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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: COUNCIL DECISION in support of the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) for the implementation of the Regional Roadmap on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans and in support of disarmament and arms control activities in South-East and East Europe - Annex

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## PROJECT DOCUMENT

# PROJECT ON SALW CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE ROADMAP FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO THE ILLEGAL POSSESSION, MISUSE AND TRAFFICKING OF SALW/FIREARMS AND THEIR AMMUNITION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH-EAST AND EAST EUROPE

## 1. Introduction and objectives

Illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons continue to contribute to instability and violence in the European Union, in its immediate neighborhood, and in the rest of the world. This is recognized in the *EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition*, with the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighborhood listed as priority areas of concern. The overall objective of this action is to further contribute to European and global peace and security by combatting the threat posed by the illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and will enhance regional stability by working within the framework of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and in partnership with other relevant international partners and initiatives.

Progress has continuously been made in South-East and East Europe with regards to combatting the illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW, mainly due to the comprehensive and long-term support of the European Union. Nevertheless, according to the *2025 European Union Serious and Organized Crime Organized Threat Assessment*, the Western Balkan continues to be a key source of illicit firearms trafficked into the EU<sup>1</sup>. While there are no reports of firearms trafficking from Ukraine at the moment, a post conflict environment may similarly emerge as a significant source in the future. Thus, further strengthening of SALW control efforts in the EU's neighboring regions (and ensuring the progress made until now is sustained) is extremely relevant for the security of the EU as well as and global peace and security.

In 2018, building on the *South East Europe Regional Implementation Plan on Combatting the Proliferation and Impact of SALW*, the authorities of the Western Balkans reinforced their commitment to address the remaining challenges regarding the illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW by adopting the *Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse, and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and explosives in the Western Balkans by 2030*<sup>2</sup> (the 'Roadmap') at the Western Balkans Summit in London.<sup>3</sup>

The Roadmap envisions the Western Balkans as a safer region and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable oversight and control mechanisms, fully harmonized with Union and other international standards, are in place to identify, prevent, prosecute and control the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives. The South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)<sup>4</sup>, supported the development of the Roadmap and is mandated by the Governments and the EU to [coordinate](#), [monitor](#) and [support its implementation](#).

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<sup>1</sup> According to SEESAC, the region is not only a source, but also a transit and destination for firearms trafficking.

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.seesac.org/SALW-Control-Roadmap/>

<sup>3</sup> The Roadmap has been extended beyond 2024 at the EU Western Balkans Ministerial Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs in October 2024.

<sup>4</sup> As the executive arm of the *South East Europe Regional Implementation Plan on Combatting the Proliferation and Impact of SALW*.

Since 2018 progress has been made; jurisdictions in the Western Balkans have seized over 36,000 firearms; over 294,000 firearms have been voluntarily surrendered; 4,447 firearms legalized, and 5,064 deactivated. Furthermore, over 67,000 pieces of SALW have been destroyed. The Roadmap also contributed further to the harmonization of legislation with the EU acquis, thereby directly supporting their EU integration aspirations; enhancing operational cooperation, not only in the Western Balkans, but also with key EU platforms and bodies such as FRONTEX, EUROPOL and EMPACT. The Roadmap has also contributed to strengthening regional security and trust in a post conflict fragile environment, which are essential foundations for sustaining peace and development. Nevertheless, challenges remain. During the first phase of implementation of the Roadmap, 17,798 incidents with firearms have been recorded in the Western Balkans, with 794 people killed, 2,108 injured, 2,650 threatened and 333 committing suicide. The fact that almost 50% of all recorded incidents represented weapons seizures, demonstrates a proactive approach of the law enforcement institutions in removing weapons from circulation.

The good practices implemented in the Western Balkans have influenced also the wider region. With EU funding and support of SEESAC, the Republic of Moldova has made progress in strengthening their physical security and stockpile efforts with security upgrades of 2 storages of SALW, and 4 evidence rooms; destruction of over 13,000 pieces of SALW since 2005, and by establishing the electronic weapons registry system. Efforts have also been made in strengthening the analytical capacities for firearms related investigations by establishing the Firearms Focal Point. Ukraine, on the other hand, has made progress by strengthening of coordination efforts at the national level by establishment of *the Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms*<sup>5</sup>, initiation of development of the SALW strategy, efforts to harmonize their legal framework with the EU acquis as well as by strengthening their capacities through various trainings. Both, representatives of Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are regularly taking part in SEESAC facilitated regional cooperation processes on SALW control in South East and East Europe.

