6th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting

Online meeting, 1-2 December 2021

Meeting notes

BACKGROUND

The 6th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting was held in a Hybrid Setup on 1-2 December 2021. The meeting was organized as part of the 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 in close cooperation with the EU, Germany, France.

The 6th 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. (List of Participants attached).

This meeting provided the opportunity to inform on and coordinate activities under implementation as per the specific goals of the Roadmap, present the data as collected by the authorities, on the Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 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.

WEDNESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2021

Opening Session
Chaired by Ms. Bojana Balon, Head of SEESAC

H.E. Marjolijn van Deelen, EU Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament, European External Action Service, noted the Roadmap’s progress which was firmly emphasized in the Co-Chairs’ conclusions of the High-level Meeting on the Implementation of the Specific Actions for South East Europe of the EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025 hosted by the EU Commission in September 2021. She also stressed the need for further impetus in several areas of the Roadmap, particularly on awareness-raising and education on the dangers related to the misuse, illicit possession, and proliferation of firearms as well as on voluntary surrender or legalization of firearms. She noted that the Western Balkans is the largest recipient of EU’s support for arms control under the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, with an overall financial assistance of approximately 20 million EUR.
H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador-at-large on transitional criminal threats and the fight against the illicit trafficking of SALW, France, commended the authorities in the Western Balkans for progress achieved. He confirmed commitment of the French Government to the Roadmap and thanked also other international stakeholders for their support. Ambassador Brunet stressed the importance of tackling the challenges posed by the illicit proliferation of firearms, ammunition, and explosives for the region’s integration to EU and noted potential new threats arising from destabilized areas in Africa and Afghanistan. He mentioned France’s readiness to expand its support to partners in the Western Balkans by sharing French expertise and experiences in various areas of SALW control.

Mr. Albrecht von Wittke, Director of Division, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, stressed that the Roadmap has become a model for forward-looking security partnerships. He commended the SALW Commissions from the region for their cooperation and continued focus on the oversight and coordination of activities despite the multitude of activities and projects that are currently under implementation. Mr. von Wittke concluded by underlining Germany’s unwavering commitment and reiterated that the German contribution of 3mln EUR will serve as a boost to fulfilling the goals of the Roadmap by 2024.

Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, expressed gratitude for the jurisdictions’ commitment to a comprehensive implementation of the Roadmap. He noted that the Roadmap’s progress was also highlighted in the recently published UN Secretary-General’s Seventh Biennial Report on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Mr. Trogemann informed the participants on the UNDP activities in the region, conducted in close cooperation with the national authorities and supported through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund. He also thanked all the donors for their support to the region’s arms control efforts. Mr. Trogemann concluded by expressing UNDP’s full dedication to continuing to support the governments in the region in reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Amer Kapetanovic, Head of Political Department, Regional Cooperation Centre, emphasized the importance of regional security cooperation for the EU accession of the Western Balkans. He informed the participants of the upcoming Sixth Regional (Jumbo) Security Coordination Conference and the initiation of the second edition of the regional Security Barometer that will measure citizens’ attitudes and perceptions on the most important security issues. He also presented data on armed violence from SEESAC’s Armed Violence Monitoring Platform and noted the importance of the implementation of the Roadmap for further reducing the illicit flows of firearms.

SESSION I – 6TH REGIONAL ROADMAP PROGRESS REPORT – KEY FINDINGS

Ms. Juliana Buzi, Regional Cooperation Specialist, SEESAC presented the 6th Regional Roadmap Progress Report/Key findings on Roadmap implementation based on KPIs and Roadmap Goals (Presentation attached).

