

**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**

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) The 2018 EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition entitled 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens' (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 mentioned 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 the 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'), which was prepared by the SALW commissions of the Western Balkans in the framework of the Franco-German donor coordination initiative on illicit firearms trafficking in the Western Balkans. Those commissions are preparing their action plans for the implementation of the Roadmap.
- (5) 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.
- (6) At the 8th Biennial meeting of States parties (BMS8) on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2022 at the UN in New York, UN Member States undertook to strengthen partnerships and cooperation at all levels in preventing and combating the illicit trade in SALW, and to promote and strengthen border cooperation and regional and sub-regional coordination.
- (7) The goals of the Roadmap agreed by the Western Balkans partners are consistent with the efforts within the Union and the UN to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition. Therefore, the Union should support the Western Balkans in implementing the Roadmap.

- (8) 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.
- (9) The Union previously supported SEESAC by means of Council Decision 2002/842/CFSP <sup>(1)</sup>, extended and amended by Council Decisions 2003/807/CFSP <sup>(2)</sup> and 2004/791/CFSP <sup>(3)</sup>, as well as by means of Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP <sup>(4)</sup>, Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP <sup>(5)</sup>, extended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/2051 <sup>(6)</sup>, Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 <sup>(7)</sup> and Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788 <sup>(8)</sup>, extended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2161 <sup>(9)</sup>.
- (10) 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.
- (11) The action resulting from this Decision should build upon the basis created by the achievements under the previous Council Decisions in support of SEESAC.
- (12) In addition, this 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,

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<sup>(1)</sup> Council Decision 2002/842/CFSP of 21 October 2002 concerning the implementation of Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe (OJ L 289, 26.10.2002, p. 1).

<sup>(2)</sup> Council Decision 2003/807/CFSP of 17 November 2003 extending and amending Decision 2002/842/CFSP concerning the implementation of Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe (OJ L 302, 20.11.2003, p. 39).

<sup>(3)</sup> Council Decision 2004/791/CFSP of 22 November 2004 extending and amending Decision 2002/842/CFSP implementing Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe (OJ L 348, 24.11.2004, p. 46).

<sup>(4)</sup> Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP of 11 March 2010 in support of SEESAC arms control activities in the Western Balkans, in the framework of the EU Strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (OJ L 80, 26.3.2010, p. 48).

<sup>(5)</sup> Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP of 9 December 2013 in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe in the framework of the EU Strategy to Combat the Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition (OJ L 332, 11.12.2013, p. 19).

<sup>(6)</sup> Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/2051 of 16 November 2015 amending Decision 2013/730/CFSP in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe in the framework of the EU Strategy to Combat the Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition (OJ L 300, 17.11.2015, p. 19).

<sup>(7)</sup> Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 of 19 December 2016 in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South-East Europe in the framework of the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (OJ L 348, 21.12.2016, p. 60).

<sup>(8)</sup> 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).

<sup>(9)</sup> Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2161 of 6 December 2021 amending Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788 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 436, 7.12.2021, p. 46).

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 by 2024'. The goals set out in the Roadmap are:

- (a) by 2023, to ensure that arms control legislation is in place, fully harmonised with the EU regulatory framework and other related international obligations and standardised across the region;
- (b) by 2024, to ensure that arms control policies and practices in the Western Balkans are evidence based and intelligence led;
- (c) by 2024, to significantly reduce illicit flows of firearms, ammunition and explosives (FAE) into, within and beyond the Western Balkans;
- (d) by 2024, to significantly reduce the supply, demand and misuse of firearms through increased awareness, education, outreach and advocacy;
- (e) by 2024, to substantially decrease the estimated number of firearms in illicit possession in the Western Balkans;
- (f) to systematically decrease the surplus, and destroy seized small arms and light weapons and ammunition;
- (g) to significantly decrease the risk of proliferation and diversion of firearms, ammunition and explosives.

2. In addition to the goals referred to in paragraph 1, this Union action shall provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

3. In order to achieve the goals referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, the Union shall, by means of this Decision:

- (a) support the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans;
- (b) support authorities in the Western Balkans in fully harmonising their arms-control legislation with the Union regulatory framework and other related international obligations; and
- (c) provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, in the Republic of Moldova and in Ukraine through capacity assessments and technical assistance to the law-enforcement and border-police authorities.

