stressed that Article 348 of the Serbian Criminal Code is not harmonized with the firearms protocol, which

make their hands “tied”, since all the cases relate to the illegal possession and illegal trade of firearms. The same situation is in Montenegro and North Macedonia. He added that UNODC in North Macedonia is developing a gap and needs analysis for the detection of firearms in postal parcels, stating that they are at the final stage with the project application, pending its approval. For Kosovo, Mr. Dimov emphasized that the obligation to implement the Firearms Protocol is mandatory only for UN members. He also highlighted that development of the gap analysis of criminal law and criminal procedure law in BiH is being finalized and would be shared with the Ministry of Justice.

H.E. Clemens Koja, Head of OSCE Mission in Skopje, stressed that the OSCE would continue its work in North Macedonia in the reduction of the risk of proliferation of SALW, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. He mentioned that the physical and ICT security upgrades for 11 border police stations has been initiated, and that OSCE would collaborate with the MoI on the real-time information exchange possibility for the police. The aim is to involve the currently existing police-custom cooperation centers and ensure direct access to the SIENA system, as well as to conduct awareness raising campaigns and provide support to the strengthening of the Canine (K-9) capacity of the police services to detect and confiscate SALW, ammunition and explosives.

Ms. Meri Atanasovski, Project Manager, UNDP CO North Macedonia, informed on the ongoing project “Improving national SALW-related practices and building a violence-resilient community.” She noted that the upgrade of Weapons Registration and Stockpile Management Software (WRMS) is in its final stage of development. In parallel comprehensive trainings have been completed for end users of WRMS, with 120 participants from different sectors within the MoI and the weapon selling companies. She also noted that the necessary equipment (servers and licenses) have been procured and delivered to project beneficiary for the functioning of WRMS.

THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2020

SESSION IV - IMPLEMENTATION OF GOAL 4&5 OF THE ROADMAP– PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, PLANS

This session allowed the SALW Commissions of the six jurisdictions of the Western Balkans to present updates on the status of implementation of Goal 4&5 of the Roadmap including, progress, key challenges and plans.

Chaired by: Mr. Slobodan Boskovic, Project Officer, Conflict Prevention Centre/FSC Support Section, OSCE

Belgrade

Mr. Miodrag Lazic emphasized the challenges caused by COVID-19 pandemic to the implementation of goals 4 and 5. He noted that all activities and projects that have been planned under these goals in coordination with the international organizations are currently on a standby.

With regards to legalization and voluntary surrender of firearms, Mr. Lazic noted that 6,465 pieces of firearms were seized from legal owners during the reporting period. Furthermore, he stressed that the

owners have surrendered 32,161 pieces of registered weapons, doubling the number of voluntary surrenders in comparison to the previous reporting period. He also mentioned that 58,450 weapons were re-registered while 541 pieces of weapons were legalized within the weapon legalization campaign, which took place between March and August. During the reporting period, 276 pieces of registered weapons were deactivated. Mr. Lazic expressed gratitude to France and OSCE for their support to the capacity building for the deactivation of firearms.

Podgorica

Mr. Mladen Markovic also reported that COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the slowdown of the implementation of goals 4 and 5. He expressed a need for additional support to “Respect life, return weapons” awareness raising campaign. Furthermore, Mr. Markovic noted that additional awareness raising activities shall be targeted at weapons producers, sellers and licensed persons in order to inform them on potential harms of weapons and precursors.

Mr. Markovic informed that citizens have voluntarily surrendered around 90 firearms, 51 mines and explosive devices (mostly hand grenades) and around 572 pieces ammunition during the reporting period. He further mentioned that there were 149 criminal charges for illegal possession of firearms in the first half of the year. With regards to the deactivation of firearms, Mr. Markovic noted that very few citizens use the possibility for the deactivation of firearms, underlying that no deactivation of firearms was reported during the current reporting period. In conclusion, Mr. Markovic thanked UNDP and OSCE for their support and cooperation and inquired on the possibilities for the organization of trainings to support canine explosives detection capabilities.