Comments:

Mr. Ermin Pešto, Assistant Minister/Head of SALW Coordination Board, Ministry of Security inquired about the modality of the upcoming mid-term review of the Roadmap and suggested the organization of a preparatory meeting. Ms. Buzi noted that the mid-term review will be conducted in consultation with all SALW Commissions and confirmed that a preparatory meeting will be considered, subject to developments related to the pandemic situation in the Western Balkans.
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 priorities, plans, key challenges, 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

Mr. Dejan Kovačević, National SALW Coordinator highlighted that the Draft amendments to the Law on Weapons and Ammunition were submitted to the European Commission for opinion. Additionally, he informed that the Decision on the Establishment of the National Control List of Dual-Use Goods was adopted. He also reported ongoing work on the Law on Explosives, as well as on the amendments to the Criminal Code. Further support was requested in developing bylaws that would accompany the Law on Weapons and Ammunition. Mr. Kovačević noted that the area of explosive precursors remains yet to be regulated. Regarding Goal 2, it was reported that Serbia has started with its activities to develop and adopt a new biannual action plan. Moreover, Mr. Kovačević highlighted that Serbia has adopted the new Law on gender equality that specifies equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities as well as balanced participation and representation of men and women in all areas of life.

Podgorica

Mr. Mladen Marković, President of SALW Commission, reported on the ongoing work regarding the amendments to the Criminal Code and its further harmonization with the UN Firearms Protocol. He noted that Amendments to the Law on Weapons were prepared and draft was sent to the Government for further procedure. Ongoing work was also reported on the Draft Law on Manufacturing, Modernization, and Overhaul of Weapons and Military Equipment. Similarly, Mr. Marković reported the development of the Rulebook for the safe storage of explosives and conventional ammunition. Regarding Goal 2, Mr. Marković confirmed that the current SALW Control Strategy is in place and covers the period 2019-2024.

Pristina

Mr. Destan Mustafa, Head of Division for Weapons Ammunitions and Explosives/ Department for Public Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs, reported ongoing work to amend the current Law on Weapons. He noted that amendments to several related laws are underway to fully harmonize them with the new Law on Weapons. These changes to legislation will facilitate the process for voluntary surrender and the legalization of firearms. Regarding Goal 2, Mr. Mustafa noted that the current SALW Strategy and related Action Plan will expire at the end of this year and announced their evaluation and drafting of a new strategy in the immediate future.

Sarajevo

Mr. Ermin Pešto, Assistant Minister/Head of SALW Coordination Board, Ministry of Security expressed gratitude to donors, in particular the representatives of the EU, Germany, and France, for their support
provided to the area of SALW control in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Regarding Goal 1, Mr. Pešto informed that the **new Law on Weapons was adopted** and entered into force in Una-Sana Canton in June. This law is serving as a model for the development of the laws on weapons by other ministries. Mr. Pešto also noted ongoing work on the development of the **draft Law on Trade of Explosives, Flammable liquids, and Gases** in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He informed on the comprehensive analysis of harmonization of four criminal codes in BiH with UN Firearms Protocol which was sent to relevant BiH authorities for opinion. Regarding Goal 2, Mr. Pešto reported the adoption of the new SALW Control Strategy for the period 2021-2024 and the accompanying Action Plan. He noted that these documents are based on sex and age disaggregated data and are completely in line with the Roadmap.

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**Skopje**

Ms. Marija Topalovska, Advisor for Legal and Normative Affairs, Ministry of Interior noted that work on amendments to the **Law on Weapons** and the **Law on Explosives for Civil Use** was ongoing during the reporting period while the **Draft Law on Manufacture and Trade in Armament and Military Equipment** was in the parliamentary procedure. She also informed the OSCE’s training and expert support to the Ministry of Interior for the implementation of the revised legislation on deactivation. Further need for support in this regard was also mentioned, in particular through the procurement of a marking machine. In addition, Ms. Topalovska expressed the need for training on firearm registration and supervision of legal entities, while noting that the area of explosive precursors remains to be regulated. Additionally, **amendments to the Criminal Code** were reported to have been drafted. On Goal 2, Ms. Topalovska reported ongoing evaluation of the current and development of the new SALW Strategy and Action Plan for 2022-2025. She also stated that the gender analysis of relevant legal and policy framework has been completed.

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**Tirana**

Ms. Margarita Vogli, SALW Commission's, Expert, Directorate of Policies and Strategies, Ministry of Interior reported on the adoption of two laws regulating the **supervision of explosives for civil use** and the **supervision of pyrotechnic articles**, as well as six bylaws in support of the **Law on Weapons**. Further work on the drafting of bylaws on the procedures for issuing licenses for weapons manufacture, deactivation, and repair was also reported. Ms. Vogli further informed that the draft revision of the Criminal Code was under development and currently being reviewed. Regarding Goal 2, Ms. Vogli reported that the SALW Control Strategy is in place and covers the period 2019-2024, while a new Action Plan for 2022-2024 is currently being drafted. She noted that the gender analysis of relevant legal and policy framework has been completed.

