The SEESAC initiative is supported by:

[Images of flags and logos from various countries]
UNDP prides itself on being a trusted partner able to facilitate access to a unique menu of knowledge, expertise, and practical experience to further the development agenda across the globe.

The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) is a perfect example of this. With almost two decades of experience in facilitating regional cooperation and advancing effective, accountable and inclusive security sector institutions in South East Europe, Belarus and Ukraine, SEESAC has assembled a wide range of top experts, gained the trust of institutions, and perfected a series of strategies to achieve concrete results. SEESAC actively facilitates regional cooperation to advance its agenda, contributing to peacebuilding in a post-conflict landscape.

This joint UNDP – Regional Cooperation Council initiative leans on two pillars to enhance citizen security, one dedicated to strengthening small arms and light weapons (SALW) control, and the other focused on mainstreaming gender equality in the security sector reform, thus effectively advancing achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals.

Year 2020 brought a unique set of challenges, with the COVID-19 pandemic and three parliamentary elections held in the region bringing to a halt many Governments’ activities. Yet, SEESAC maintained Governments’ active engagement and achieved one of its highest delivery rates (93%) in 19 years, implementing project activities worth over $3 million. This success demonstrates SEESAC’s relevance in the region, as well as a genuine engagement from institutional partners and a truly committed, professional and adaptable team.

It comes as no surprise that, in 2020, SEESAC’s approach has been replicated and adopted by regions and institutions across the world. Mirroring the Western Balkans’ example, the Caribbean region developed and adopted its own SALW Control Roadmap. The EU Commission integrated the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap into the new EU Action Plan on Combating Illicit Trafficking of SALW and introduced the Roadmap’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as a way of initiating data collection and monitoring of progress on arms control within the EU.

As it strives for excellence, SEESAC enjoys UNDP’s full support and serves as an example of smart and adaptable implementation of the United Nations’ values and approaches.
2020 has been a particularly difficult year for all and South East and East Europe is no different. COVID-19 pandemic initiated lockdowns, disrupted work processes and instilled in us a deep sense of uncertainty. In the midst of these unprecedented times, three parliamentary elections were held in Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia bringing with them usual delays in the implementation of scheduled activities. In spite of these compounded and truly considerable obstacles, the region stayed remarkably on target in terms of its commitments to The Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap as well as its work on gender mainstreaming in security sector reform.

As the organization mandated to advance a political climate of dialog, reconciliation, tolerance and openness towards cooperation in South East Europe – we at the RCC see this demonstration of steadfast dedication to a set of jointly defined and agreed goals by all the regional players as a truly encouraging sign for the future of increased cooperation, transparency, knowledge exchange and joint action; and we applaud it.

The importance of readiness for regional collaboration becomes particularly important when we consider how the level of arms control in any one jurisdiction directly affects the safety and security environment not only at home, but throughout the region and beyond it. We must not forget that our problems, and their solutions, are deeply interconnected and should be addressed as such.

The success we witnessed in 2020, and which this Report details, has not been achieved easily. It was born out of almost two decades-long strategic approach spearheaded by UNDP with SEESAC, and ultimately implemented by the authorities in the region. RCC is particularly proud of having provided a political framework for such an important and comprehensive coordination effort and would like to extend its gratitude to the EU, Germany, Norway, US and Slovakia for lending their generous support without which this year’s achievement would not be feasible.

RCC’s 2021 Western Balkan Public Barometer indicates a positive trend regarding the perceptions of gun ownership and a sense of security among the public in the region, particularly as they relate to illegal possession and misuse of weapons. We see this as yet another and a very tangible result of this long-term joint effort and we hope it is an indication of positive change to come.
SEESAC is UNDP’s and RCC’s flagship regional programme contributing to the reduction of illicit arms flows and armed violence, as well as to advancement of gender equality, and thus to the implementation of UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 and 5. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) enable violent crime and, in some cases, human rights violations, including killing and maiming, domestic violence and various forms of sexual violence.

Through the implementation of practical measures on the ground, coupled with facilitation of several regional processes that regularly bring together stakeholders that are generally functioning in a politically sensitive environment, the programme not only contributes to the reduction of armed violence in the region, but also contributes to the regional cooperation and confidence-building. The project is therefore a key element of the UNDP’s reconciliation and peace sustaining efforts while also being an example of how to better address developmental challenges using a regional approach.

As a joint initiative of the UNDP and the RCC, SEESAC is the focal point for SALW-related activities in South East and East Europe. Since 2002 SEESAC has served as the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, working with key stakeholders on implementing a holistic approach to SALW control through the execution of a wide spectrum of activities. These included:

- facilitation of strategic and operational regional cooperation;
- supporting policy development and capacity enhancement of institutions;
- awareness-raising and SALW collection campaigns;
- stockpile management, surplus reduction, improved marking and tracing capabilities; and
- improved arms export control.

In 2009, SEESAC also initiated the development of a comprehensive regional programme on gender equality in the security sector.
Additionally, the project contributes to the following targets: SDG target 16.1 - Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere, and SDG target 5.2 - Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

In terms of international and regional legal frameworks, SEESAC directly contributes to the achievement of SDG 16, striving to Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, as well as advancing SDG 5, intended to Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Specifically, SEESAC’s work is linked to SDG target 16.4 which aims to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime. SEESAC is poised to contribute to the target by supporting the work on countering the illicit trafficking and misuse of firearms through improved SALW control legal frameworks and evidence-based policies, increased local capacities for inspection, seizure and confiscation of misused firearms, increased public awareness about the dangers of firearms misuse, and strengthened capacities for inspection and implementation of life cycle management of SALW and its ammunition.