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<sup>5</sup> Full name: Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

Furthermore, the Western Balkans Roadmap, with a clear monitoring framework and a coordination mechanism, has inspired action across the globe, leading to the development of the [Caribbean Firearms Roadmap](#) and [Central America and Dominican Republic Roadmap](#).

The impact of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap and its relevance for regional cooperation and the security of the EU was acknowledged at several high-level meetings, with a clear commitment of the EU to continue to support its implementation.”<sup>6</sup>

The new phase of the SEESAC project will build upon the achievements under EU Council Decisions (CFSP) 2018/1788 and 2022/2321 and the IPA/2021/425-067 Support for enhancing the fight against the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the Western Balkans project, all implemented by SEESAC (the latter two expiring end of December 2025). It will be implemented in complementarity with EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3006.

The action will directly contribute to the implementation of the EU Security Strategy, the EU SALW Strategy, the EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking, the EU Policy Cycle for organized and serious international crime (EMPACT Firearms), the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument, the UN Firearms Protocol, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and peace and security, and the UN Disarmament Agenda which has been reinforced through the Pact for the Future, giving new political momentum and institutional backing to many of the original Agenda’s disarmament commitments. The action will further specifically enhance regional cooperation in combating the threat posed by the spread of SALW and their ammunition. The project results will also directly contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda on peaceful and just societies, in particular targets 16.1 (significantly reduce all forms of violence and death rate everywhere) and 16.4 (significantly reduce illicit arms flows), and Goal 5 on gender equality. It will also contribute to the implementation of the South East Europe Regional Implementation Plan Combatting the Proliferation and Impact of SALW. The action will be implemented as part of UNDP Regional Programme Document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2026-2029).

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<sup>6</sup> For example: the [EU-Western Balkans Summit](#) on 13 December 2023, the [EU Western Balkans summit](#) on 18 December 2024, the [Berlin Process Summit](#) on 14 October 2024.

## **2. Selection of implementing agency and coordination with other relevant funding initiatives**

SEESAC is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council with core funding from the European Union and is the focal point for SALW-related activities in South-East Europe. As the executive arm of the South-East Europe Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW, SEESAC has a key mandate to coordinate the implementation of SALW control efforts, monitor progress and provide the technical, advisory and project implementation support to the Governments in the region in combatting the illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW. Regional ownership is ensured through the Regional Cooperation Council as well as through the Regional Steering Group, where representatives of all partners in South East Europe provide strategic guidance for SEESAC activities.

SEESAC has been working since 2002 with national and international stakeholders in South-East and East Europe on implementing a holistic approach to SALW control through the execution of a wide spectrum of activities including: the facilitation of strategic and operational regional cooperation, supporting policy development and capacity enhancement for institutions, awareness-raising and SALW collection campaigns, stockpile management, surplus reduction, and improved marking and tracing capabilities, detection and investigation capacities, as well as improved arms-exports control. In this way, SEESAC has acquired a unique capacity and experience implementing multi-stakeholder regional interventions against the shared political and economic background of the partners in the region, ensuring national and regional ownership and the long-term sustainability of its actions and establishing itself as the primary regional authority in the SALW control field.

SEESAC continues to maintain bilateral and multilateral channels of communication with all relevant actors and organizations. In that regard, SEESAC continues to serve as the Secretariat of the Regional Steering Group for SALW (RSG) and coordinates and monitors the implementation of the Western Balkans Roadmap in close cooperation with the EU, Germany and France. In this context, SEESAC also performs the Secretariat functions of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi Partner Trust Fund.

SEESAC regularly contributes to relevant regional fora. SEESAC regularly contributes to EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Ministerial Meetings, meetings organized within the Berlin Process, the South East Europe Defence Ministerial process. SEESAC continues to maintain a wide network of formal and informal partnerships with organizations and initiatives, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and relevant UN agencies, in particular the UNODA, UNODC, UNIDIR and UNWOMEN and regional organizations such as the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC). SEESAC regularly contributes to UN Coordination Action on Small Arms (CASA) bringing together all the UN agencies working on disarmament and arms control; the SALW and mine action coordination meetings, an informal coordination mechanism on SALW control activities involving NATO, the Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and SEESAC. Further to this, SEESAC is regularly participating in coordination meetings on Ukraine, the Coordination Meeting of International Partners on SALW Control Efforts in Ukraine facilitated by OSCE and the Law Enforcement Sectoral Working Group Subgroup on Countering Crime and Ensuring Community Security in Ukraine, facilitated by EUAM.