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**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, 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.
Mr. Stefan Miljanović, Assistant Head of Criminal Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior, reporting under Goal 2, noted that the FFP has been established in virtual modality. He added that the process of merging all firearms-related databases is in its final stage. He informed also on ongoing work and results achieved in strengthening Serbia’s forensics capabilities. On Goal 3, Mr. Miljanović briefed on strengthened international cooperation in countering trafficking of firearms, ammunition (FAE) and explosives by highlighting the participation in EMPACT’s activities and information, the increased exchange of firearm-related information through SIENA and iARMS. Mr. Miljanović concluded his remarks by presenting data on FAE seizures during the reporting period.

Mr. Milan Tkalac, Public Prosecutor, Appellate Public Prosecutor’s Office, reported on Serbia’s cooperation with Eurojust and informed about the prosecution and adjudication data for illegal possession and trafficking of firearms and ammunition during the reporting period.

Mr. Mladen Marković described the role of FFP in Montenegro and informed on its activities during the reporting period, which included the collection, analysis, distribution, and exchange of data on firearms, as well as preparation of intelligence and strategic reports. He further informed on the activities conducted to further strengthen the investigation capacities of the Police Directorate. Mr. Marković also presented concrete international cooperation activities, highlighting a recent operation conducted with the Dutch police.

Mr. Shaip Nura, Directorate for International Cooperation in the Rule of Law (ILECU), Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that the FFP has been established in 2016 and that it is fully operational. He noted that the FFP conducts daily data collection and arms tracing, provides periodical reports, and participates in meetings at national and international levels and that several trainings were organized in this period further developing the capacities for investigations of firearms-related crimes. Mr. Nura informed that the Ballistic Laboratory has been accredited for 5 methods as per the ISO 17025:2017 standard. Regarding data exchange between law enforcement agencies, prosecution, and the judiciary system, Mr. Nura noted that a unified system does not exist at this moment. He also informed on the lack of a system for registration of prosecuted and adjudicated cases. In addition, Mr. Nura reiterated that Kosovo* does not have direct access to iARMS and SIENA but uses these tools through UNMIK and EULEX. He concluded by stressing the need to further strengthen the capacities of the FFP and improve investigation capacities for investigating armed robberies.

* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
Mr. Ermin Pešto noted that the working group for the establishment of the FFP has organized several meetings during the reporting period to discuss potential modalities. In a study visit to France authorities had the opportunity to learn about FFP’s role and to discuss the use of the ballistic identification system Evofinder. A Technical Agreement on the Cooperation in Fighting Illegal Trafficking of FAE was also signed. Additionally, Mr. Pešto noted that the relevant authorities in BiH have access to SIENA for the exchange of information related to firearms, as well as access to Interpol’s iARMS database. He concluded by stressing that the track records system remains to be developed as the collection of firearms-related data is not conducted in a systematized manner.

Skopje

Ms. Marija Topalovska informed that the FFP has been established but is not yet fully operational while the connection of the relevant databases was ongoing. She also informed on the activities conducted with UNDP’s support that aim to enhance data recording and information management at the Ministry of Interior. Ms. Topalovska highlighted that a new ballistic identification system EVOFINDER has been installed. She informed that a needs assessment of capacities of border police has been conducted in cooperation with SEESAC and presented activities within the cross-border project conducted by Pristina and Skopje with UNDP’s support. She noted that this project aims to strengthen investigation capacities and improve knowledge and awareness of relevant authorities in countering the illicit possession, misuse, and trafficking of SALW. She reported challenges regarding the exchange of information between the law enforcement agencies, prosecutor’s office, and courts and stressed that there is a need to establish a unified system.

Tirana

Ms. Lindita Nushi, Firearms Focal Point, State Police noted that the FFP was established in 2019 in virtual modality and currently consists of six members from several departments of the State Police. She informed on the FFP’s activities conducted during the reporting period in countering illicit possession and trafficking of firearms and ammunition. Ms. Nushi also provided an extensive update on the Firearms Information Management System (SIMA) and emphasized that the firearm-related information is reported through iARMS and SIENA systems.