The project also directly supports the implementation of the: UN Secretary General’s new Disarmament Agenda; the EU Security Strategy; the EU SALW Strategy; the EU Commission’s Action Plan to Target the Illicit Trafficking of Firearms and Explosives in the Union; the EU Policy Cycle for Organised and Serious International Crime including the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPFACt); the Arms Trade Treaty; the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in all its Aspects; the International Tracing Instrument; the UN Firearms Protocol; and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

Furthermore, SEESAC was instrumental in the development of the Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illicit Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition in the Western Balkans, and is supporting its implementation. Developed by the Western Balkans authorities under the auspices of the Governments of Germany and France, in coordination with the EU and with SEESAC’s support, the Roadmap was adopted at the Western Balkans Summit, in London, on 10 July 2018. The Roadmap envisages the Western Balkans as a safer region and an exporter of security where comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms, fully harmonized with the EU and other international standards, are in place to identify, prevent, prosecute, and control the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives. It is based on the regional cooperation principles and it draws upon SEESAC’s signature solutions to arms control, rooted in almost two decades of work on all aspects of arms control completed hand-in-hand with the governments in the region and in partnership with the EU.

SEESAC ensures the longevity and sustainability of its work in several important ways. Projects are developed and implemented at the request of and in close cooperation with its beneficiaries – primarily Ministries of Interior and Defence, thus ensuring that they directly respond to the actual needs of governments, build on previous work, and are complementary to other ongoing initiatives. Much of SEESAC’s work is executed through the facilitation of various regional platforms, which enable knowledge sharing, identification of existing gaps and joint planning of activities, and which require and are marked by particularly active participation by key governments’ representatives such as SALW Commissions members, border police, firearms experts and focal points, gender equality mechanisms, etc. This is essential for local ownership and consequently for the sustainability of actions. Long-term change is also secured through prioritization of advancement of policy and institutional networks, development of SOPs and knowledge products, as well as via capacity development through trainings.

SEESAC is supported by the European Union, Germany, United States of America, Norway, Slovakia, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden and France.
In 2020, SEESAC continued supporting the authorities in South East and East Europe in building effective, accountable, and inclusive security sector. This was done through facilitation of regional cooperation processes at both strategic and operational levels, combined with targeted assistance measures at the local level, thus contributing to the confidence building and a safer region.

In the realm of SALW control, SEESAC maintained its central coordination role in the region, on behalf of the governments as well as the EU. In close cooperation with the EU, Germany and France, SEESAC continued coordinating the implementation of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap, involving the Western Balkans governments, key implementers such as UNDP, OSCE, NATO and UNODC, and key donors. It also ensured comprehensive monitoring of the Roadmap implementation. The Roadmap coordination and monitoring approaches were acknowledged by several partners as a particularly unique and effective mechanisms ensuring the information exchange, knowledge sharing, coordination of efforts and identification of gaps.

Presence and effects of illicit firearms continue to be a concern in South East and East Europe. This is clearly reflected in armed violence trends, which SEESAC tracks using its various signature tools.
Good practices developed by the Western Balkans’ governments with SEESAC support, continued attracting global attention and inspired action in other parts of the world.

- Following the Western Balkans example, the SALW Control Roadmap was developed, and adopted in 2020 in the Caribbean.

- Furthermore, the EU Commission integrated the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap into the EU Action Plan on Combating Illicit Trafficking of SALW.

- Additionally, recognizing the quality of the comprehensive monitoring system developed under the Roadmap, the EU Commission introduced the Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the EU Action Plan to improve detailed data collection and monitoring of progress on SALW control within the EU.

- Finally, SEESAC assisted UNODA in integrating the gender perspective into its SALW control policy—making activities based on lessons learnt in the Western Balkans, through development and delivery of a set of coaching sessions for UNODA’s regional centres in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

These examples position the Western Balkans as an exporter of security-related initiatives globally and demonstrate progress made in the region. They also highlight the quality and impact of SEESAC’s work – in terms of its leadership, its in-depth knowledge of regional affairs and its ability to deliver transformational change.

In 2020, SEESAC continued implementing projects funded by the EU and the US, advancing small arms and light weapons control in South East and East Europe. It facilitated regional cooperation and provided support for evidence-based policymaking on SALW control, thus further contributing to the reduction of the threat of illicit proliferation of SALW. Furthermore, authorities in the Western Balkans were supported in harmonising their arms-control legislation with the European Union acquis. Support was also provided for operational cooperation and capacity development of law enforcement and border authorities in preventing and countering trafficking of illicit arms and explosives. Additionally, measures to enhance physical security and stockpile management through infrastructure security upgrades, and to dispose of seized firearms were implemented.

