

CLOSING REMARKS

12th Regional Coordination Meeting on the implementation of the Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Legal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition in the Western Balkans

Dear colleagues, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

We came to the end of the 12th Regional Coordination Meeting held here in this festive atmosphere in Skopje / I think that this atmosphere shields us at least a little bit from rather grim global developments towards the end of this year.

I think we had another successful meeting and thank you all for the contributions and making it a success / allow me in conclusion of the meeting to summarize briefly some key points from these two productive days:

- First and foremost, listening to all your comprehensive updates and presentations it is clear that your dedicated work, strong commitment and engagement are the **key enabling factors** of successful implementation of the Roadmap.
 - The successful implementation of the Roadmap is possible due to **cooperation at and sharing of information among the institutions**, donors and regional and international organizations. These **are key elements contributing to sustainably of efforts to address our common security challenges**.
 - **Cooperation like the one here under the Western Balkans Roadmap is especially significant** bearing in mind the threats deriving from an increasingly challenging geo-political environment and increases in armaments globally.
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- I would here also like to highlight that the SALW Control Roadmap for implementation period 2025-2030 was endorsed by jurisdictions and the EU. I would like to congratulate you once again, for this achievement which is another demonstration of the exemplary model of cooperation coming from this region.

- In this context, we were also pleased to hear once again that good practices from this region are being **replicated globally and influencing the global agenda** and relevant instruments in this area – we were briefed about one such example by UNODC.
- Ongoing work in the implementation of the roadmap was reported in particular towards harmonization of legal framework with EU Acquis and compliance with the UN Firearms Protocol, with three jurisdictions already reporting full compliance with the UN Protocol. **Concrete challenges were highlighted by several jurisdictions in drafting the required amendments and the requests for support in several areas were noted.**
- We also took note of the activities at both policy and law enforcement level throughout the region, in particular the progress reported in enhancing the capacities of the **Firearms Focal Points where these are already established**, and we also took note of the ongoing efforts reported from Sarajevo towards establishing the Firearms Focal Points and from Skopje in making their FFP operational.
- The increase of **exchange of operational information and participation in intelligence led operations** in cooperation with EU and international law enforcement agencies was also notable in your reports.
- Significant ongoing efforts in increasing **detection capacities** to counter illicit trafficking of firearms were reported by all jurisdictions, and I would like to once more commend you on the reported results.
- Another important announcement during the meeting was also the agreement by the EU Member States in initiating collection of data under KPI 5, which will be a key contribution in demonstrating the impact of the Roadmap implementation not only for the region but also for the European Union.

- Another area of progress centered around awareness-raising within Goal 4. We heard about ongoing awareness raising campaigns in all jurisdictions and we encourage these efforts in order to further reduce the negative impact of firearms in our societies.
- It was highlighted once more through the updates in the last but not least important session, that if SALW and ammunition are not properly governed and managed, they may proliferate, deteriorate and create security and safety risks. Important work was reported from each of you in reducing this risk.
- We also noted the renewed commitment of funding support by EU Member States through the Multi Partner Trust Fund and extend an invitation to donors to further contribute to this fund in order to ensure a donor coordinated approach and continued implementation of the Roadmap. We also note with thanks, the new significant contributions to the implementation of the Roadmap, announced by the EU representatives.
- Let me conclude by extending first my sincere gratitude to the respected speakers at the **opening session for their inspiring speeches**, to the **SALW Commissions for** the very comprehensive reports during these two days but also to the **chairs of the different sessions**. The success of the meeting lies in the hands of each one of us.
- Allow me also to extend my thanks to the delegation of Cambodia for their attendance in this meeting and sharing with us their regional efforts in reducing the negative impacts of firearms.
- Let us continue building on the momentum of this event and continue working towards achieving our common goal for a Safer Region, Europe and beyond.
- Last but not least, let me thank the team working in organizing all the complex logistics for this meeting Ana, Marija, Andreja, and Igor but also the other colleagues working on preparation of the reports, Edin, Nenad, Majlinda and Violeta.

- I would like also to thank the interpreters and technicians for their tireless work in this meeting.

For those of you travelling wishing you a safe trip, the delegations are staying here for the regional meeting of SALW commission in which where will be accompanied by colleagues from Moldova and Ukraine.

Lastly, I would like to wish you peaceful holidays and end of the year celebrations. I wish you all the best for the next year and for us to continue working together in a positive and collaborative spirit.