Mr. Kujtim Luli, Chief of Sector/Prosecutor, General Prosecution Office noted that there was an improvement in the efficiency of investigations of SALW related crimes during the reporting period. He also reported on the progress achieved in building capacities for investigations and prosecution of crimes related to SALW through cooperation with UNODC. Concerning the remaining challenges in this area, Mr. Luli mentioned weak information exchange between law enforcement agencies, prosecution, and the judiciary system.

Comments:

Ms. Amina Mašović, Specialist, INTERPOL Firearms Programme presented the UNODC-INTERPOL joint project that provides support for the strengthening of the firearms-related investigations in five jurisdictions in the Western Balkans. She noted that one of the planned activities envisages delivery of trainings on iArms.
Mr. Ian Head, Head of Intelligence, Lead for Performance & Enabling Services, NABIS congratulated the Western Balkans authorities on the progress made and offered NABIS’ support regarding future enhancement of the work of their FFPs.

Mr. Bošković concluded the session by emphasizing steady progress achieved in the establishment and operationalization of FFPs throughout the region. He also noted that significant improvement has been achieved in the area of forensics in several jurisdictions. With regards to seizures, Mr. Bošković stressed the commitment presented by the authorities in the region to further develop capabilities to better detect illegal trade of firearms, ammunition and explosives. He also noted that there is a slight decrease in preventive actions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, Mr. Bošković highlighted the challenge faced by authorities in establishing a track record and the gaps in information exchange between police, prosecution, and courts.

THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2021

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. Edin Serezić, Joint Programme Coordinator, UNDP Bosnia, and Herzegovina

Belgrade

Ms. Jasmina Roskić, Head of Department, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, noted that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no in-person seminars held for legal entities licensed for export and import of arms and military equipment. Nevertheless, she noted that authorities did not stop issuing licenses in this area during the pandemic’s peak. Furthermore, Ms. Roskić described models used to engage with these legal entities, as well as topics discussed, in particular those related to awareness-raising on possible diversion of SALW.

Ms. Mirjana Ćubrović, Head of SALW Registry Department, Common Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Interior reported on the activities conducted with OSCE within the project "Support to designing and implementing awareness-raising campaigns on SALW control in Serbia". She also presented the trends regarding weapons surrender in Serbia, stressing that the legal deadline for replacement of permits for firearms ownership expired in February, thus decreasing the number of firearms surrendered in the reporting period. Furthermore, Ms. Ćubrović informed on the process of deactivation of weapons in Serbia and offered support to jurisdictions in the region when it comes to testing, marking, and stamping of firearms.

Podgorica

Mr. Mladen Marković informed that awareness-raising activities were limited during the reporting period. A workshop was organized with OSCE in preparation of the campaign for firearms legalization and
deactivation, as a continuation of the earlier campaign titled "Respect life, return weapons". Further activities in this regard are pending the adoption of amendments to the Law on Weapons. Mr. Marković also reported on the process of deactivation of weapons, informing on the aim to further improve this process and raise awareness among citizens about this possibility.

Mr. Kadrija Kurpejović, Directorate for Policy and Regime of Foreign Trade in Controlled Goods, Ministry of the Economy, added that the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down significantly activities on awareness-raising of the legal entities licensed for export and import of arms and military equipment. Furthermore, he stressed that there are limited tools to increase the awareness of these entities, highlighting the Ministry of the Economy’s website. He announced plans to further modernize the website in the upcoming period.

Mr. Destan Mustafa noted that relevant authorities have carried inspections of firearms storages owned by private entities during the reporting period, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. He also mentioned that meetings to raise awareness on the misuse of SALW were organized with legal entities such as retail shops, security companies, and shooting ranges. Mr. Mustafa further informed on limited activities organized to raise awareness of the general population on the threats related to the use of firearms, primarily those related to the celebratory shooting. No activities to decrease the number of firearms through legalization or voluntary surrender were conducted in the reporting period.

Mr. Ermin Pešto pointed out that dedicated awareness-raising campaigns were not implemented in the reporting period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some police directorates did nonetheless carry out such activities as part of their regular activities. Mr. Pešto informed that awareness-raising campaigns are planned through two projects, to be implemented by UNDP and OSCE.

