

13th SALW Roadmap Local Coordination Meeting in Belgrade

5 June 2016

Opening remarks

Opening the meeting on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior, the Assistant Director of Police reported good progress in 2025 despite some delays, and recalled the December adoption of the new Programme on SALW Control 2025–2030. He noted that Serbia would now appoint a new National SALW Coordinator and establish a new Council, recalled the country's full membership of the Permanent International Commission for the Proof of Small Arms (C.I.P.), and referred to a major INTERPOL operation covering Eurasia being prepared for the end of July. Additionally, the relevant laws are in their final stages.

The German Embassy commended Serbia's engagement of civil society, its awareness campaigns and systematic data collection, and described the Roadmap as well recognized in New York, while observing that MPTF funding had become more challenging than before. The EU Delegation welcomed the adoption of the SALW Programme and Action Plan and noted that the draft criminal code amendments and the draft law on ammunition were under EU review, both relevant to Chapter 24. It informed on a new EU proposal amending Directive (EU) 2024/1260 on firearms trafficking, addressing 3D printing, the criminalisation of blueprints, common definitions of firearm offences and data exchange, and the obligation to maintain firearms focal points, while EU attention remained on stockpile management.

Legal framework and harmonisation

On export control, new individual and global licence forms for dual-use goods were intended to ease the burden on industry, and a national control list fully aligned with the EU list would be adopted the following month. Work on a new Law on the Export and Import of Arms and Military Equipment had been paused pending the return of the licensing procedure to its normal framework, with the EU Common Position criteria to be set in an easily amendable government act; industry was now engaged company by company. Work on a new Law on the Export and Import of Arms and Military Equipment had been paused; a new law would be drafted once the licensing procedure returned to its normal framework, and the intention was to set the licensing criteria, including the amendments to the EU Common Position adopted the previous year, in a government act that would be easier to amend than primary legislation. Rather than holding seminars for industry, the authorities were now meeting individual companies, with a session scheduled that day with one of the largest exporters. Regional cooperation continued with Bosnia and Herzegovina, given the volume of raw materials traded, alongside an exchange with North Macedonia held in July. The Ministry noted that compiling statistical data under the new Roadmap had been challenging, partly because Article 348 of the Criminal Code was not yet disaggregated by type of offence, which complicated comparable data from the prosecution.

The inter-ministerial working group formed in August 2024 had prepared the draft Law on Weapons and Ammunition together with line ministries. Following public consultation (27 March to 20 April) and a round table in Belgrade on 16 April, comments were received from, among others, the Chamber of Commerce, associations of detectives and veterans, the Autonomous Women's Centre, the Personal Data Protection Commissioner and the Republic Secretariat for Legislation. The Ministry referred to the study visit to Slovenia, supported by UNDP, as particularly useful for understanding the challenges an EU Member State had faced in transposing the directive. SEESAC's proposals were incorporated, and the draft was sent to the European Commission in mid-May. The draft Law on Explosives for civil use was under internal review at the legislative department. Authorities clarified the sequencing: the Law on Weapons and Ammunition must be adopted first, creating the conditions to finalise the already-prepared amendments to the Law on Testing, Stamping and Marking.

Firearms Focal Point, tracing and operational cooperation

The Firearms Focal Point was presented as a team drawn from various organisational units, with connected databases enabling unified searches and a new server and backup established, while the Ministry of the Interior was described as understaffed. Cooperation with the manufacturer "Zastava" was described as good, with accelerated procedures for data exchange, although checks of model and number still had to be carried out manually and responses were not always rapid. It was noted that

tracing requests were increasing, including from South America, and that a single request could concern one weapon or several hundred, with one request from an EU Member State covering some 300 weapons, each of which had to be checked against all databases. Because any Zastava-marked weapon, regardless of when or from which former jurisdiction it had been exported, tends to be referred to Serbia for verification, the volume of requests continues to grow while vacancies remain an issue. Reference was also made to the manufacture of counterfeit firearms, such as imitation Glock-type pistols produced outside the original factory, which are difficult to distinguish from genuine ones. As an operational example, it was noted that four rocket launchers had been seized concealed in the bumper of a vehicle at entry into Serbia, and that those responsible had been apprehended.

Forensic, ballistic, Proof House, deactivation and destruction

A supervisory visit in May had given preliminary, unofficial confirmation that all four regional ballistic laboratories (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Užice) had passed ISO accreditation for bullet and cartridge-case analysis, with the official report awaited. Niš laboratory had gained a dedicated ballistics room and Novi Sad was under reconstruction. Two further methods, projectile velocity and trigger-pull force, awaited validation. A second meeting with around twenty prosecutors had also addressed convertible firearms and mine-explosive devices. Testing volumes for imported weapons were rising, with a roughly fifteen-fold increase expected the following year. With OSCE support, deactivation capacities had been strengthened, and certification training held in early 2026 had enabled the agency, including one woman officer from the Ministry of the Interior, to obtain the necessary deactivation certification, with two further visits from the French proof house expected

The Agency, the sole permitted deactivator (up to caliber 12.7), was intended to become the sole destruction body once the relevant laws were amended. Three destruction methods were described, cutting and shredding, crushing, and melting (the cheapest), the cost of the work had been the main difficulty, prompting the procurement of equipment to make the process shorter and cheaper, and that a large number of weapons were awaiting destruction. It noted cases in the region where components reportedly destroyed had re-entered the market and stated that the destruction database had to be automated and connected to the Firearms Focal Point, with plans to develop software with the Ministry of the Interior to track a weapon's lifecycle from deactivation to destruction.