SEESAC also coordinated the implementation of UNDP offices’ projects in support of the Roadmap implementation through the Regional UNDP SALW control project funded by Germany through UNDP Funding Windows, thus positioning UNDP as an international organisation providing the most comprehensive support for the execution of the Roadmap. In 2020, the regional project implemented by the UNDP Offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, and coordinated by SEESAC, helped improve the collection and analysis of firearm-related crime evidence, achieve a more effective and standardized approach in countering illicit arms trafficking, improve firearm-related data, record-keeping and collection facilitating, as well as the operational information exchange, better understanding of mainstreaming gender considerations into the policy and legislative framework of arms control and the impact of firearms use on domestic and gender based violence. SEESAC supported COs by providing advisory services in the implementation and ensuring the coordination and synchronization with ongoing efforts of other implementers at the regional level, as well as coordination with the authorities on the ground. This has ensured that COs’ interventions stay relevant throughout the duration of their implementation and continue to respond to the governments’ strategic needs.

As part of the Roadmap coordination efforts, SEESAC continued providing Secretariat functions to the Western Balkans SALW Control Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) that received funding from Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, France and Norway. The Secretariat is responsible for the programmatic coordination and monitoring of the Fund as well as for providing technical and management support to the Fund’s Steering Committee. Four projects under the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund, implemented by UNDP and UNODC with an overall budget of $5.34 million, were initiated in March 2020, and five additional projects in the amount of $5.05 million were selected and approved for funding in November 2020. The projects focus on providing support in countering illicit arms trafficking, including strengthening of ballistic and crime scene investigations capacities, improving criminal justice response to firearm-related offences across the Western Balkans, and providing assistance in the destruction of surplus of unsafe ammunition and raising awareness on SALW control.

Progress continued in advancing gender equality, working closely with the Ministries of Defence (MoDs) and Armed Forces (AFs) in the Western Balkans, and with financial support from Norway and Slovakia. The capacities of MoDs and AFs for gender responsive and evidence-based policy development and implementation were strengthened. MoDs and AFs were also supported to address gender-based discrimina-tion, sexual harassment and abuse in the military. This was done through information sharing, knowledge exchange and learning through regional meetings, data collection and development of knowledge products as well as through support for the implementation of small-scale projects. Support was also provided for increasing gender awareness in the AFs and integration of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion into all aspects of their business operations.
Apart from influencing project implementation dynamics, COVID-19 pandemic also brought to light two specific challenges within the SALW control portfolio. Namely, the pandemic also affected the modus operandi of illicit arms traffickers – reflected in increased online trade and parcel delivery of firearms. Additionally, specific conditions of the imposed lockdown increased the risks of use of firearms in domestic violence context, but also made it more difficult for women to report violence. SEESAC paid attention to these two new developments and addressed them through project activities.

Despite the unprecedented challenges that affected project implementation, SEESAC achieved one of the highest delivery rates (93%) since its establishment in 2002, with over $3.2 million distributed through project activities.

This was made possible due to the strong commitment of project beneficiaries to implement planned activities despite considerable challenges that needed to be overcome, reflecting their sense of ownership of the project results. This strong performance demonstrates SEESAC’s relevance in the region, its capacity to deliver under challenging circumstances and constantly changing environment, knowledge of the region, ability to overcome political obstacles, strong partnership with key stakeholders, and resilience of the project team.

Furthermore, project implementation experienced delays due to the parliamentary elections held in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and subsequent changes in governments’ high and middle-level management, which led to delays in decision-making processes. Additionally, project activities on gender equality in the military were further affected by Serbia’s withdrawal from all international cooperation processes. SEESAC diligently observed the situation in order to plan and respond to challenges in a timely manner. The team coordinated and adjusted project activities and timelines, and maintained regular contact with the project beneficiaries through online means whenever necessary or in-person meetings when possible, in order to secure beneficiaries’ continued commitment and participation in the project.

SEESAC continued to provide comprehensive support to its beneficiaries in South East and East Europe in SALW control, citizen security and gender equality in the security sector, thus contributing to a safer and more interconnected region. Regional cooperation among authorities in South East and East Europe was facilitated through enabling of information exchange, knowledge sharing and planning of joint activities, thus leading to confidence building and standardisation of approaches in the region. Comprehensive and innovative data collection processes were fostered, including digitalisation of data collection processes, with the aim to enhance evidence-based policy making as well as to foster government transparency. Cutting edge knowledge products were developed in close cooperation with the authorities allowing for a better insight into specific targeted areas by the responsible institutions. Capacity development was provided for SALW control and gender equality mechanisms in South East and East Europe, including comprehensive advisory and technical support contributing to effective, accountable and inclusive governance of the security sector.

Practical measures were implemented on the ground to prevent misuse and trafficking of firearms. Capacities of government authorities to trace firearms were strengthened, physical security of stockpile management enhanced, capacities of police services to better detect and investigate firearms related crimes raised, awareness of the dangers of misuse of firearms increased. Strategic and operational cooperation on
III Progress Review: Key Activities and Results in 2020

In 2020, coordination of the Roadmap implementation continued to be ensured both at the local and regional level through coordination meetings held on a regular basis, bringing together the key government authorities, international organisations, civil society organizations and donors. Two regional Roadmap coordination meetings took place in 2020 via an online platform, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent measures, enabling information exchange, coordination and further planning of the implementation of the Roadmap. The meetings were preceded by four informal coordination meetings organized by SEESAC in close cooperation with EU, Germany and France and engaging implementing partners such as EMPACT, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, UNDP Country Offices, OSCE, NATO, UNODC and others, which allowed for information exchange on provided support and thematic discussions on specific aspects of Roadmap implementation. In preparation for the regional meetings, two rounds of Roadmap local coordination meetings were organized by five Western Balkans jurisdictions, with SEESAC’s support, enabling information exchange on the progress of the implementation of the Roadmap action plans. Additionally, numerous bilateral meetings were organized with local jurisdictions, international and regional organizations as well as donors. Finally, SEESAC regularly provided advisory support to various stakeholders regarding different aspects of Roadmap implementation and facilitated knowledge management on Roadmap implementation.

