



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretariat

Conflict Prevention Centre

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Report on the Regional Workshop on the Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons Skopje, 1-2 July 2004

In accordance with the FSC decision 5/2003, the Conflict Prevention Centre in close co-operation with the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje organized a regional workshop for all South-Eastern European states in Skopje on 1-2 July 2004 in order to introduce the Handbook of Best Practices on SALW. The workshop addressed different chapters of the Handbook designed to reduce and prevent illicit trafficking of SALW. The international expert speakers from SEESAC, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden and Germany covered a number of topics, including export, import and transit of small arms; marking, record-keeping and tracing; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; weapons collection and destruction of weapons. Speakers and participants also shared national experiences regarding these mentioned topics during the seminar. The CPC representatives provided detailed information on the OSCE assistance mechanism in relation to SALW and SALW information exchanges. The workshop aimed at mid-level officials from respective ministries of each participating state and brought together about 70 participants from SEE states, including political-military experts from the OSCE missions and the UNDP. The local media was also present at the opening session of the workshop and provided a wide coverage of the event.

The workshop was conducted in an atmosphere of co-operation and open dialogue and was productive for both participants and expert speakers. All the participants had a chance to meet their counterparts from other SEE states, the experts speakers as well as the officials from the OSCE and UN and to share their own views and experiences in this field. The information provided by the speakers generated a broad discussion and exchange of views on a number of relevant issues. The workshop identified some areas for future common work and more targeted OSCE activities in relation to the implementation of the Handbook in the SEE region.

The discussion also showed that the UNDP plays an active role in the region in the field of SALW. In particular, the elaboration of the SALW related legislation for SEE countries was mentioned. In our view such assistance should take into account respective OSCE commitments and recommendations stemming from the Document on SALW and the Handbook of Best Practices. In this regard the OSCE Missions could play a more active role in accordance with their mandates in order to be in the picture of latest SALW related activities in the region.

The CPC plans to continue addressing these issues with the aim to focus on certain topics of the Handbook based on the needs expressed by the states in the region. The purpose is to go deeper to some particular topics of the Handbook and, with the consent of a requesting state, to assist the country to deal with the existing problems.

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