



STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Working Table III – Security Issues

Executive Summary of the 5th Meeting of the Regional Steering Group for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in SEE

Budva (Republic of Montenegro), 13 October 2004

1) The 5th Meeting of the Regional Steering Group (RSG) for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in SEE was organized on margins of the 2nd Regional SALW Seminar for National Focal Points and Programme Managers.

2) Mr. Pieter Verbeek, Director of SP WT III, chaired the RSG meeting.

3) Both meetings were attended by representatives from seven of the countries within SEE, two donor countries (Norway and Switzerland), the five UNDP SALW Projects, EUROPOL, OSCE, RACVIAC, the Stability Pact and UNDP BCPR (a list of participants is attached).

4) The main purpose of both events was to consider – in particular prior the Stability Pact Regional Table / Working Table III meetings (Skopje, 17 –19 November 2004) - the ways how to enhance awareness of the problems and consequences of SALW proliferation in the SEE region and to assess the implementation of the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan on SALW. It was also the occasion to exchange options for intervention initiatives and feed back on ‘lessons learned’ in order to support SALW control interventions at strategic and operational levels. Last but not least, the important issue of how to approach problems related to recovered and surplus SALW and ammunition was raised.

5) The attendees welcomed detailed presentation made by Mr. Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader on SEESAC recent (until mid-October 2004) and future activities (end of 2004 + 2005). In particular they were informed about SEESAC Project – Phase 2 (finally adopted in June 2004, i.e. after the RSG meeting in Belgrade in May this year) and its strategic objectives. Mr. Wilkinson also briefed the participants about the current state of SEESAC Phase 2 funding (substantial contribution from the European Commission and UNDP TTF/UK/ was mentioned in particular; in spite of this fact a shortfall for 2005 still exists). The implementation of the project will start on 1 January 2005. As he pointed out, the successful implementation of SEESAC Phase 2 project requires *inter alia* clearer strategic direction from the RSG, small financial contributions from stakeholders’ countries (in order to establish funding mechanism and encourage further regional ownership) and improved effectiveness of SALW National Focal Points.

6) During the discussion, the participants supported SEESAC strategy as presented by the Team Leader.

They also endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Norway regarding bigger involvement of national parliaments in SALW issues. Concrete proposals in this regard were made by the OSCE representative (possible use of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly) as well as the SP WT III Director (growing importance of 'parliamentary dimension' in various SP's initiatives and task forces, parliamentary cooperation in the SEE region as one of the key activities of the Stability Pact). In some interventions the role of the media was highlighted.

As reflected in the majority of the interventions (including the SP WT III Dir., SEESAC TL, UNDP) the functioning/role of SALW National Focal Points (NFPs) should be strengthened. In spite of a letter sent by the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact in March 2004 to the Foreign Ministers and the SP National Coordinators of the eight SEE countries to address this problem, only little progress has been achieved. Therefore, as proposed, this problem will be raised at upcoming SP RT/ WT III meeting in Skopje. Moreover, the Stability Pact office was asked to prepare another letter on behalf of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact to address this issue on the highest political level. As underlined several times, a clearly expressed political will from the side of the recipient countries to actively participate in the process of implementation of the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan on SALW, including SEESAC Phase 2, as well as in the RSG meetings, would also be an important indicator for the donor community to provide necessary funding.

Some participants underlined the importance of better relationships between NFPs and SALW Program Managers in individual countries. On the other hand, the performance of the NFPs in some countries was positively highlighted.

The OSCE representative briefed the participants about the successful implementation of the OSCE Document on SALW. SALW issues will also become an important part of the upcoming OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia in December 2004. He called for regular exchange of information among various international organizations and institutions dealing with SALW issues in SEE, including eventual 'joint assessment missions'. SEESAC experience could be shared with other countries within the 'OSCE area'. He also underlined the important role of donor countries. Although OSCE has no possibility to provide funding, it could support SALW related activities undertaken by other actors, e.g. through OSCE field missions.

The vast majority of participants, incl. SP, UNDP Country Offices, SEESAC and OSCE called for increased international cooperation regarding various aspect of SALW proliferation in SEE. There is a strong need to synchronize actions in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

In this context, the WT III Director informed the participants about the possible use of the existing Stability Pact framework (incl. relevant SP Task Forces on combating organized crime and corruption, border management and security as well as on defence conversion) to attract more attention to SALW issue and establish links where and when necessary. Moreover, the Stability Pact could play a greater coordination role in the whole process. The SP WT III will continue to support cooperation and partnership with the relevant international partners (in particular with the EC, OSCE and NATO), regional initiatives (including regional military/defence cooperation structures) and individual donor countries. In this respect, the South Eastern Europe Cooperation Process (SEECF), as the principal SP 'regional partner' was specifically mentioned.

The participants also underlined that participation of NATO and EU representatives in the future RSG meetings would increase the 'visibility' and political importance of the implementation of the SP Regional Implementation Plan on SALW both inside and outside the region.

Finally, the participants took note of the information provided by Mr. Adrian Wilkinson regarding the selection process of SEESAC Deputy Team Leader. The participants recommended that the new Deputy Team Leader should come from the region itself.

7) The participants decided that the 6th meeting of the RSG would take place in May 2004. The Chair of the meeting had asked Bosnia and Herzegovina to consider hosting this event.

Jiri Kalasnikov
SP WT III