Mr. Damir Karahodžić, 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 suggested that jurisdictions from the Western Balkans initiate information exchange on licenses. He also noted that this year’s awareness and outreach activities for legal entities were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Karahodžić added that the Internal Compliance Program (ISP) was ongoing. With regards to the deactivation of firearms, he mentioned that relevant authorities had several meetings with OSCE to discuss possible procedures and methods for the deactivation of firearms.

Mr. Nikša Gligić, Senior Associate at Ministry of Interior and Member of the SALW Coordination Board presented awareness-raising activities conducted by the Ministry of Interior of Republika Srpska, highlighting those related to threats of celebratory shooting.

Comments:

Ms. Jasmina Roskić suggested a region-wide request for access of Western Balkans jurisdictions to the Working Party on Conventional Arms Exports (COARM)’s database on denials.
Ms. Marija Topalovska informed that relevant authorities have organized numerous awareness-raising activities on armed violence prevention, including through panel discussions, trainings, and sports events. Ms. Topalovska noted that there is currently no legal basis for voluntary surrender or legalization of firearms. However, the required provisions are planned to be introduced in the amended Law on Weapons. She also stressed a need for expert training on the deactivation of weapons and noted that OSCE has initiated activities to provide support in this area.

Ms. Lidija Petrova Mojsovska, National Focal Point for SALW, Ministry of Interior noted that the Ministry for Interior is responsible for issuing licenses for private entities such as retail shops, security companies, and shooting ranges. With regards to military arms, the responsibility lies with the Ministry of Economy. She noted that these private entities, as well as the hunting federation and sport shooting federation, are included in the working group that is drafting amendments to the Law on weapons.

Tirana

Ms. Margarita Vogli informed that the amended Law on Weapons has introduced new responsibilities regarding licensing. For example, State Police is responsible for licenses for deactivated firearms. However, she noted that full implementation of this activity requires the adoption of secondary legislation and further development of technical capabilities. She also announced amendments to legislation that will allow the initiation of the amnesty and voluntary surrender campaign. Furthermore, regular inspections of legal entities have been conducted during the reporting period. It was emphasized that COVID 19 pandemic has significantly limited the planned activities in this area. State Export Control Authority’s website is redeveloped with support from the United States Embassy and further work is being conducted on the introduction of an E-Licensing system.

Ms. Lindita Nushi added that awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the general population were not organized during the reporting period. However, police officers made efforts through their daily work to increase awareness of the general population and business entities. She also noted that State Police inspectors also carried out inspections of storages, shooting ranges, retail shops, and other entities to ensure that safety and security measures are in place.

Comments:

Addressing the inquiry from Pristina, Ms. Margarita Vogli and Ms. Lindita Nushi clarified the controlling process that State Police in Albania conducts with regards to private entities and individuals that have licenses for firearms possession.

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 Mr. Ermin Pešto, Assistant Minister/Head of SALW Coordination Board, Ministry of Security
Ms. Marijana Pavlović, Adviser, Section for Cooperation with EU, Sector for International Cooperation EU Affairs and Planning, Ministry of Interior noted that the Ministry of Interior did not organize destruction of firearms during the reported period and that there is no surplus of firearms within the MoI. She further added that 11 tons of ammunition have been disposed during the reporting period. Ms. Pavlović also reported on the establishment of two commissions in charge of firearms collection and their classification. Regarding the enhancement of safety and security of SALW/firearms, ammunition, and explosives storage facilities, Ms. Pavlović presented the ongoing activities on the upgrade of MoI's weapons and ammunition storage in "Duwaniste" and the reconstruction of the three evidence rooms. She also stressed the need for further support in the reconstruction of evidence rooms in Serbia. Ms. Pavlović concluded her remarks by informing on the activities conducted with regards to the inspection of legal entities licensed to possess firearms (retail shops, security companies, shooting ranges, etc.).