Pristina

Mr. Burim Kadriu, Senior Officer, Department of Public Safety noted that during the reporting period two meetings on the misuses of SALW were organized with the private and legal entities (retail shops, security companies, shooting ranges, etc.). He further stressed that due to COVID-19 pandemic no activities were organized regarding the raising the awareness of general population on the threats related to the use of the firearms.

Mr. Kadriu also informed that no activities to decrease the number of firearms through legalization or voluntary surrender have been conducted this year. The possibility of legalization of firearms for deactivation purposes is covered by the law on weapons, however, bylaws that would regulate all pertaining technical issues need to be drafted. He also noted that the system for weapon registry is entering into the final designing stage.

Sarajevo

Mr. Damir Karahodzic, Head of the Department for Regulation of Weapons Production at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations and Member of the SALW Coordination Board informed the participants that this year’s awareness and outreach activities conducted by the relevant inspectorate have been reduced by one third, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Mr. Karahodzic noted that the current situation did not have an impact on the activities that the authorities are undertaking regarding the outreach to the firearms manufacturers.

He mentioned that the focus of the authorities in the upcoming period will remain on the harmonization of the firearms marking regulations for those firearms intended for deactivation. This process will be based on the UN protocol and the EU Regulation. The intention of the authorities in Sarajevo is to implement this activity with the support of the European Commission and the international organizations. Mr. Karahodzic also underlined impediments for the comprehensive alignment of this regulation since consensus has to be reached on the state level in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Ermin Pesto, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Security and Head of SALW Coordination Board added that competent authorities in Bosnia Herzegovina could not conduct awareness raising campaigns due to the pandemic. However, he expressed hope that awareness raising campaigns will be conducted in the next reporting period, through already planned projects with UNDP and OSCE. Moreover, Mr. Pesto informed the participants that the relevant authorities have seized 4 firearms on the borders, and 98 inland. He noted that these numbers are fewer compared to the previous reporting period due to pandemic and the migrant crisis as the capacities of the border police are overburdened. In conclusion, Mr. Pesto informed that 202 firearms and 3709 pieces of ammunition have been voluntarily surrendered, while 80 firearms were legalized, and 14 firearms were deactivated during the reporting period.

Skopje

Ms. Lidija Petrova, National focal point for SALW informed the participants that a training session was organized for all representatives and legal entities whose business activities are related to firearms. She stated that a request has been made to the OSCE for the support in planning and organization of awareness raising campaign. Furthermore, Ms. Petrova mentioned that 60 criminal offences related to SALW were reported during the reporting period.

Ms. Petrova noted that an extensive work has been conducted within the relevant ministry to set a strategy for capacity building and awareness raising. In addition, she mentioned the necessity to establish a legal framework for legalization or voluntary surrender. This would create also the legal ground for the future campaign on the deactivation of firearms.

Tirana

Mr. Gramos Sulaj, Albanian State Police noted that during the reporting period only 3 firearms were voluntarily surrendered due to lack of legal framework which would allow smother process of legalization. He also informed that a slight decrease in the number of seized firearms took place during the reporting period due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Sulaj stressed that certain amendments to the relevant legislation have been made during the reporting period with an aim of further alignment to the EU relevant documents. He informed that during the reporting period there were 14 incidents with firearms in legal possession and 47 incidents with firearms in illegal possession. He also noted that, as the result of pandemic, priority was put on the activities related to the improving of the infrastructure of facilities for storage of weapons through support from UNDP and SEESAC. With regards to other activities, Mr. Sulaj expressed interest for further support to capacity building that would aim to enhance internal coordination. As one of the priorities in the upcoming period, he mentioned the reassessment and re-registration of all firearms with a focus on category C weapons (hunting weapons).