SEESAC maintains close contact and provides support to relevant Union institutions for a more effective outreach to South East Europe counterparts, primarily to DG Home of the Commission, and Europol, as well as Union-led initiatives such as EMPACT Firearms and the European Firearm Experts (EFE) group.

SEESAC has pioneered an approach based on tackling shared problems through regional initiatives, which has yielded impressive results in South East and East Europe not only because of the crucial information-sharing and promotion of healthy regional competition which it sparks, but also because it helps achieve consistent and easily measurable results at national and regional level through a holistic implementation modality. The organization of the annual RSG meetings and participation by SEESAC in all relevant processes and initiatives provides timely and candid information exchange, strong situational awareness and the foresight necessary to ensure that implementation is not prone to overlap and is in line with the current needs of the governments and the regions as well as with developing trends.

SEESAC grounds all its activities in counterparts' expressed needs and the collected baseline data and needs assessments and secures endorsement and political support from national stakeholders as a precondition for action. In addition, all efforts are framed in support of Union-led processes and achievement of Union standards and criteria. SEESAC implemented its previous Union-funded projects with a very high delivery rate of the envisaged activities, delivering sustainable project results by developing and fostering partners' ownership of its projects and activities, and promoting regional coordination, experience and sharing of best practices, as well as regional research. Its SALW expertise and in-depth knowledge of regional affairs and relevant stakeholders make SEESAC the most suitable implementing partner for this particular action.

SEESAC will continue to work in combination with the ongoing international assistance efforts implemented under the UN framework, in particular the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The Roadmap Trust Fund is a key funding mechanism supporting the implementation of the Roadmap. The Trust Fund was established in March 2019 by UNDP and UNODC as Participating UN Organizations, to ensure a donor- and jurisdiction-coordinated funding approach in the implementation of the Roadmap. It strengthens coordination, planning and communication among all partners, fosters collaboration, and reduces risks to governments and financial contributors through a comprehensive risk and results-based management system. The Trust Fund has benefitted from a strong cooperation with Germany and France, as the initiators of the Roadmap, that were joined by the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. The Trust Fund mobilized approximately US\$30 million in contributions. UNDP SEESAC functions as the Secretariat of the Trust Fund and is responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the Trust Fund, providing technical, management, planning and programming support to it. By September 2025, the Trust Fund supported 25 projects implemented by the Participating UN Organizations, whereby 16 completed their operations and nine are currently ongoing.

SEESAC's work is also complemented by OSCE through the OSCE implementation of the EU COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2024/3097 in support of the comprehensive programme on supporting efforts to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of SALW and Conventional Ammunition in South-Eastern Europe; and the OSCE implementation of the EU COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2024/3003 in support of strengthening the capacities of the Ukrainian authorities to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives.

Other Union-supported actions in Southeast and East Europe, primarily those of Europol, Frontex and Interpol, and the operational action plans of EMPACT Firearms regularly liaise with SEESAC in order to secure complementarities of action, the relevance and timeliness of intervention.

### **3. Project description**

The new phase of the SEESAC project will build upon the achievements made under the projects implemented through EU Council Decisions (CFSP) 2018/1788 and (CFSP) 2022/2321, as well as the Commission funded project implemented through IPA/2021/425-067, "Support for enhancing the fight against the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the Western Balkans". All these three projects were implemented by SEESAC. The latter two projects are expiring by the end of December 2025. The new phase of the SEESAC project will furthermore be implemented in complementarity with the ongoing project under EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3006.

It will focus on four main areas, maintaining the holistic approach to tackling the threat posed by SALW in the region. Those areas address the strategic/policy level as well as the operational aspects, thus directly assisting at all levels of SALW control, with a focus on: coordinating the regional approach and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap; strengthening of knowledge exchange and interregional cooperation on SALW control; and strengthening the capacities of law enforcement services in Moldova and Ukraine to counter illegal possession, misuse and trafficking; as well as those in the Western Balkans, primarily the law enforcement and customs services of the Western Balkans for countering illicit trafficking.