Mr. Mladen Marković reported on the ongoing activities conducted by the MoI’s team for unexploded ordnance highlighting the recent discovery of a large quantity of World War II weapons in river Zeta. Furthermore, he informed that the works on the adaptation of storage in Rogame complex were finalized, as well as the works on the reconstruction of three evidence rooms in Bijelo Polje, Nikšić, and Bar. Mr. Marković also stressed the need for support for the renovation of remaining facilities in the Rogame complex, as well as several MoI’s evidence rooms. He also noted that the Ministry of the Interior and the General Police Directorate have no surplus weapons and ammunition.

Ms. Neda Kadović, Ministry of Defence reported that the reduction of military armaments is conducted through sales and destruction. She also stressed a need for further reconstruction of the storage facility “Brezovik” which would entail necessary adaptations and equipment for the laboratory for testing the chemical stability of gunpowder, perimeter fences, CCTV, and hydrant network.

Mr. Shaip Nura noted that the destruction of 42,490 rounds of ammunition of different calibers was organized during the reporting period. He further mentioned that regular inspections of storage facilities were conducted during the reporting period and emphasized that 15 firearms have been reported as stolen by legal persons, while 19 weapons have been reported stolen by natural persons. He added that no firearms were reported stolen from state entities. In conclusion, Mr. Nura announced that the destruction of firearms is planned for 2022.

Mr. Ermin Pešto noted that destruction of approximately 2,000 firearms was organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina during this year. He expressed gratitude for the support provided by UNDP and SEESAC in this regard. He reported on the need for better cooperation between the prosecutors’ offices and courts to address the challenges regarding lengthy court procedures that cause decade-long storing of seized firearms. Mr. Pešto also provided the update regarding the reconstruction of three evidence rooms with SEESAC’s assistance and informed on the OSCE’s project to improve the storage infrastructure at 10 locations in BiH. He also described the challenge related to the lack of human capacities for effective physical security and stockpile management.
Mr. Denis Selimović, Senior Expert for Information Exchange, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Defence, highlighted the importance of MoD’s cooperation with international organizations in the improvement of the security infrastructure of storages in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also reported on the 62,000 pieces of firearms that were marked with support provided by the HALO Trust.

Skopje

Ms. Marija Topalovska informed on seized weapons and ammunition and noted that destruction of surpluses of firearms was not organized during the reporting period. She also stressed a need for the establishment of a database of destroyed weapons. Regarding the enhancement of safety and security of SALW/firearms, ammunition, and explosives storage facilities, Ms. Topalovska noted that an expert was engaged, through support from SEESAC, to assess the safety and security conditions of all storage facilities for explosives. She also reported on the inspections of the private security companies as well as companies involved in the trade of firearms. Ms. Topalovska concluded by stressing a need for and requesting support in the preparation of Standard Operating Procedures on the destruction of weapons, on the handling of lost and stolen weapons, and the storage of the Forest Police weapons.

Tirana

Mr. Blerim Caka, the representative of the Ministry of Defence, noted that relevant authorities have continued implementing a demilitarization project on clearing hotspots contaminated with explosives in cooperation with ITF. Furthermore, he announced the continuation of cooperation with SEESAC and UNDP regarding the increase of physical security of stockpile storages.

Ms. Margarita Vogli added that the new project, implemented by UNDP, includes the reconstruction of police evidence rooms in 10 locations.

SESSION VI – FUNDING SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROADMAP

This session allowed the international organizations and partners 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: Ms. Juliana Buzi, Regional Cooperation Specialist, SEESAC

Mr. Shawn Decaluwe, Chief of FSC Support Unit, Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE, informed on the current OSCE activities that are contributing to the Roadmap implementation, highlighting seven ongoing projects and one project proposal that is currently in the process of approval. He noted that the total value of the current OSCE portfolio in this regard is EUR 8 million. Mr. Decaluwe also reported on the current status of negotiations with the European Council for further funding that would close the remaining funding gap and ensure the implementation of all OSCE’s planned projects in the Western Balkans.