4. The project's geographic scope is the Western Balkans, with direct project beneficiaries being Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo \*, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia.

In addition, for the goals referred to in paragraph 2, the project shall provide support to the Republic of Moldova and to Ukraine.

5. A detailed description of the project is set out in the Annex to this Decision.

#### *Article 2*

1. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ('HR') shall be responsible for implementing this Decision.

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(\*) 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.

2. The technical implementation of the project referred to in Article 1 shall be carried out by SEESAC, where necessary in coordination with the Driver of the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT) Firearms.
3. SEESAC shall perform its tasks under the responsibility of the HR. For that purpose, the HR shall enter into the necessary arrangements with UNDP, which shall act on behalf of SEESAC.

#### *Article 3*

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the project financed by the Union referred to in Article 1 shall be EUR 4 006 955,58.
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 4*

1. The HR shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of regular quarterly 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.

#### *Article 5*

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 3(3). However, it shall expire six months after the date of its entry into force if no agreement has been concluded within that six-month period.

Done at Brussels, 25 November 2022.

*For the Council*  
*The President*  
J. SÍKELA

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## ANNEX

## PROJECT DOCUMENT

**UNION CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEESAC 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**

The objective of this contribution is to continue supporting the efforts in combatting the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in South-East and East Europe and addressing the new and emerging challenges. Despite the progress made and in the light of the war in Ukraine, the South-East and East Europe remains an area of concern and an important challenge in the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition ('the EU SALW Strategy'). While significant progress has been made in recent years, the accumulation of small arms and light weapons ('SALW') and ammunition, inadequate storage conditions, illicit possession, and policy-making and implementation capacity gaps coupled with fragile political systems, and the changing security environment continue to limit the effectiveness of SALW control efforts. Therefore, in order to ensure continuous progress, secure the gains made and pave the way for a long-term sustainable solution that includes full harmonisation with the Union legislative and regulatory framework and compliance with international standards, the continuation of support to combat the threat posed by the spread and illicit trafficking of SALW in and from South-East and East Europe forms an essential part of the Union's efforts to achieve the goals of the EU SALW Strategy.

To address the remaining challenges in SALW control and reinforce the commitment of the Western Balkans in combating illicit trafficking and misuse of firearms, a 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') was adopted by the SALW commissions of the Western Balkans on 29 May 2018 in Tirana, following a consultation process with relevant institutions and international organisations. It was endorsed in the framework of the Western Balkans Summit in London on 9 July 2018. The Roadmap envisions the Western Balkans as a safer region and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable oversight and control mechanisms, fully harmonised 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 Roadmap has been developed as a guiding document and, as such, envisages agreed levels of performance and outlines the commitment required at strategic, policy and operational level amongst the beneficiaries, building on the political commitment of the Western Balkans authorities to the UN and Union arms-control commitments and strategic documents.

The South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), as the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, supported the development of the Roadmap and will coordinate and support its implementation. This action will thus increase the assistance for SALW control provided by means of Council Decisions 2010/179/CFSP, 2013/730/CFSP, 2016/2356/CFSP, and 2018/1788/CFSP and in complementarity with 2019/2111/CFSP. It will advance further the processes and measures necessary for achieving sustainable SALW control in the Western Balkans.

This action will support the coordination and monitoring of the Roadmap implementation; enhance interregional knowledge exchange; and further strengthen capacities of law enforcement services in South-East and East Europe for countering illicit trafficking and possession of firearms. The overall objective of the project is thus to contribute to European and global peace and security by combatting the threat posed by the accumulation or illicit trafficking in SALW and their ammunition in and from South-East and East Europe. At the same time, it 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.

The project will directly contribute to the implementation of the EU Security Strategy, the EU SALW Strategy, the EU Action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025, the operational action plans of 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 and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and will specifically enhance regional cooperation in combating the threat posed by the spread of SALW and their ammunition. The project results will also directly contribute the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 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). The action will be implemented as part of UNDP Regional Programme Document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2022-2025).

