



## **The Chair of Working Table III**

**Intervention of Amb. Janez Premože, Chairman of the Stability Pact  
Working Table on Security and Defence Issues  
at the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference  
Vienna, 23 June 2004**

### **Session 1: Preventing and Combating Terrorism (SALW aspects)**

Dear Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to thank you for providing me the opportunity to present in a few words how the Stability Pact is dealing with the challenge of Small arms and light weapons (SALW) in South Eastern Europe.

The recently held Stability Pact Regional Table / WT III meetings in Portorož confirmed again that the uncontrolled proliferation and circulation of SALW in the SEE region remains a priority item on the Stability Pact agenda and constitutes an important element of the Pact's contribution towards improving Human Security. The risks and security challenges connected to the uncontrolled spread of SALW are evident:

SALW trafficking and organized crime may increase the risk of terrorism, set back economic development and social stability. Moreover, the availability, accumulation and uncontrolled flow of SALW pose serious threats to peace, stability and reconciliation in the South Eastern European region. These facts have also been stressed during the first meeting of the Defence Ministers of the South Eastern European Countries held in Sarajevo on 15 April 2004.

In view of the enormous challenges ahead, the Stability Pact endeavours to cooperate with all relevant actors in this thematic field. The Pact's SALW agenda is closely linked with some other SP's security-related initiatives and Task Forces, such as the Initiative to Fight Organized Crime (SPOC) and the Police Forum for South Eastern Europe, the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC), and the Border Security and Management Issues Initiative, also called the "Ohrid Border Process". Cooperation is also being developed with the South East European Cooperation Initiative's Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime in Bucharest. The Stability Pact has recently started a dialogue with the South Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM) process about seeking

synergy between SP WT III and SEDM, including possible cooperation/actions on mutually agreed topics, which might include SALW.

Why am I mentioning the SALW issue here at this forum? The reason is that we pursue the objective of developing a co-ordinated regional approach to fight the excessive and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons in the region, building on the existing processes of, *inter alia*, the Wassenaar Agreement, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the European Commission, the OSCE and the United Nations.

In this context, we are fully aware of the high importance of actions undertaken and documents adopted by the OSCE so far in the field of combating SALW proliferation. Let me mention in this context especially "The Handbook of Best Practices on SALW", which is a set of guidelines developed by the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation to help cut down the amount of illegally-held weaponry in circulation and the recent decision of the FSC to tighten export controls on man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). We are also grateful in particular to the Conflict Prevention Centre and various OSCE field missions for their constant attention paid to the cooperation with the Belgrade-based South East European Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) – a joint disarmament and SALW control initiative of the Stability Pact and UNDP.

SEESAC is providing strategic and technical advice and assisting in coordination of SALW control in the SEE region. At the same time SEESAC represents the main tool of implementation of the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan on SALW in eight countries in South Eastern Europe.

Let me inform you that a joint UNDP/Stability Pact/Donor assessment of the SEESAC project to date was conducted in February 2004. At the last meeting of the Regional Steering Group for the Control of SALW in SEE held in Belgrade in mid-May, this assessment was discussed as well as a project proposal for a second two-year phase of SEESAC (starting in January 2005) to be adopted by the end of June. However, clearly expressed political commitment from the side of the SEE countries to actively participate in the whole process of implementation of the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan on SALW, including SEESAC Phase 2, would be necessary to secure donor funding.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SEESAC Regional Arms Laws roundtable, co-sponsored by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), took place in Belgrade on 25-26 May 2004 and contributed to reinforcing the momentum in the region for the development of effective export and domestic arms control measures.

Let me assure you that the SP will continue to support cooperation and partnership with the relevant international partners including OSCE, regional initiatives and individual donor countries. Evidently our efforts aimed at fighting organized crime, corruption or international terrorism could hardly be successful without the strong engagement of various international and

national NGOs. Speaking about SALW in particular, let me stress that we fully recognize and appreciate the role of the NGOs (like the Szeged Small Arms Process/SSAP and Saferworld) in combating the proliferation of SALW, in raising public awareness, in engaging civil society in concrete actions in the field and in assisting journalists to inform the public about combating SALW problems in SEE.

Thank you.

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## **Session 2: Border Security and Management**

Let me in a few words address this session in my capacity as the Chair of the Ohrid Process for Border Management and Security, which formally operates under the Stability Pact's umbrella. At the very beginning I am very pleased to state that the Stability Pact highly appreciates its cooperation with the partner organizations and with the OSCE in particular.

The Ohrid Border Process represents a joint effort by the countries of the region, the OSCE, the EU, NATO and the Stability Pact to address the very sensitive issue of borders. As the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact Erhard Busek underlined at the OSCE Permanent Council on 20 May, the Ohrid Border Process is moving ahead very well, with the countries of the Western Balkans region step by step implementing the commitments made. Indeed, according to the intermediate reports on the implementation of the Way Forward Document, which were sent to the Stability Pact mid-May, the five countries of the Western Balkans Region have chosen up to 6 action-oriented measures which are already being implemented, or about to be in the nearest future.