In particular, the project will result in:

- coordinated implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and explosives in the Western Balkans by 2030;
- strengthened interregional cooperation, knowledge management and knowledge sharing on arms control;
- strengthened capacities of law enforcement services of Moldova and Ukraine for countering illicit trafficking, misuse and possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives;
- strengthened capacities of law enforcement and customs services of the Western Balkans for countering illicit trafficking.

The project's strategy is grounded in SEESAC's unique approach of fostering confidence and cooperation in the region as a prerequisite for achieving concrete and measurable transformational change. In particular, at the regional level, different cooperation processes facilitated by SEESAC, involving both policymakers and operational- level practitioners, represented the backbone of the approach, ensuring an enabling and competitive environment for knowledge transfer, expertise exchange and information-sharing. This has served not only to increase the capacities in the region, but more importantly to build confidence and foster direct cooperation among institutions and individual experts, which, among other, enabled the development and implementation of the Roadmap. The project will continue to foster regional cooperation and local ownership as the essential enabling elements for measurable results.

### **3.1. Coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and explosives in the Western Balkans by 2030**

#### *Objective*

To ensure the effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap.

#### *Description*

Building upon the Decisions CFSP/2018/1788 and CFSP/2022/2321, this component will ensure the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the second phase of the Roadmap (2025-2030). The Roadmap was revised for the second phase of implementation through consultative meetings by Small Arms and Light Weapons Commissions in the region during 2023 and 2024, ensuring regional ownership and sustainability of results. Consultations included donors, regional and international partners, as well as civil society representatives. The revised text of the Roadmap was endorsed by the Western Balkans Ministers of Interior during the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs held in October 2024.

The Roadmap continues contributing to the existing Union activities to counter the illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW, specifically the EU SALW strategy, the EU Action plan on firearms trafficking that has integrated the Western Balkans Roadmap; and EMPACT work in the region. The Roadmap is a testimony to the consensus reached among all stakeholders in the region about the current challenges, the overall targets to be reached and the timeline of actions to be taken. It provides an overall platform for the achievement of commonly agreed KPIs at strategic, policy and operational level.

Covering the first phase of Roadmap implementation thirteen progress reports have been published providing a measurable and up to date account on the progress of implementation of the Roadmap. In addition, biannual local and regional coordination meetings have ensured an exemplary coordinated approach of implementation of efforts and resources among authorities, donors and implementing partners.

Specifically, the work under this component will continue to ensure the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap through:

- provision of expert and technical support to Roadmap coordination including regional Roadmap coordination meetings focusing on taking stock of progress and information exchange;
- the provision of expert and technical support to local Roadmap coordination meetings monitoring the implementation of partners' action plans;
- the development of biannual monitoring and evaluation reports documenting progress, challenges and needs in the implementation of the Roadmap based on the commonly agreed KPIs;
- the mid term review of the implementation of the Roadmap;
- Roadmap outreach and visibility activities (including the maintenance of an online platform, stakeholder engagement and awareness raising).

Project results/implementation indicators:

- Organization of up to three regional Roadmap coordination meetings;
- Taking stock of progress, facilitation of information exchange, knowledge transfer and standardization;
- Organization of local coordination meetings (up to 36 in total);
- Development of biannual regional monitoring reports (up to six);
- Mid term review of the Roadmap;
- Maintenance of an online platform to ensure proper outreach and visibility of the Roadmap.

### **3.2. Contribute to strengthened interregional cooperation, knowledge exchange and information-sharing on arms control**

#### *Objective*

This component will facilitate the interregional information sharing, knowledge exchange, replication of good practices and lessons learnt through provision of technical advice, meetings, workshops and study visits.

#### *Description*

South East Europe has been implementing a comprehensive regional approach to SALW control for over two decades, covering all the functional areas of SALW control. As such, the region stood at the forefront of innovative solutions for SALW control that inspired action and were replicated in other parts of the world. SEESAC's Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards and Guidelines that were developed in 2006 to standardize SALW control procedures, practices and norms at the operational level, influenced the development of the International Small Arms Control Standards which then later transferred into the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC). Further, the Western Balkans Roadmap has been highlighted by numerous stakeholders as one of the most successful regional efforts for SALW Control globally. It has been described as a positive example by the UN Secretary General in his Reports on SALW Control to the Security Council and he has also called for elaboration and further development of Roadmaps in his Agenda for Peace.