Comments:

H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador-at-large on transitional criminal threats and fight against the illicit trafficking of SALW, France praised SALW Commissions members for a very focused and informative discussion. He noted that support to the deactivation of firearms has been identified as a clear priority for France. As a result, France and OSCE co-developed a project that includes an online conference and a visit to the *Banc National d' Epreuve de Saint-Etienne* (Saint-Etienne Proof House) for the Western Balkans firearms experts. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of firearms collection campaigns and underlined French readiness to share its information and experiences in this regard.

In conclusion of the session, representatives from Sarajevo and Tirana reiterated that COVID-19 pandemic represents a significant impediment for the implementation of goals 4 and 5. Mr. Boskovic added that the OSCE will consider possible opportunities to further support jurisdictions in 2021 to conduct outreach and awareness raising, particularly towards the civilian population, but also towards the weapons manufacturers, retailers, security companies and other legal entities whose business activities are related to firearms.

SESSION V – IMPLEMENTATION OF GOAL 6&7 OF THE ROADMAP - PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, PLANS

This session allowed the SALW Commissions of the six jurisdictions of the Western Balkans to present updates on the status of implementation of Goal 6&7 of the Roadmap including, progress, key challenges and plans.

Chaired by Ms. Eirini Lemos-Maniati, Deputy Director, Arms Control, Disarmament and WMD Non-Proliferation Center, NATO HQ

In her introductory remarks, Ms. Lemos-Maniati noted that NATO's goal is to help partners in SEE to build their own capacities to mitigate and address SALW challenges and their security concerns. She stressed that NATO has been a strong supporter of the Roadmap and have contributed substantially to the implementation of the Goals 6 and 7. In this regard, she mentioned the support provided to the demilitarization and destruction of surplus of convention weapons and ammunition in Serbia and Montenegro as well as to the ongoing project in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Belgrade

Mr. Miodrag Lazic, noted that Ministry of Interior did not organize destruction of firearms during the reported period due to COVID-19 pandemic. However, Ministry of Defense demilitarized 37,4 tons of ammunition as well as dismantling of 176,590 pieces of SALW, mines, hand grenades and different lighters. These activities were implemented through the NATO's support. Mr. Lazic informed on the development of the project proposal to upgrade Mol's weapons and ammunition storage in "Duvaniste". He also stressed that a priority in the upcoming period will be on the reconstruction of the evidence rooms throughout Serbia. Furthermore, Mr. Lazic noted that a number of activities have been conducted with regards to the goal 7. Inspection systems are in place for relevant legal entities and detailed information with regards to this topic has been provided through the Narrative Report.

Podgorica

Mr. Mladen Markovic noted that the Ministry of Defense finalized an activity of the destruction of 240 pieces of acoustic bottom-influence mines. In addition, approximately 84 tons of explosive ordnances of big caliber were destroyed through the support of ITF and NATO. Furthermore, Mr. Markovic stated that 4 tons of unexploded ordnances were collected during the reporting period. He also stressed that Montenegro was cleared from cluster munitions this year through the support by Norwegian People's Aid project.

Mr. Markovic added that certain funds have been obtained for further adaptation of two Ministry of Interior's storage facilities. He stressed that additional funds are needed to increase the security measures in one military storage. Mr. Markovic praised cooperation with SEESAC in the reconstruction of evidence rooms – a process that is ongoing. He also explained the process of control and oversight of all relevant legal entities that have SALW in their possession.

Pristina

Mr. Burim Kadriu, Senior Officer, Department for Public Safety, noted that there are no surpluses of SALW from state institutions or legal entities. He also stated that no destruction activities were organized during the reporting period. Mr. Sallahu mentioned that 33 inspections of storage facilities were conducted during the reporting period, out of which 40 percent was owned by legal entities. He noted that one state storage facility for pyrotechnic devices was constructed through a donation from UNDP.

Mr. Kadriu expressed need for further support in the capacity building and training of the inspectors, as well as for the establishment of the system for registration of destroyed weapons. He also informed on criticism received from NGOs regarding the environmental aspect of the destruction process (through melting) and inquired about possibilities for support in development of an ecologically more favorable process. Mr. Kadriu also described the legal process for the destruction of weapons and concluded that additional systematization is needed in order to establish a better organized procedure.