Monitoring of the Roadmap implementation was ensured through preparation of biannual regional reports, covering periods from July – December 2019 and January – June 2020, based on the comprehensive Roadmap reporting framework developed for the jurisdictions, the Roadmap’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the Roadmap’s goals.

In 2020, the Roadmap coordination and monitoring platform established by SEESAC was acknowledged by a multitude of partners as a unique and comprehensive instrument with a bottom up and all-inclusive approach, ensuring at the same time a steady ownership of the Western Balkans authorities. KPIs allow us to measure progress and identify trends more clearly and consistently across the board. They indicate intensified efforts in several areas of the Roadmap implementation, including: harmonization of legislation with the EU Acquis; improvement of investigative capacities, the intelligence-led policing, and detection capacities for countering firearms trafficking; bolstered operational cooperation with specialized EU agencies; and improved security of stockpiles.

Based on the latest reports covering year 2020, 51,102 firearms and almost 15,000 pieces of ammunition were surrendered, 400 firearms were legalized, 530 deactivated, and 4,793 firearms (4,690 inland and 103 at the border) were seized in the Western Balkans.

SEESAC continued to coordinate the implementation of Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap, in close cooperation with the EU, Germany and France. This involved synchronizing the efforts of the Western Balkans governments, key international organizations supporting Roadmap implementation (UNDP, NATO, OSCE, UNODC and others), and key donors (EU, Germany, France, UK, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden).
Multi-Partner Trust Fund

As an integral part of the Roadmap coordination efforts, SEESAC continued serving as a Secretariat to the Western Balkans SALW Control Multi-Partner Trust Fund. The Secretariat is responsible for the programmatic coordination and monitoring of the Fund, as well as for providing technical and management support to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is the Trust Fund’s decision-making body, comprised of representatives of the Trust Fund participating organizations (UNDP and UNODC, Germany, France and the EU (as ex-officio members), top three donors to the Fund (currently the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden), and the Fund’s Administrative Agent (MPTF Office) as the observer. In 2020, the Trust Fund met eight times.

Four projects under the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund, implemented by UNDP and UNODC with an overall budget of $5.34 million, were initiated in March 2020. The projects focused on providing support in countering illicit arms trafficking, improving criminal justice response to firearm-related offences across the Western Balkans and providing assistance in the destruction of surplus of unsafe ammunition. Projects are regularly monitored by SEESAC, as the Trust Fund Secretariat.

Following a second call for project proposals, launched in February 2020, five new projects were selected and approved for funding by the Trust Fund Steering Committee. The projects underwent a thorough technical review conducted by the external and SEESAC’s experts as well as Steering Committee’s evaluation before their approval. One project was initiated in mid-December 2020 by UNDP in Albania, while the other four approved projects will be initiated in 2021 by the UNDP Offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The projects cover topics such as support to ballistics capacity development, countering illicit arms trafficking and awareness raising on the dangers of firearms. The total budget of the projects approved in 2020 amounts to $5.05 million.

Results of the UNDP’s Funding Windows regional project implementation

Results of projects funded through the MPTF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>105</th>
<th>police officers</th>
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<td>trained in firearms investigations and confiscations in Kosovo</td>
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<th>8</th>
<th>standard operating procedures</th>
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<td>for tackling illicit arms trade by the customs services drafted in Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<th>4</th>
<th>jurisdictions</th>
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<td>gained a better understanding of how their criminal laws comply with the provision of the UN Firearms Protocol</td>
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Source: UN MPTF 2020 Annual Report

UNDP’s Regional SALW Control Project

In 2020, SEESAC continued to act as the coordinator of UNDP’s regional project on SALW control, providing technical and management support to the UNDP Offices implementing projects that contribute to the realisation of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap.

The regional project, with SEESAC at its helm, propelled quick and comprehensive implementation of the Roadmap. It created a platform for UNDP to best utilize its capacities to develop and deliver assistance in a very timely manner in line with governments’ priorities, tailored to the particular needs and gaps of each beneficiary, and in close cooperation with them. The regional project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office with a $6.3 million contribution through the UNDP’s Funding Windows.

