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LIMITE

CORLX 1141
CFSP/PESC 1745
COARM 210
COWEB 162
COEST 853

LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

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

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2025/...

of ...

**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**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 28(1) and 31(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 19 November 2018, the Council adopted the EU Strategy against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms & Light Weapons and their Ammunition, entitled ‘Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens’ (the ‘EU SALW Strategy’), which sets the guidelines for Union action in the field of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The EU SALW Strategy states that the Union gives particular prominence to regional cooperation as an efficient means of small arms control. The EU SALW Strategy mentions the Western Balkans as a priority region for support.
- (2) On 17 May 2018, at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia, the leaders of the Union agreed on the Sofia Declaration, to which the Western Balkans partners aligned themselves, and which includes a commitment to enhance significantly operational cooperation in the fight against international organised crime in priority areas such as firearms, drugs, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.
- (3) The Western Balkans region remains one of the sources of illicit arms trafficking into the Union.
- (4) On 10 July 2018, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hosted the 5th Western Balkans Summit in London, which adopted the ‘Regional Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024’ (the ‘Roadmap’).

- (5) The Roadmap has since been updated and extended until 2030.
- (6) The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015, affirmed that sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security and that illicit arms flows are amongst the factors which give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice.
- (7) At the Fourth Review Conference on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June 2024 in New York, UN Member States reaffirmed the importance of reinforcing regional and subregional cooperation, through improved coordination, consultation, information exchange and operational cooperation, as appropriate, with relevant regional and subregional organisations, mechanisms, road maps and other initiatives as well as law enforcement, border control and export and import licensing authorities.
- (8) The goals of the Roadmap agreed by the Western Balkans partners are consistent with the efforts within the Union and the UN to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition. Therefore, the Union should support the Western Balkans in implementing the Roadmap.

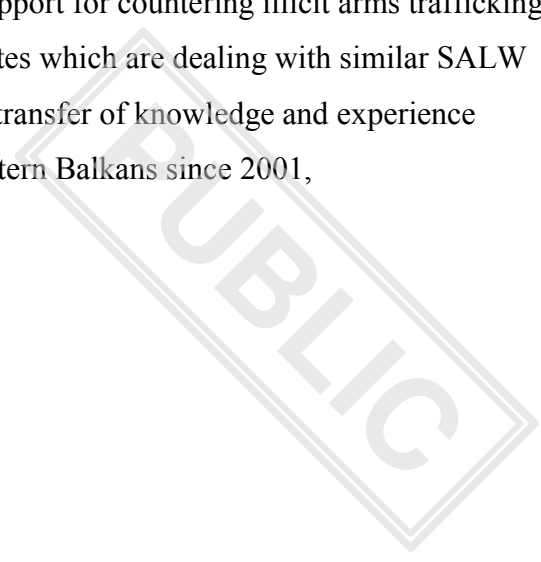
- (9) The Union previously supported the implementation of the Roadmap by means of Council Decisions (CFSP) 2018/1788¹ and (CFSP) 2022/2321².
- (10) The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) was established in Belgrade in 2002 and functions under the joint mandate of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). SEESAC is the successor to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, assists national and regional stakeholders in controlling and reducing the spread and misuse of SALW and ammunition, and thus contributes to enhanced stability, security and development in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. SEESAC places particular emphasis on the development of regional projects to address the reality of cross-border flows of weapons.
- (11) The Union considers SEESAC to be the preferred implementing partner for the implementation of the Roadmap in the Western Balkans, because of its proven experience and established network, the proven quality of its work and its coordinating role in the preparation of the Roadmap.

¹ Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788 of 19 November 2018 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 (OJ L 293, 20.11.2018, p. 11, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2018/1788/oj>).

² Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2321 of 25 November 2022 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 (OJ L 307, 28.11.2022, p. 149, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/2321/oj>).

- 12) In addition, the Union action should provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Republic of Moldova and in Ukraine, states which are dealing with similar SALW control challenges. It should do so through the transfer of knowledge and experience gained and best practices developed in the Western Balkans since 2001,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:



Article 1

1. The Union shall support Western Balkans partners with the implementation of the ‘Regional Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans’.
2. The new phase of the Union’s support shall build upon the achievements under Decisions (CFSP) 2018/1788 and (CFSP) 2022/2321, and the project ‘Support for Enhancing the Fight Against the Illegal Possession, Misuse, and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the Western Balkans’ funded through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA/2021/425-067), all implemented by SEESAC.
3. The new phase of the Union’s support shall be implemented in complementarity with Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3006³.

Article 2

1. The focus shall be on four main areas, maintaining the holistic approach to tackling the threat posed by SALW in the region.
2. Those main areas address the strategic and policy levels, as well as the operational aspects, thus directly assisting at all levels of SALW control, with an emphasis on:
 - coordinating the regional approach and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap;

³ Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3006 of 2 December 2024 in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South-East Europe reducing the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition (OJ L, 2024/3006, 3.12.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/3006/oj>).

- strengthening of knowledge exchange and inter-regional cooperation on SALW control;
 - strengthening the capacities of law enforcement services in Moldova and Ukraine to counter illegal possession, misuse and trafficking;
 - strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and customs services in the Western Balkans for countering illicit trafficking.
3. The action's geographic scope shall be the Western Balkans, with direct project beneficiaries being Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia. In addition, for the goals set out in paragraph 1, the action shall provide support to the Republic of Moldova and to Ukraine.
4. A detailed description of the action is set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 3

1. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative') shall be responsible for implementing this Decision.
2. The technical implementation of the action referred to in Article 1(1) shall be carried out by SEESAC, where necessary in coordination with the Driver of the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT) Firearms.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

3. SEESAC shall perform its tasks under the responsibility of the High Representative. For that purpose, the High Representative shall enter into the necessary arrangements with UNDP, which shall act on behalf of SEESAC.

Article 4

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the project financed by the Union referred to in Article 1(1) shall be EUR 3 499 363,97.
2. The expenditure financed by the reference amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the Union budget.
3. The Commission shall supervise the proper management of the expenditure referred to in paragraph 2. For that purpose, it shall conclude the necessary agreement with UNDP, which shall act on behalf of SEESAC. The agreement shall stipulate that SEESAC has to ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution, appropriate to its size.
4. The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the agreement referred to in paragraph 3 as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Decision. It shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of conclusion of the agreement.

Article 5

1. The High Representative shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of 6-monthly reports prepared by SEESAC. Those reports shall form the basis of the evaluation carried out by the Council.
2. The Commission shall report on the financial aspects of the project referred to in Article 1(1).

Article 6

1. This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.
2. This Decision shall expire 36 months after the date of conclusion of the agreement referred to in Article 4(3). However, it shall expire six months after the date of its entry into force if no such agreement has been concluded within that six-month period.

Done at ..., ...

For the Council

The President