Ms. Teodora Zafiu, Pooled Funding Coordination Consultant, SEESAC/Secretariat of the Western Balkans Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), presented an update on the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund
established in support of the implementation of the Roadmap. She noted that the cumulative Trust Fund portfolio surpassed USD 20 million with the last contributions from Germany (EUR 3 million), France (USD 1.2 million), Sweden (approximately USD 800,000), and Norway (approximately USD 500,000). Ms. Zafiu added that there are 10 projects under implementation at the moment with a total budget of USD 12 million; seven projects at the jurisdiction level, two regional projects, and one cross-border project that is implemented by UNDP COs in Kosovo and North Macedonia. She also announced that the Annual Meeting of the MPTF Steering Committee will take place in February 2022 to review the progress made in 2021 and agree on the next steps. Addressing the inquiry from the Sarajevo delegation, Ms. Zafiu noted that the Steering Committee will also address the possibility to launch the new call for project proposals in its February 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 authorities in the Western Balkans for informative presentations and successful discussions. He informed the participants that France has recently added EUR 150,000 for OSCE programs in support of the Roadmap implementation that comes in addition to previously contributed amounts of EUR 300,000 for OSCE’s canine and awareness-raising related activities and EUR 1 million for MPTF. With these 2021 contributions, the total amount that France has contributed to the Roadmap related projects since 2018 amounts to nearly EUR 6 million. Ambassador Brunet underlined that France also provides support to the jurisdictions in the Western Balkans through direct bilateral assistance and highlighted the recent donation of EvoFinder systems to several jurisdictions. He concluded by thanking the other donors for their continued contributions to the Roadmap and confirmed French readiness to further support the authorities in the Western Balkans in meeting their goals within the Roadmap.

Mr. Albrecht von Wittke, Director of Division, Conventional Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, congratulated the authorities in the Western Balkans on the impressive progress reported during the 6th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting. He underlined Germany’s unwavering commitment to, together with France, the EU, and other donors, support the full implementation of the Roadmap. Furthermore, he stressed that Germany’s overall funding support for the implementation of the Roadmap surpassed EUR 18 million with its most recent contribution to the MPTF. Mr. Wittke also expressed gratitude to all the implementing partners, in particular UNDP, UNODC, and OSCE, for the coherence of their activities on the ground. He concluded by stressing the importance of synergy of efforts and sustainability of all capacity-building activities.

Ms. Francesca Pavarini, Policy Officer, DG NEAR, European Commission, provided an update on the EU contributions to SALW control in the Western Balkans and highlighted the additional funding that SEESAC received through DG NEAR’s Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. She noted that through this new EUR 5 million-worth funding, the authorities in the region will be supported in several strategic and operational areas, including further strengthening of the FFPs, support to the Crime Scene Investigation units, awareness-raising activities, and mainstreaming gender in SALW control.

Conclusions of the Meeting

Mr. Emmanuel Vallens, Policy Coordinator “firearms” Unit HOME D5 Organized Crime, DG HOME European Commission, in his concluding remarks, congratulated the authorities in the Western Balkans for the progress achieved in the implementation of the Roadmap and the EU Action Plan, despite the immense strain caused by COVID 19 pandemic. He stressed the importance of the continued
harmonization of the national legislation with the EU Acquis and the UN Firearms Protocol underlining that the EU legislation is also evolving which requires constant readaptation by the jurisdictions in the Western Balkans. Mr. Vallens added that significant progress was reported in law enforcement cooperation, in particular in the context of Joint Action Days and the exchange of operational cooperation and information with the EU. Furthermore, he noted the progress achieved related to the operationalization of FFP and encouraged the authorities to carry on with the accreditation of the ballistic laboratories and continue with the improvement of information exchange between law enforcement agencies, prosecution offices, and the judiciary.

Mr. Vallens acknowledged the request from the delegation of Serbia for access to the COARM’s database on denials and expressed readiness to facilitate further contacts with the relevant authorities regarding this request. Furthermore, Mr. Vallens highlighted the increasing trend of reported firearms incidents captured at SEESAC’s Armed Violence Monitoring Platform and stressed the need for further work on awareness-raising activities. He also pointed out the importance of strengthening capacities for inspections of legal and private entities. In conclusion, Mr. Vallens confirmed the readiness of the EU and its member states to continue support to the Roadmap implementation.

On behalf of SEESAC, Ms. Juliana Buzi concluded the meeting by congratulating all the delegations from the Western Balkans for their continued commitment and hard work on the implementation of the Roadmap, as well as representatives of international organizations, implementing partners, and donors for their active participation in the 6th Regional Roadmap Coordination Meeting.