The Roadmap has been replicated in the Caribbean, as well as in Central America and Dominican Republic, along with its coordination and monitoring mechanism, and it has also been integrated in the EU Action plan on firearms trafficking. SEESAC supported the development of the first SALW Control Strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic and facilitated interregional knowledge exchange through study visits from Kyrgyz Republic, Cambodia and Honduras to the Western Balkans with the aim for delegations to learn from best practices developed in the Western Balkans and share their experiences in SALW control.

Furthermore, SEESAC's Armed Violence Monitoring Platform, an innovative online data platform providing in depth information as well as visualization of data on incidents with firearms across South-East Europe, is also being replicated by the EU. South East Europe has also been paving the way for the practical integration of gender in SALW control. Progress made in operationalization of Firearms Focal Points in South-East Europe is regularly shared with FFP's from across the EU member states in joint meetings.

Most of these practices were developed and operationalized as part of implementation of EU Council Decisions in support of SEESAC's disarmament and arms control efforts in South East Europe throughout the last two decades.

This component will facilitate further the information sharing, knowledge exchange, replication of good practices and lessons learnt among the regions.

It will do so through:

- Provision of technical and advisory support
- Organization of meetings, workshops, study visits

Project results/implementation indicators:

- Technical and advisory support provided
- Meetings, workshops or study visits organized

### **3.3. Capacity development of law enforcement services of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine for countering illicit trafficking, misuse and possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives**

#### *Objective*

To reduce the threat of illicit trafficking of firearms by enhancing the capacities of law-enforcement institutions including border police through advisory support and technical assistance based on identified needs.

#### *Description*

This component builds on SEESAC's previous support to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Representatives of both countries have been participating and contributing to the regional cooperation processes that SEESAC is facilitating at the strategic and operational levels. The transfer of knowledge and experiences gained, and best practices developed in the Western Balkans since 2001, has been particularly valuable in the context of ongoing war in Ukraine.

The representatives of Moldovan and Ukrainian institutions have been regularly taking part in meetings of SALW commissions and relevant institutions in South-East and East Europe; the meetings of the South-East Europe Firearms Experts Network, and thus benefitted from the information sharing and regional knowledge exchange at the strategic and operational levels. They have also benefitted from regional capacity building activities, such as those on harmonization of legislation with the EU acquis, online investigations and combatting arms trafficking on the darknet.

SEESAC has also been providing support for targeted SALW control measures at the national level. Advisory support has been provided to Ukraine in the establishment of the Coordination Centre on Combatting the Illicit Arms Trafficking under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the development of the national legal framework on SALW control, and the development of the national strategy to prevent and Combat Illicit SALW. Tailor made trainings to enhance the investigation capacities of law enforcement institutions have been delivered.

SEESAC has also been providing support for targeted SALW control measures in the Republic of Moldova. Over the last two decades these included measures for physical security and stockpile management, including destruction of SALW and security upgrades of storages of weapons and ammunition, and evidence rooms. Support has also been provided for marking, record keeping and tracing; a marking machine has been procured and training for its use organized, and support for the establishment of the weapons registry system has been provided. SEESAC also provided the initial technical and advisory support in setting up the Firearms Focal Point. Additionally, awareness raising activities were supported on the dangers of misuse and illicit possession of firearms. Support has also been provided for the establishment of the national SALW commission; data collection has been supported to enhance the understanding of SALW control gaps, leading to the publication of the SALW survey for Republic of Moldova, while an up-to-date insight in to firearms incidents is provided through the Armed Violence Monitoring Platform. SEESAC also provided support for the development of the SALW National Programme on SALW Control for 2026–2030. Following a detailed needs assessment of the Criminal Police, support was provided for development of Standard Operating Procedures, training and equipment to enhance investigation capacities.

This component will further strengthen the capacities of institutions in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to combat the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives, based on needs assessments and in line with international best practices.

It will do so through:

- Provision of advisory support, technical assistance, training, equipment for law enforcement services in countering illicit arms trafficking in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
- Support for participation in specialized regional platforms on SALW control

## Project results/implementation indicators

- Advisory and technical support provided
- Equipment for suppression of arms trafficking procured
- Capacity development activities implemented
- Security upgrade of one storage of SALW in Republic of Moldova planned and completed

### **3.4. Further capacity development of customs services of the Western Balkans for countering illicit trafficking**

#### *Objective*

To reduce the threat of illicit trafficking of firearms by enhancing the capacities of customs services of the Western Balkans for countering illicit trafficking.