## 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 RCC, and as such 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 been working since 2002 with national and inter national stakeholders in South-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) <sup>(1)</sup> 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 continues to maintain a wide network of formal and informal partnerships with organizations and initiatives, such as the South East Europe Defence Ministerial process (SEDM), the Centre for Security Cooperation of the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) and the OSCE and NATO. Regular coordination meetings as well as information and data exchange with other UN agencies such as UNODC and UNODA take place through, inter alia, the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA). SEESAC is part of the SALW and mine action (MA) coordination meetings, an informal coordination mechanism on SALW control activities involving NATO, the Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and SEESAC.

SEESAC serves as a regional hub and focal point for a wide spectrum of issues related to security-sector reform, with a particular focus on SALW control and stockpile management. 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.

Based in Belgrade, SEESAC currently operates throughout South-East Europe, with activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, as well as limited support to Ukraine. In the past, SEESAC also operated in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania. Regional ownership is ensured through the RCC as well as through the Regional Steering Group, where representatives of all partners in South-East Europe provide the strategic guidance, initiatives and requests for SEESAC activities.

<sup>(1)</sup> Steering Group for the implementation of the South-East Europe Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW.

SEESAC has pioneered an approach based on tackling shared problems through regional initiatives, which has yielded impressive results in South-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 organisation 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 of its activities in counterparts' expressed needs and the collected baseline data, 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 the 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.

The project also complements existing national and regional efforts, seeking maximum synergies. SEESAC will work in combination with the following ongoing international assistance efforts implemented under the UN framework:

- The regional project “Support to the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans” was established by UNDP in May 2019, in order to support a coordinated approach in the implementation of the Roadmap. The project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office through a \$6.2 million (EUR 5.5 million) earmarked contribution to the UNDP Funding Window Governance for Inclusive and Peaceful Societies for arms control activities, for the period 2019-2022. The project is coordinated by the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, through UNDP SEESAC, and is implemented together with the UNDP Offices in the Western Balkans. Out of eight (8) sub-projects approved for funding within the Funding Windows by the Project Board in July 2019, implemented by the UNDP Offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, four projects continued through 2022 and currently there are two (2) active sub-projects implemented in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- In Albania: As part of the regional project, UNDP Albania implements a sub-project “*Support Albania’s Law Enforcement Authorities to Strengthen Firearms Criminality Evidence Management and Investigation Capacities*”, aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the Albanian Institute of Scientific Police (AISP) through the improvement of its procedural framework, supporting Albanian State Police CSI units with standard and modern tools for daily work, and enhancing the technological infrastructure of the Albanian Ballistic Sector within AISP. The activities also entail the establishment of necessary databases for evidence recovery, open case files, and inventory management systems.
- In BiH: the UNDP BiH implements a sub-project “*Countering Illicit Arms Trafficking (CIAT)*”, with the overall objective to enhance the capacity of the Border Police and 14 entity and cantonal Police Agencies throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina to combat illicit arms trafficking. The project entails the development of a database on the legal transport of weapons, improving the SALW Identification Tool, providing specialized border control equipment, and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation. Additionally, the sub-project aims to provide specialized training on the use of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and specialized detection equipment for police in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) is a key funding mechanism supporting the implementation of the Roadmap. The Trust Fund was set up in March 2019 by UNDP and UNODC as Participating UN Organizations, together with the MPTF Office, to contribute to a donor coordinated funding approach in the implementation of the Roadmap and provide 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, and were joined by the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. Due to the generosity and commitment of these donors, the Trust Fund mobilized contributions exceeding US\$22.2 million. 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 2022, the Trust Fund supported 11 projects implemented by the Participating UN Organizations, and three more projects are upcoming.

- In Albania, UNDP implements a project that aims to strengthen national institutions and systems and improve collaboration and coordination between relevant institutions and affected communities for an effective and efficient response to SALW/firearms threats. [Title: Strengthening control, administration and social attitudes towards SALW, in Albania]
  
- In BiH:
  - UNDP and UNODC Global Firearms Program jointly support the Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA)/BiH Customs to better detect and respond to the illicit trafficking of SALW. Apart from ITA, several other BiH institutions benefit from the project implementation including BiH Border Police, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MOFTER), and three postal agencies. [Title: Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade (HALT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina]
  
  - UNDP Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction EXPLODE+ is designed as a multifunctional project platform, that enables multilateral approach to intervention in the field of Ammunition Reduction and Life-Cycle Management in support to the efforts of the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (MoD/AF BiH), including activities related to Unsafe/Surplus Ammunition Disposal, Capacity Development, and Infrastructure Upgrades of Ammunition and Weapon Storage Sites.
  