In 2020 activities were implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and they included: advancing standard operating procedures in the areas of customs chain of custody, and ballistic examination drafted or amended in Albania and Serbia in a very timely manner, trained to detect polymer-made firearms, procured in Kosovo, 590 media stories about domestic violence cases and the use of firearms, published in Serbian media, analysed, 13 standard operating procedures on crime scene investigation, chain of custody, and ballistic examination drafted or amended in North Macedonia and Serbia, 5 dogs trained to detect polymer-made firearms, procured in Kosovo, 120 representatives of the MoI and relevant companies in North Macedonia trained to use the newly updated firearms registration system, 8 standard operating procedures for tackling illicit arms trade by the customs services drafted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4 jurisdictions gained a better understanding of how their criminal laws comply with the provision of the UN Firearms Protocol.
III Progress Review: Key Activities and Results in 2020

Following recommendations of the South Eastern EU (SEESAC), in the Serbian context. Also, the project enabled expanding the recommendations identified by SEESAC in the Western Balkans, implementing the extensive research conducted by SEESAC on gender and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the region. The project component implemented by UNDP Serbia takes from this project and the forensics activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Additionally, the lessons learnt from the gender-focused analysis of firearm incidents as well as various trends related to firearms in seven jurisdictions.

The regional project showed its catalytic value and was instrumental in scaling up existing initiatives implemented by SEESAC. Thus, the gender and SALW component implemented by UNDP Serbia takes from the extensive research conducted by SEESAC on the equipment for firearms detection; provision of IT software and specialized training assisting development of quality risk, threat and impact assessment at border crossings and green border lines; security upgrades at a SALW storage; improvement of a weapons registration software; procurement of equipment for ballistic testing, keeping of ballistic evidence and facilitation of accreditation of CSI infrastructure; and conducting an in-depth analysis of gender dimension in cases of firearms misuse; to name a few.

The existing UNDP projects have also shown significant potential for scaling-up and replication and will contribute to standardization of approaches across the region. The project component implemented by UNDP Serbia in forensics and crime scene investigation will enter its second phase. Also, the experience from this project and the forensics activities in Albania have been replicated into a similar project to be initiated in 2021 in Montenegro. Additionally, the lessons from the gender-focused analysis of firearms-related legislation conducted by UNDP Serbia were integrated into the methodology of the regional gender screening of firearms legislations that is conducted by SEESAC. The gender screening is currently being conducted in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.

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With the aim of ensuring operational cooperation, transfer of knowledge and exchange of expertise focusing on tackling illicit firearms trafficking, the 13th SEEFEN meeting was organized online on 17-18 November 2020, and was attended by more than 50 participants, including the representatives of the six Western Balkans jurisdictions, Belarus and Moldova. The annual Regional Steering Group (RSG) meeting on SALW was organized on 4 March 2020 in Belgrade, which allowed the information exchange on current and planned activities on arms control, as well as for reviewing local and regional SALW control priorities for 2020.

Based on the SALW Survey reports for each jurisdiction (published in 2019), seven Fast Facts on Small Arms and Light Weapons Surveys were developed and published in order to provide snapshots of key data and trends in distribution, impact and perceptions on firearms. Based on the data provided by authorities, SEESAC prepared and published the 2018 Regional Report on Arms Exports, which contains the information on arms exports from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP) was regularly updated with firearm-related incidents in the SEE region. Twelve monthly reports and two quarterly reports with data based on the wide set of categories of firearm-related incidents were published, highlighting the most striking trends in the region. The BIH SALW Coordination Board was regularly supported with the preparation of brief analyses of firearm incidents, as per the data from the AVMP, which served also as background information in the development of their new SALW Control Strategy.

Lastly, as a part of this component, a media strategy development coaching programme was completed by the President of the SALW Commission in Montenegro, strengthening his capacities for outreach and advocacy on internal and external communication, public speaking, facilitation of dialogues and communication with the media, among others.
III. Progress Review: Key Activities and Results in 2020

documents. Related to arms control but also the main related policy has been integrated into the key laws and bylaws re -

understanding of the extent to which gender aspect and Herzegovina and North Macedonia, to get a better

furthermore, a methodology for conducting a similar needs assessment of the capacities of the criminal police services to tackle illicit possession, trafficking and firearms related crimes in general was developed by SEESAC. Experts who will be deployed to conduct the assessment in 2021 were recruited and began the pre-

paratory activities.

Following a through needs assessment of border police services throughout the region, SEESAC sup-
ported Albanian Border and Migration Police in developing the new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for countering illicit possession and trafficking of SALW through the organization of a four-day work-
shop that took place on 19-22 October 2020.

 Capacities of ballistic experts and investigators for ad-

ressing cross-border firearm-related criminality were strengthened as well. Further support to the establish-

ishment and operationalization of the Firearms Focal Points (FFPs) was provided through the provision of technical advice and organization of various capacity development activities. The Regional meeting of the FFPs that enabled information sharing and knowledge exchange was organized on 19 November 2020.

A template SOP for the establishment and functioning of the Firearms Focal Points in SEE was developed and presented during the meeting, aiming to support the jurisdictions in better defining the responsibilities and functioning of the FFPs. Furthermore, a Guideline for tracing of firearms was developed by SEESAC in order to support the jurisdictions’ FFPs in drafting bylaws, which further supports a more effective tracing of the firearms. A pilot workshop on operational ballistic information-exchange on converted weapons was organized with representatives of Kosovo and North Macedonia on 17 December 2020, during which the problem profile on converted weapons and its impact on the EU was presented. To increase the capacity for online investigations from open sources by using open source intelligence tools, a five-day training for six Western Balkans jurisdictions, Moldova and Ukraine was organized.