#### *Description*

In 2024, SEESAC completed the first region-wide Needs Assessment of Customs Administrations in the Western Balkans to evaluate their capacities to counter illicit firearms trafficking. The assessment was conducted using a methodology previously developed and applied by SEESAC for Border and Criminal Police Services, covering all relevant aspects, including legislation, administrative and institutional capacities, training needs, and technical equipment.

Assessment missions were carried out across all six jurisdictions, resulting in comprehensive reports, endorsed by the authorities. They set the basis for targeted support, ensuring that customs authorities are systematically integrated into regional and EU firearms control efforts. Strengthening customs capacities is needed to enable a coordinated, cross-border response with Border Police, in line with EU Integrated Border Management standards and the Western Balkans SALW Roadmap, thereby reinforcing the region's collective ability to combat illicit firearms trafficking.

To date, customs administrations in most jurisdictions have not benefited from systematic capacity development in relation to the detection of firearms, essential components, ammunition, and explosives at border crossing points. This gap is critical, as effective firearms control requires a joint and coordinated response by both Border Police and Customs authorities. While Border and Criminal Police services have been supported through EU Council Decisions (2018/1788 and 2019/2111) implemented by SEESAC, comparable tailored support to customs—apart from participation in regional processes—has been largely absent. Building on lessons learned and best practices applied with Border and Criminal Police, a similar approach has now been envisaged for customs authorities.

Under the EU Council Decision 2024/3006, SEESAC has already initiated capacity development activities by supporting the development of Standard Operating Procedures for each Customs Administration in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, targeted training across all jurisdictions will take place until the end of 2025. The needs assessments identify lack of specialized equipment as one of key gaps. This gap will be addressed under this project.

This will be done through:

- Procurement and delivery of specialized equipment for Customs Authorities

Project results/implementation indicators:

- Equipment provided.

#### **4. Beneficiaries**

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be the institutions responsible for SALW control in South East and East Europe. The authorities responsible for home affairs, police services, border guards and customs authorities of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine will benefit from either advisory support, the coordination and monitoring efforts, or capacity development, knowledge advancement, improved procedures and cost-effective specialized equipment necessary for policy, operational and technical advancements in SALW control. The proposed activities are fully in line with the *South East Europe Regional Implementation Plan on Combatting the Proliferation and Impact of SALW* and the Western Balkans Roadmap, as well as partners' priorities on SALW control. The general population of South East and East Europe and the Union, at risk from the illegal possession, misuse and proliferation of SALW, will benefit from this project indirectly.

#### **5. Union visibility**

SEESAC shall take all necessary measures to ensure the visibility of the European Union's financial support. Such measures will be carried out in full compliance with the Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Actions (2018) as well as the updated guidance Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions (2022).

## **6. Duration**

Based on the experience of implementing Decisions 2002/842/CFSP, 2010/179/CFSP, 2013/730/CFSP, 2016/2356/CFSP, 2018/1788/CFSP and 2022/2321/CFSP and taking into consideration the regional scope of the project, the number of beneficiaries and the number and the complexity of planned activities, the timeframe for implementation is 36 months.

## **7. General set up**

The technical implementation of this action has been entrusted to UNDP, acting on behalf of SEESAC, the regional initiative working under the mandate of UNDP and the RCC. As the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW, SEESAC acts as focal point for all SALW-related issues in the South East and East Europe, including facilitating the coordination of the implementation of the regional Roadmap. UNDP, acting on behalf of SEESAC, will have the overall responsibility for the implementation of project activities and accountability for project implementation. The project duration is three years (36 months).

## **8. Partners**

SEESAC will directly implement the action in close cooperation with SALW commissions as well as with the relevant authorities for home affairs of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. Other institutions will be closely involved in line with the established multi-stakeholder holistic approach to SALW control.

## 9. Reporting

Reporting, narrative as well as financial, shall cover the whole of the action described in the relevant contribution-specific agreement and its attached budget, regardless of whether this action is wholly financed or co-financed by the Commission. On a quarterly basis, narrative progress reports shall be submitted to record and monitor progress towards the completion of key results.

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