  - UNDP Project PILLAR [Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina] seeks to implement a comprehensive response to raise awareness amongst the population regarding the dangers of illegal possession of firearms and to educate how to recognize individual and collective threats to security. Furthermore, the project aims to contribute to behavioural change and comprehensive understanding of the threats posed by SALW within families, community and society in general.
  
- In Kosovo, UNDP implemented until June 2022 a project to support the Kosovo Police in strengthening their capacities to better detect and increasingly confiscate firearms, components and ammunition, and improve the quality of investigations. [Title: Support to Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in Kosovo\* for Criminal Police (CPIAT)]
  
- In Montenegro, UNDP project aims to improve the capacities of the Police Directorate of Montenegro in the entire investigative cycle and in particular to advance the custody chain. More specifically, the project will raise the expert competencies, professionalism, accuracy, and preciseness of the Forensic Centre, the Arson and Explosives Laboratory and the Chemical Laboratory by supporting the development of standard operating procedures, providing specialized equipment for the crime scene investigation units, and training.
  
- In Serbia:
  - UNDP implements a project to further improve the capacities of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia in the entire investigative cycle as related to the trafficking of firearms and firearms criminality, from crime scene and ballistic examination, through the whole custody chain, thus improving investigations leading to regular convictions. The project complements the results of its previous phase implemented outside the MPTF framework. [Title: Advancing the Capacities of the Ministry of Interior in the SALW Control-Related Field (Phase II)]
  
  - UNDP initiated another project as of September 2022, whereby it builds upon a previous project and seeks to create a comprehensive approach to strengthening the healthcare system's role in the prevention of firearms misuse for domestic violence and of committing suicides. [Title: Reduce Risk - Increase Safety II]



- As part of the Kosovo-North Macedonia cross-border project, UNDP aims to improve the capacities of the authorities in both jurisdictions to create more violence-resilient communities through series of closely coordinated activities such as joint trainings and sharing of experience and intelligence, joint investigation teams (JIT), support to joint police patrols at the border, joint analysis and developing problem and risk profiles, information sharing and joint actions in combating converted weapons trafficking as well as promote an integrated institutional approach towards dealing with firearms-related threats. Project activities build upon and complement the ongoing SALW projects in Kosovo and North Macedonia to achieve synergies, develop best practices and allow for more coherent and result-oriented investigations. [Title: Cross-Border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combating IAT and SALW]
  
- At the regional level:
  - The UNODC's Global Firearms Programme (GFP) supports the Western Balkans authorities with the criminal justice response against arms trafficking and in the process of harmonizing respective criminal and criminal procedural legislation with the provisions of the UN Firearms Protocol. [Title: Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking]
  
  - The project implemented by UNODC's GFP in partnership with INTERPOL aims to provide support to the Western Balkans jurisdictions to collect and analyze criminal justice data and facilitate and strengthen the cooperation and information exchange between criminal justice practitioners, thus supporting detection of illicit firearms trafficking. [Title: Support for increased international cooperation in criminal matters]
  
- regionally, the Regional Security Sector Reform Platform (RSSRP), a well-established resource that delivers quick, effective and demand-driven responses to rule-of-law needs at the technical level across the globe; with a quick deployment mechanism based on SEESAC's unique network of security experts with experience in the area of security-sector reform, RSSRP provides tailor-made assistance with a particular focus on SALW control and gender mainstreaming in security policy.

SEESAC regularly liaises with the OSCE, NATO, Europol, Interpol, Frontex, EMPACT, as well as with other relevant actors, in order to secure complementarities of action, timeliness of intervention and cost-effectiveness in the use of resources.

### 3. Project description

The new phase of the SEESAC project will build upon the basis of the achievements under Decision 2013/730/CFSP, Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356, Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788 and in complementarity with Decision (CFSP) 2019/2111 and the IPA/2021/425-067 Support for enhancing the fight against the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Western Balkans project implemented by SEESAC.

