

Regional Cooperation Council Annual Meeting
Statement delivered by Ivan Zverzhanovski, SEESAC Coordinator

Ohrid, 30.05.2013

Mr. Secretary General,
Representatives of RCC participants
Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. Allow me to congratulate you Mr. Secretary General on your successful leadership of this initiative. The Annual Report 2012-2013 presented here today stands as a proof of relentless efforts of the RCC in its tireless activities to facilitate, coordinate and support collaboration and joint activities in the region.

As the body mandated by the Regional Cooperation Council to implement the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), SEESAC is deeply committed to facilitating and supporting efforts to reduce the threat posed by the uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking of SALW. However, SEESAC is also committed to a broader understanding of security and has in recent years expanded its portfolio of activities to include security sector reform more broadly, focusing in particular on the gender equality dimension.

In terms of arms control, SEESAC's ten year long track record speaks for itself and includes, among others the facilitation of information exchange processes, the design and implementation of weapons registration, marking, tracing and record-keeping systems, the implementation of collection and awareness raising campaigns, as well as improved stockpile management and the destruction of some 275,000 pieces of surplus and confiscated firearms. This track record also clearly shows the benefits of regional cooperation in this matter.

In introducing the gender perspective in security sector reform, SEESAC is proud of the achievements of the Women Police Officers Network, a truly regional advocacy and knowledge sharing platform through which police services in our region have significantly improved the position of women in policing. Similar efforts are currently afoot in the defence sphere. Both initiatives clearly show the benefits of regional processes - cooperation, knowledge sharing and information exchange. Through the assistance offered by our two flagship projects in this domain we have helped position institutions in South East Europe on the global map as best practice examples of practical implementation of [United Nations \(UN\) Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security](#) and the [UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)

Against that background permit me to underline the need for a strong ***renewed commitment towards regional cooperation on the reduction of surplus stockpiles of weapons and ammunition as well as improved stockpile management.*** We believe that significant, tangible and measurable progress has been achieved in this area by all countries in South East Europe. That is why it is of critical importance that the momentum is kept and that all of us persist in keeping this item a priority until it is finally resolved in an adequate and sustainable manner. Therefore, we would welcome a joint renewed commitment of all participants to a regional approach in resolving the problem of surplus stockpiles of weapons and ammunition as well as the security of those stockpiles.

Mr. Secretary General,

SEESAC would like to reiterate our commitment to finding synergies between initiatives and projects in the region. It is essential to avoid duplication and competition and we fully support statements of some of the RCC participants regarding the need to streamline initiatives and projects. Thus we look forward to working not only with institutions in South East Europe but also with other initiatives, some of which are

present here, implementing projects aimed at making our region more secure and delivering coordinated and focused assistance and support.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to take part in this meeting and address you today.