 III.3 Supporting harmonization of arms control legislation with the EU Acquis and contributing to standardization across the region

In 2020, SEESAC continued assessing the level of har-

monization of SALW control legislation in the Western Balkans with the relevant EU regulatory framework, contributing to a better understanding of the remain-

ing gaps in the harmonization of the local laws with the relevant parts of the EU Acquis. Specifically, a gap analysis of the SALW legal framework was con-

ducted in Kosovo, and a gap analyses of the SALW, explosive and explosive precursors legal frameworks were conducted in North Macedonia. The second re-

gional workshop on the harmonization of legislation in the field of SALW and explosives control with the EU Acquis was organised online for representatives of Western Balkans institutions, and those from Mol-

dova, Belarus and Ukraine. One local workshop on the civil use of explosives and pyrotechnic materials was organized in North Macedonia. Separate adviso-

ry support was provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Furthermore, gender screening of SALW was initiated in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia, to get a better understanding of the extent to which gender aspect has been integrated into the key laws and bylaws re-
lated to arms control but also the main related policy documents.

 III.4 Countering illicit arms trafficking through capacity assessments and capacity building of law enforcement and border authorities

In 2020, a needs assessment of the capacities of the border police services to counter illicit arms traffick-
ing in Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedo-

nia and Serbia was finalized through dedicated field missions in each of the jurisdictions, thus increas-
ing the understanding of the needs of border police services for capacity development in several areas including, legal framework, equipment and training. The findings of the assessment were presented and endorsed by the authorities during the Regional Bor-
der Police meeting, organized on 1 December 2020.

Relevant support to the border police services con-
sisting in equipment, training and standard operating procedures, and in line with findings of the needs’ assessment, is envisaged to be provided through the implementation of the EU Council Decision 2019/2111.

Furthermore, a methodology for conducting a similar needs assessment of the capacities of the criminal police services to tackle illicit possession, trafficking and firearms related crimes in general was developed by SEESAC. Experts who will be deployed to conduct the assessment in 2021 were recruited and began the pre-

paratory activities.

Following a thorough needs assessment of border police services throughout the region, SEESAC sup-
ported Albanian Border and Migration Police in developing the new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for countering illicit possession and trafficking of SALW through the organization of a four-day work-
shop that took place on 19-22 October 2020.

Capacities of ballistic experts and investigators for ad-
dressing cross-border firearm-related criminality were strengthened as well. Further support to the establish-

ishment and operationalization of the Firearms Focal Points (FFPs) was provided through the provision of technical advice and organization of various capacity development activities. The Regional meeting of the FFPs that enabled information sharing and knowledge exchange was organized on 19 November 2020.

A template SOP for the establishment and functioning of the Firearms Focal Points in SEE was developed and presented during the meeting, aiming to support the jurisdictions in better defining the responsibilities and functioning of the FFPs. Furthermore, a Guideline for tracing of firearms was developed by SEESAC in order to support the jurisdictions’ FFPs in drafting bylaws, which further supports a more effective tracing of the firearms. A pilot workshop on operational ballistic information-exchange on converted weapons was organized with representatives of Kosovo and North Macedonia on 17 December 2020, during which the problem profile on converted weapons and its impact on the EU was presented. To increase the capacity for online investigations from open sources by using open source intelligence tools, a five-day training for six Western Balkans jurisdictions, Moldova and Ukraine was organized.

Firearms laser marking machines were delivered and installed, and related trainings were organized in the period from 11 October to 10 November in Serbia, Mon-
tenegro, Albania, Kosovo and Moldova, for the relevant departments with the mandate to perform import and deactivation marking of firearms. They will significant-
ly improve the capabilities of these jurisdictions to trace firearms, which in turn will support the effective-
ness of firearms related crimes investigations.
III.5 Improvement of capacities for physical security and stockpile management through infrastructure security upgrades, surplus reduction and training

SEESAC continued supporting the authorities in reducing the risk of proliferation through the enhancement of weapons and ammunition stockpile security, reducing surplus and confiscated stocks of SALW and ammunition, improving the physical security and stockpile management practices as well as strengthening the inspection systems of law enforcement authorities in the region – thus increasing public safety and security.

Security upgrades of two storage locations were completed in Albania in 2020. These works included the installation of a full perimeter security fence, of exterior lighting and of a CCTV system in Mirake storage location, as well as manufacturing and installation of 70 customized metal racks for SALW safekeeping at ‘Zall-Herr Garrison’ storage location. In Serbia, the conceptual design was completed and approved, and several necessary legal design requirements for the ‘Dupuniste’ storage location were obtained from the competent government authorities. The legal procedures will be completed in 2021, thus enabling works tendering and execution. The additional security upgrades in Albania (Mullet storage location) and in Serbia (Duvaniste storage location) will be finalised in 2021, as will be the proficient-level PSSM training in Serbia.

SEESAC also initiated preparatory works for the security upgrades of a number of evidence rooms of police services. With the objective of improving the capacities of Police/Ministry of Interior of Montenegro for physical security and management of evidence rooms, a local engineering expert conducted a detailed survey at three identified evidence rooms of the Montenegro Police Directorate and prepared technical documentation for the procurement of required upgrades. A local engineer was also hired in Kosovo to perform a detailed survey of three police evidence rooms.