Sarajevo

Mr. Ermin Pesto, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Security and Head of SALW Coordination Board noted that one of the strategic goals of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of control of SALW is the destruction of the confiscated SALW. He stressed that important progress has been made within this activity over the last several years. In particular, he highlighted the progress in coordination and cooperation of different police agencies and other stakeholders within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Pesto also informed that the progress over the past few years has been achieved in the area of the upgrade and development of police storage facilities. However, during the reporting period, COVID-19 pandemic caused a slowdown in the implementation of this activity. Mr Pesto expressed hope that these activities will be continued soon as SEESAC's support has been already agreed for the upgrade of several storages. Additional support is expected from OSCE. With regards to the destruction of surplus of firearms and ammunition, Mr. Pesto noted that 275 tones have been destroyed during the reporting period, while 40,169 pieces of SALW have been marked.

Skopje

Ms. Lidija Petrova, noted that the management of stockpiles and destruction of surpluses are conducted in line with international standards. However, during the reporting period no destruction of surpluses of firearms was organized due the impediments caused by COVID-19 pandemic. She also stressed that 41 cases of stolen weapons occurred during the reporting period and noted that one of the challenges is how to improve and modernize the storage facilities where weapons are being stored.

Ms. Petrova informed that authorities are in the process of finalization of a project that would entail an upgrade of 16 storage facilities and expressed a need for the international assistance and technical support. She also noted that further support will be needed to upgrade evidence rooms.

Tirana

Mr. Blerim Caka, representative of the Ministry of Defense noted that no activities with regards to destruction of surpluses have been conducted during the reporting period. However, he noted that relevant authorities have continued with the implementation of a demilitarization project on clearing hotspots contaminated with explosives. Furthermore, he noted that recent revisions and amendments to the law on weapons will allow prompt initiation of the destruction of confiscated weapons.

Mr. Caka also stressed that additional upgrades have been conducted on the three underground storage facilities through the support from the United States and SEESAC. In addition, physical security of weapons in storage was increased through the successful procurement of safes and there is an intention to continue with this activity.

Comments:

Ms. Sabina Beber Bostjancic, Deputy Director, ITF Enhancing Human Security thanked authorities in Montenegro and Albania for constructive cooperation in the implementation of their projects. She called upon closer coordination among international stakeholders with an aim to maximize utilization of available resources and avoid the duplication of activities.

SESSION VI – FUNDING SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROADMAP

This session allowed SEESAC to update on the funding mechanisms and tools established or available in support of the implementation of the Roadmap, while the donors informed on the current or new planned funding support.

Chaired by: **Mr. Amer Kapetanović, Head of Political Department, Regional Cooperation Council**

Ms. Bojana Balon, Head of UNDP SEESAC/Secretariat of the Western Balkans Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) presented the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund established in the support of the implementation of the Roadmap. She noted that the current contributors (Germany, UK, Netherlands, Sweden, France and Norway) amount to over 12 million US dollars. She described the Governance Structure of the Trust Fund. The Steering Committee is composed of ex officio members: Germany, France and EU; top three donors to the Fund: the UK, Netherlands and Sweden; and participating organizations: UNDP and UNODC. Additionally, the Administrative Agent - the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office is part of the SC with no voting rights.

The Steering Committee is the guiding, decision-making and supervisory body for the Fund activities. It is responsible with setting the strategic guidelines of the Fund, approving project proposals, and monitoring the Fund's overall performance.

UNDP and UNODC are MPTF participating organizations that can apply and receive funding for projects implementation. They can partner with other organizations in development and implementation of projects but maintain the overall responsibility for project implementation.

The Administrative Agent (Multi Partner Trust Fund Office) is in charge with the administration of the funds, including, receiving donor contributions and disbursing funds to Participating Organizations in accordance with the decisions of the Steering Committee, preparing financial reports, and providing tools to ensure the transparency of the Fund.