K-9 detection capacities

With the support of the OSCE Mission, the police had developed service-dog capacities for detecting weapons, ammunition and explosives: handlers had been certified in the SAMBI methodology after a final test held in the presence of the French gendarmerie, and detection dogs were already being deployed operationally in coordination with the Firearms Focal Point, dispatched across the territory from the Belgrade base and recovering weapons and ammunition of various calibres, with the training adapted so that a single dog could detect whole firearms, their components and ammunition across several scent profiles. Awareness materials had been produced to encourage women officers to become handlers, with the support of the women police officers' networks, and the procurement of works for a new training ground at the Special Police Brigade had been completed and a contractor selected. Looking ahead, the works at Bežanijska Kosa were due to begin within about ten days and to be completed within four to six months; the master plan, standard operating procedures and a manual for the training and use of service dogs were being finalised; and in June five Ministry of the Interior representatives and two dogs would take part in a regional K-9 workshop in North Macedonia, with a further expert workshop envisaged later in the year (if finances permit) alongside units from France, Austria, Hungary and Slovakia.

Voluntary surrender, stockpile security and prevention

Voluntary surrender continued, with around 5,000 firearms surrendered since the start of the year and a projected 10,000 annually. Serbia was described as the regional leader in deactivation, with over 6,000 weapons deactivated since 2016, and the deactivation-and-marking fee (around 15,000 dinars) might be lowered once the Agency became the sole deactivator. Following an order by the Director of Police, all weapons warehouses were to have video surveillance, bars and regular inventories, and the EU Delegation requested to visit selected sites. In prevention, the uniformed police reported a campaign between 15 December and 15 January reaching some 14,500 citizens, partly on

pyrotechnics, of whom 318 confirmed legal firearm ownership and were reminded of safe-storage rules, while over 1,200 were addressed on celebratory shooting.

Key findings from the 15th Progress Reports

Following the interventions by the relevant institutions, **UNDP SEESAC** presented an overview of the data reported through the 15th Roadmap Progress Reports, covering both the Narrative Progress Report and the Key Performance Indicators Report.

Plans and activities of international organisations

UNDP presented two strands of support. Under the "Reduce Risk, Increase Safety" project, it reported a 33% fall in homicides committed in the context of domestic violence over the past two years, the training of 260 police officers in the second half of the year in regions with disproportionately high domestic-violence homicide rates, and the piloting of a psychological screening instrument for use in health institutions. It also referred to continued support to the Institute for Mental Health, where Norwegian experts supervise the assistance provided to victims and witnesses of the two mass shootings, and to work on a methodological framework to improve the transparency of data on domestic-violence-related homicides and suicides, currently drawn mainly from media reports and civil-society publications.

Under the MPTF-funded SALW control project, **UNDP** reported that the LIMS had completed two of five stages, with testing carried out and full completion expected by November, after which the database would be populated. It noted that adaptations in Niš, Užice and Belgrade were complete, that preparations for the accreditation of two ballistic methods and of the chemistry (gunshot-residue) laboratory method were being finalised across the four laboratories, and that ballistic experts had expressed interest in further training in England, with a proposal for trainers to come to Serbia or for a regional workshop.

The **OSCE** reported that its project supporting the Agency and the Special Police Brigade ran until the end of September, with an extension to the end of the year being sought, and that works at Bežanijska Kosa would begin within about ten days. It noted that two visits by the French deactivation agency were expected, around the end of September and in November or December, to observe how the training was being applied, and that in June five MoI representatives and two service dogs would take part in a regional K-9 workshop in North Macedonia. Although the project was nearing completion, it faced budgetary shortfalls, and the OSCE had approached potential donors to secure the sustainability of the results achieved in deactivation and K-9 detection, a need the Ministry of the Interior supported.

UNODC referred to its work under the Justitia project on aligning the Criminal Code with the UN Firearms Protocol, offering to prepare a commentary on the firearms provisions once the Code was adopted, as it had done in Montenegro and North Macedonia. It noted that, while the manufacture of firearms, including by 3D printing, was already criminalised, the possession of 3D-printing blueprints remained a grey area; following its initiative North Macedonia had legislated on this, and Serbia's draft Criminal Code likewise criminalised the possession of such blueprints. Under the Hermes project it reported the donation of three X-ray devices to postal-customs centres in Belgrade, Niš and Novi Sad, now operational, together with training on the analysis of X-ray images, and a subregional meeting with the customs, postal and courier services of Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina planned for the end of June.

UNDP SEESAC presented an overview of its current activities and plans for further work in this area in Serbia. The presentation covered support to the harmonization of the firearms, ammunition and explosives (FAE) legislative framework, evidence-based SALW control policies, Gender and SALW, as well as support provided to the criminal police, border police and customs authorities. Furthermore, support to the FFP and the CSI Unit was highlighted, together with plans for further support in these areas. Finally, support to physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) and awareness-raising activities was also highlighted.

Donor interventions

An overview was provided of the **Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)** supporting the implementation of the SALW Control Roadmap in the Western Balkans. It was noted that the Trust Fund received new

contributions from the Netherlands and France in 2025, bringing total contributions since its establishment to USD 30.4 million. The recent decision of the MPTF Steering Committee to allocate an additional USD 1 million for immediate priorities across the region in 2026 was also highlighted. Looking ahead, the Trust Fund is awaiting proposals for new activities from implementing organizations, to be developed in close coordination with and endorsed by the relevant SALW Commissions. In this context, in-kind and direct financial contributions from national authorities were encouraged as an important element in informing and guiding future support and priorities.