III.6 Strengthening of regional cooperation on gender mainstreaming in security sector reform in the Western Balkans

The project supports regional cooperation among MoDs and AFs on gender equality in the military, enabling information sharing, knowledge exchange and joint planning of activities to advance gender equality in the militaries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. Specifically, the project supports awareness raising on gender equality, strengthening of gender equality mechanisms and integration of the gender perspective in human resources policies, military education and training. This is done to increase the representation of women in the defense sector and equip it with knowledge and skills to more effectively advance gender equality.

With the implementation of these project activities, the Western Balkans is directly contributing to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, as well as to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16 on gender equality and on accountable and inclusive institutions respectively.

Support is provided for institutionalisation of Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs), strengthening of capacities of the Ministries of Defence for gender responsive policymaking and implementation, as well as enhancing their response to gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. This is done through regional information sharing, knowledge exchange and learning activities, and support of local, small-scale projects’ implementation.

Through the regional platforms supported by SEESAC, in 2020 two regional meetings of MoDs and AFs were organized: the 12th Regional Meeting of the Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs) and the 5th meeting of the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers. Both meetings further strengthened regional cooperation, enabled information exchange and knowledge sharing, while increasing capacities of MoDs and AFs to implement practical solutions for mainstreaming gender perspective in the military.

Cross-regional data collection for evidence-based policies resulted in the drafts of three national reports to inform the second regional study of The Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans. An updated set of data on gender equality in the AFs in four beneficiaries participating in the project is aimed to assess progress compared to the baseline study published in 2014. The second regional study, planned to be published in 2021, represents an important tool to promote evidence-based policy making and upholds WPS agenda.

All four MoDs, with SEESAC’s support continued focusing on combating gender-based discrimination,
Furthermore, based on the request from the MoD of Montenegro to better understand employees’ satisfaction and increase retention, HR-related data was collected and assessed. Training bolstered the capacities of relevant HR personnel to collect and analyse HR-related data in order to improve the integration of gender perspective in their work. With the aim to assist high-level decision makers to integrate gender perspective in their work, SEESAC implemented two tailor-made Gender Coach Programmes1, one with the General Inspector of the MoD in Bosnia and Herzegovina and second with the Director of Human Resources Directorate in the MoD of Montenegro.

At the local level, intensive engagement with MoDs continued through the implementation of the small-scale projects - a flexible approach to address the priority needs and honour full ownership of the MoDs and AFs. The project partners decided to focus on evidence-based and gender responsive human resources (HR) policies, as well as to advance their capacities in addressing gender-based discrimination in the military.

To that end, four tailor-made online training courses on data analysis and reporting were organized for the members of the HR department of the MoD of Montenegro. Training bolstered the capacities of relevant employees to collect and analyse HR-related data in order to better understand employees’ satisfaction with their jobs and thus be able to attract and retain more gender-balanced workforce in the military. Furthermore, based on the request from the MoD of North Macedonia, twelve representatives of the internal complaints mechanism in the MoD and AFs participated in a capacity building seminar for mediators, focusing on the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. The seminar resulted in the increased awareness and ability of the mediators to address gender-related complaints in MoDs and AFs. A series of seminars for the persons of trust in the MoD of Serbia were organized to further strengthen the capacities of the internal complaints mechanism to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination and harassment. One seminar organized in 2020 resulted in a greater clarity of the role persons of trust have and their increased ability to recognize and address gender-based discrimination.

In order to boost the opportunities for career advancement for women in the military, a variety of courses that are not limited to gender equality but include other topics relevant for expanding women’s opportunities to advance their careers were identified and offered by SEESAC within the small-scale projects.

SEESAC also works to improve the integration of women into the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans by increasing gender awareness through increasing capacities for integrating gender perspective into military education and training plans and programmes.

Building capacity by enabling access to cutting edge knowledge products continued to be one of the aspects of the project most valued by the project partners. In addition to knowledge products generated in partnership between SEESAC and the MoDs in the Western Balkan, the project translated into BCMS and Macedonian three DCAF knowledge tools related to gender and security sector reform, as well as two policy briefs discussing issues related to women, peace and security; and gender equality and security sector in the context of Sustainable Development Agenda. All publications are posted on SEESAC’s Gender in Security Sector Reform publications page, allowing partners to access relevant documents at their own convenience.

In order to step up the activities aimed at mainstreaming gender in the military education and training, the translation of DCAF’s Handbook Teaching Gender in Military in BCMS and Macedonian was finalized by the end of 2020 and the Concept paper on gender mainstreaming in education was commissioned with the aim to establish a joint understanding of gender mainstreaming in the military curricula and plan for the next steps adapted to the Western Balkans context.

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The Gender Coach Programme is an innovative approach to boosting the gender-responsiveness of security sector institutions by developing competencies and fostering commitment of their senior management. It is a one-on-one programme led by a gender expert and tailor-made for a high-level decision maker or military commander.

1 Gender Coach Programme addresses specific gender-related topics and provides practical knowledge and advice on how to mainstream gender into policy development and practice.
In addition to continuous and close coordination with relevant government authorities throughout the Western Balkans, Republic of Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine, SEESAC's project activities were implemented in close partnership with key stakeholders including UNDP Country Offices, EU (EEAS, European Firearms Experts group, DG HOME, DG NEAR, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, and EMPACT), Regional Cooperation Council, South East Europe Defence Ministerial process, OSCE, NATO, UNLIREC, UNODA, UNODC, Interpol, UN WOMEN, DCAF, Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), South East Europe Military Intelligence Chief's Forum, RACVIAC, Flemish Peace Institute, NABIS, EUPFOR, GICHD, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, BAFA, International Trust Fund, Small Arms Survey, SELEC, PCC SEE Secretariat, UNDISIR, Mines Advisory Group, HALO Trust, PAMECA, Swedish Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, etc. Regular contact and coordination was closely maintained with the EU, Germany, France, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America, Sweden, Norway and Slovakia.