At the request of donors, SEESAC is functioning as the Secretariat, and is responsible for the programmatic coordination and monitoring of the Trust Fund activities, providing technical support to the Fund. The Secretariat has no voting rights. SEESAC cannot receive funding for projects implementation from the Trust Fund.

Ms. Balon also added there are four projects under current implementation in the Western Balkans jurisdictions, implemented by UNDP and UNODC while additional five projects have already been approved and are to be initiated between January and April 2021. She further noted that additional project co-developed by UNODC and INTERPOL is in the process of approval.

In response to a specific question from Ms. Carapic, GICHD, Mr. Diman Dimov, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Global Firearms Programme, UNODC informed on an example on how other organizations can apply to MPTF funds through the co-application with UNDP and/or UNODC.

Mr. Albrecht von Wittke, Director of Division, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany noted that Germany has already supported the Roadmap implementation through bilateral projects as well by providing funds through international organizations. He announced additional German support through a donation 3 million EUR that will be provided to MPTF to finance new projects. In parallel, Germany will also provide an additional 1 million EUR to the OSCE's repository program for comprehensive SALW and conventional ammunition control.

H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador-at-large on transitional criminal threats and the fight against the illicit trafficking of SALW, France noted the importance of keeping the momentum in financial contributions to the MPTF and commended the EU for its essential financial contribution to the implementation of the Roadmap. He also informed the participants that France will continue to contribute to the MPTF in 2021 and announced that French side has already decided to donate 300,000 EUR to the OSCE program in support of the Roadmap with a particular focus on the canine capability and two additional activities related to the deactivation and a visit to Saint-Etienne Proof House.

Ms. Sarah McAveety, Justice and Home Affairs Regional Adviser at the British Embassy in Tirana congratulated all the stakeholders on the successful progress made so far and presented contributions and activities implemented by the UK's relevant institutions.

Ms. Ena Kulenovic, Project Manager at the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control BAFA stressed BAFA's commitment to continue its support to the Roadmap and presented project and its activities implemented in this regard.

Conclusions of the Meeting

H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador-at-large on transitional criminal threats and the fight against the illicit trafficking of SALW, France thanked the Western Balkans SALW Commissions' members and all participants of the 4th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting on remarkable progress achieved. He stressed the importance of the regional integration achieved through the Roadmap process and underlined French full commitment to keep the momentum despite the difficulties imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador Brunet also noted that the Roadmap is a key component of the French strategy to work closer with the Western Balkans and underlined that it would remain a high priority going forward to the first semester of 2022 when France will take upon the EU presidency.

Mr. Albrecht von Wittke, Director of Division, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany expressed his appreciation for the high level of commitment shown by all participants during the 4th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting despite all the challenges and difficult circumstances. He noted that harmonizing legislation is a key component of the Roadmap and applauded the progress achieved under Goal 1. Furthermore, Mr. Wittke underlined the importance of the institutional setup, putting a particular emphasize on Firearms Focal Points and their role in analysis and information sharing within jurisdictions and cooperation between jurisdictions.

Mr. Georgios Kritikos, Deputy Head of Division for Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Exports Control, European External Action Service in his concluding remarks confirmed the EU's readiness to stand by its partners in the Western Balkans, emphasizing that the Roadmap is a road leading to Europe. He commended the SALW authorities for their unwavering commitment to Roadmap implementation, despite the additional challenges and limitations brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters and other impediments that impacted this initiative. He also commended the impressive level of knowledge and good practices established in the region in SALW control and shared during the meeting days.

Mr. Kritikos also stressed that the Western Balkans authorities have demonstrated a high degree of ownership in the Roadmap, resulting in one of the most successful cooperation initiatives in the region. In particular, Mr. Kritikos acknowledged the important progress achieved in the area of non-proliferation and arms control in the Western Balkans underlining its significance for both the EU and its Member States. In conclusion, Mr. Kritikos thanked all the international organizations and donors supporting the Roadmap implementation and contributing to the coordination efforts. He encouraged donors to provide further support as per expressed needs of the authorities and their identified priorities.