When taking stock of what has already been done, it is necessary to remind that after the presentation of the first reports from the five countries of the Western Balkans Region at the First Review Meeting in November last year, three ad-hoc meetings have taken place this year. First, a Senior level meeting in March, where all the participants agreed that the priorities were the successful implementation of action-oriented measures, the drafting of reports focused on concrete achievements resulting from the implementation of national strategies and / or of actions taken from "the Ohrid commitments", and the improvement of communication and coordination between all the participants by appointing National Contact Points (NCPs). Secondly, an Expert level meeting in April, where the participants agreed on a timeline for the preparation and presentation of semi-annual reports. Thirdly, the 4 partners met to discuss the preparation of a meeting of the Heads of Border Services/ Guards, with the National Contact Points and the partners, which finally took place in Croatia on 2 June, 2004.

This meeting was the occasion – just prior to the Stability Pact WT III / and Regional Table meetings in Portorož on 7 – 8 June - to discuss about important issues and take steps further in the Ohrid Border Process. The main

issue of this gathering was the discussion between the countries and the partners about the intermediate reports on the implementation of the Way Forward Document (WFD). I firmly believe that this exchange of views will allow the countries to produce final reports for the first half of October, before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Meeting, which will take place in Albania in October this year.

In accordance with the conclusions of the Expert level meeting on 1 April of this year, the 5 countries as well as the four partner organisations have appointed their National Contact Point for the Ohrid Process. This procedure has led to a complete list of people, which aims at facilitating coordination and information-sharing between the participants of the process. However, there is still a possibility to improve this network, in order to make it more efficient.

When turning to the substance, let me underline that the review process of the "Ohrid commitments" relies on the implementation of specific measures taken by the countries in order to have concrete achievements on the ground. According to the Way Forward Document, these measures can be divided – in my view - into two groups: the implementation instruments and the specific action-oriented measures.

As foreseen in the Way Forward Document, the main implementing instrument is the National Strategy for Integrated Border Management (IBM). This strategy is supported by an Action plan for implementation which lists all actions to be taken and by the establishment of the appropriate organisational structures and coordination mechanisms.

According to the intermediate reports on the implementation of the Way Forward Document, which were sent to the Stability Pact, some of them following the agreed deadline (14 May), and others later, the five countries have chosen up to 6 action-oriented measures which are already being implemented, or about to be in the nearest future. When preliminary analysing the above-mentioned reports I could see that the main progress in this field deals with the preparation/ adoption/ implementation of:

- strategies on border management
- laws on state border crossing
- training of the personnel which will take over the control of the borders from the military
- overview of the needs of the border police in equipment and personnel
- information systems
- signing of Agreements (Protocols) about cooperation with neighbouring countries on prevention of border crossing criminals

Practical implementation of legislative measures and of concrete ones proved to be sometimes uneasy. This should not prevent the assessment of limited progress and stress the need for some rescheduling/redefinition of the implementation scheme in order to address unexpected difficulties, while sticking to the initial commitments.

The four partner organisations do not consider the Ohrid Border Process as a "one-side exercise". Therefore, they have assisted the countries concerned in fulfilling their task. That is why, we listened very carefully what the OSCE/CPC representative has said about the implementation of the "OSCE SEE Regional Cross Border Co-operation Programme". Let me underline that the Stability Pact highly appreciated that the OSCE has already convened three seminars (for a total of 6 in 2004), covering various aspect of this programme. These seminars have taken place in Vienna, Dubrovnik and Sofia. We took note that another three will take place in Macedonia (June), Serbia (July) and in Montenegro (September). We are ready to cooperate fully with a special Border Unit established within the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre.

Let me now mention one concrete area where we are working very closely with the OSCE in particular. This is a training of local military forces still in charge of the border in basic policing skills. We took note that the OSCE suggested to identify country specific needs, target groups, agencies that are able to implement training and the necessary financial resources. This issue had been discussed by the partner organisations prior to the 2 June meeting. As the direct result of this consultation, a draft questionnaire on the needs regarding training in the 5 countries of the Ohrid Border Process had been prepared by the SP Secretariat and subsequently distributed to all participants of the 2 June meeting. Representatives of the countries concerned agreed to submit their answers to the SP Secretariat by 30 June 2004. A possible role of RACVIAC and DCAF in the field of this kind of training has also been mentioned.

During the various meetings we organized, the question of the possible creation of a network for information exchange on existing training activities has been mentioned as well. The partners as well as the countries concerned have reached an understanding, that although there is no need to establish a special sub-group of experts for this issue (it could be covered by an already established network of NCPs for the Ohrid Border Process), the coordination of various training activities (in particular in the area of the "training of trainers" projects) would be highly desirable. These issues will be further discussed at the Ohrid Border Process meetings in the fall of this year.

In this context, I would like to note that the European Union and NATO have repeatedly reiterated their commitment to assist the countries of the region in this process and I would like to thank them for their outstanding support and advice.

Last, but not least, on the side of the Stability Pact, we have prepared and subsequently distributed to all Ohrid Border Process participants the draft "SP Concept for More Efficient Police Control of Main Border Crossings: Linking Border Police to Interpol's National Central Bureaus". As stressed, this idea – supported also by the EU and NATO - is fully in line with the Stability Pact efforts in combating organized crime in the SEE region. We invited the participants, in particular the countries concerned, to look at this proposal and to provide the SP Secretariat with their views before the end of June.

Thank you.