These long-lasting partnerships generally facilitate the transfer of knowledge regionally and globally, but in 2020 they also resulted in several important spin-off activities, replicating SEESAC's signature work in South East and East Europe globally.

1. Following the Western Balkans example, the SALW Control Roadmap was developed in the Caribbean, and a similar Roadmap coordination mechanism introduced, with the support of the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and Caribbean (UNLIREC) and German Federal Foreign Office. SEESAC provided advisory support to German Federal Foreign Office. In addition, upon UNLIREC's request, good practices from the Western Balkans on the Roadmap development process, as well as the establishment of its monitoring and coordination platform, were shared in a dedicated presentation during the preparatory meetings of the Caribbean SALW Control Roadmap.

2. See page 11.


4. See page 8 of the Action Plan.

5. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD), United Nations Regional Disarmament Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

2. The EU Commission integrated the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap in the EU Action Plan on Combating Illicit Trafficking of SALW instead of creating a separate EU Action Plan for the Western Balkans. Additionally, recognising the quality of the comprehensive monitoring system developed under the Roadmap, the EU Commission introduced the Roadmap’s Key Performance Indicators into the EU Action Plan as a way of initiating detailed data collection and monitoring of progress within the EU.

3. At the request of the EU, assistance was provided to UNODA with capacity development for the integration of the gender perspective in SALW control policy-making, based on the lessons learned in the Western Balkans. SEESAC developed and delivered a set of coaching sessions for UNODA's regional centres in Asia and Pacific, Africa and Latin America (with the support of the UN Regional Disarmament Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) staff through online sessions organized in March 2020 in Kathmandu; United Nations Regional Disarmament Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) staff through eight online sessions organized in May and June 2020; United Nations Regional Disarmament Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) staff through three online sessions organized in September and October 2020.

4. The knowledge and experience of integrating gender into the security sector reform in the Western Balkans was shared with the German Federal Foreign Office and support was provided in the organisation of a global conference establishing the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENDAC). GENDAC was launched in February 2020 as a part of German Foreign Office's efforts to promote greater and more active inclusion of women in SALW control decision-making, as well as improved gender-responsive measures to protect women and men from the misuse of firearms. While contributing to the conference and the working sessions, SEESAC also facilitated the participation of women police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the conference who shared their experience on advancing gender equality in policing. Their experience was highlighted in the conclusions of the conference as one of the three examples of existing good practices globally.

5. The gender military trainers from the Western Balkans trained their peers in the National Army in Chisinau, Moldova. The Trainers were deployed through SEESAC’s Regional Security Sector Reform Platform (RSSRP) at the request of the Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations, which organized the training for representatives of the Ministry of Defence of Moldova. The Platform represents the regional network of experts in small arms and light weapons, as...
well as in gender mainstreaming in security sector and serves as the South-South knowledge transfer mechanism.

6. Based on their request, SEESAC is supporting FRONTEX as a key partner in the development of the Handbook on firearms for border guards and customs adjusted for the Western Balkans jurisdictions. Namely, FRONTEX developed the first version of the Handbook only for the EU member states and SEESAC was actively involved in the process. During the development of the first version and seeing the great value that the Handbook will have in its implementation in practice, SEESAC initiated and FRONTEX agreed on the development of a similar document for the relevant authorities in the Western Balkans.

Other partnerships played out in a variety of positive ways, to name but a few:

SEESAC regularly contributed to the EFE network and EMPACT by keeping them abreast of the Roadmap implementation, and by supporting the Regional Meetings of the Firearms Focal Points (FFPs).

SEESAC supported EMPACT in the preparation of the Joint Action Days, organized in cooperation with EUROPOL, in countering illicit trafficking of goods including firearms; but also, in organizing thematic workshops, especially on online investigation and social media intelligence, in order to provide an additional source of information to the FFPs.

At the request of the Regional Cooperation Council, SEESAC developed and delivered a Basic Gender Seminar for members of the South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs’ Forum.

SEESAC was also consulted and contributed to the development of a number of knowledge products such as: discussion paper on gender and life-cycle management of ammunition (UNODA and SAS); methodology for a research on women’s participation in SALW Control (UNDIR); Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (UN Women, UNODC, IAWP); publication “Whose Security” (NCGM).

SEESAC prioritizes visibility of its work and that of its donors. With this in mind, we actively engage with our partners, and the general and specialized audiences alike, to share information about our project’s activities but also about the latest developments in security, gender equality and disarmament regionally and globally. We do so by participating in and contributing to various local, regional and international events, and by using various communications channels. This year alone we were invited and contributed to over 30 events. We mainly use SEESAC’s online information exchange platform and our social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr) to disseminate information. However, our messages are frequently further promulgated by our partners, beneficiaries and expert community as well as by the media.

Below we highlight some examples of our multifaceted communications effort.