It will focus on three main areas, maintaining the holistic approach to tackling the threat posed by SALW in the region. Those three 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 information sharing across regions; 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 ballistic laboratories, and customs in line with the integrated border management principle.

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 SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans;
  
- strengthened interregional cooperation, knowledge exchange and information-sharing on arms control;

- strengthened capacities of law enforcement services of Moldova and Ukraine for preventing/ countering illicit trafficking and possession of firearms;
- strengthened capacities of law enforcement services, primarily ballistic labs and customs services of the Western Balkans for preventing/countering illicit trafficking and possession of firearms.

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, have proven to be an essential ingredient in 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 establish 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.

The project's geographic scope is the Western Balkans, with direct project beneficiaries being Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia. In addition, the project will seek to further the support to Eastern European countries, including the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, currently dealing with an exacerbated SALW control challenge, due to the ongoing war in Ukraine. This will be done through the transfer of knowledge and experiences gained and best practices developed in the Western Balkans since 2001.

### 3.1. Coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans

#### *Objective*

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

#### *Description*

Building upon the Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788, this component will ensure the continuation of coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap. The Western Balkans partners reconfirmed at the Western Balkans Summit in London on 9 July 2018 the common determination and reinforced commitment to put an end to illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms through the endorsement of the Roadmap. The regional Roadmap, developed through a thorough consultative process and with SEESAC's support, contributes to the existing Union activities to counter that threat, specifically the EU SALW strategy, the EU Action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025 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.

During the first three years of implementation at least seven regional narrative and Key Performance Indicators 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 held have ensured an exemplary coordinated approach of implementation of efforts and resources among authorities, donors and implementing partners. As such, the work under this component will continue to ensure: an effective coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap at regional level; tailor-made support for SALW commissions and relevant authorities in the implementation of their Roadmap action plans; periodic monitoring and evaluation of progress against the jointly agreed KPIs; as well as a better understanding of progress in the implementation of the Roadmap.

Specifically, the project envisages 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 final review of the implementation of the Roadmap (2024), including support required for revision 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 six regional Roadmap coordination meetings;
- Enabling taking stock of progress, information exchange, knowledge transfer and standardisation;
- Organisation of local coordination meetings (up to 36 in total);
- Development of biannual regional monitoring reports (up to six);
- Final 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 the last two decades, covering all the functional areas of SALW control: from development of institutional, legal and policy frameworks grounded on comprehensive and innovative data collection efforts, strengthening the physical security and stockpile management of SALW and ammunition; strengthening the SALW marking, recordkeeping, and tracing including through enhanced detection and investigation capacities; to awareness raising activities and mainstreaming gender perspective in 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 **Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans** 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 Report to the Security Council in 2021, as "regional efforts remain critical", calling for elaboration and further development of Roadmaps.

The Roadmap has been replicated in the Caribbean, along with its coordination and monitoring mechanism, and it has also been integrated in the EU Action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025. 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**. SEESAC shared the lessons learnt in mainstreaming gender in SALW control and the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, among other, in several regional and subregional workshops in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. <sup>(2)</sup>

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 new 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 Moldova and Ukraine for countering illicit trafficking and possession of firearms

#### *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 the successful approach of including the authorities of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the regional cooperation processes facilitated by SEESAC in South-East Europe, and previous or ongoing targeted SALW control measures supported in the Republic of Moldova. These include 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. 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 capacity building activities, such as those on harmonization of legislation with the EU acquis, online investigations and combatting arms trafficking on the darknet.

This component builds directly on the implementation of Decision 2018/1788 and will further strengthen the capacities of institutions in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to combat trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives. Assistance will focus on development of Standard Operating Procedures needed for enhanced detection and investigation, provision of equipment and training. Assistance will be based on detailed needs assessment

<sup>(2)</sup> SEESAC has been supporting UNODA's implementation of project *Supporting gender mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse, in line with the Women, Peace and Security agenda* implementing the European Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/2011 of 17 December 2018.

conducted based on methodology developed by SEESAC and already implemented in the Western Balkans, analyzing legal and policy frameworks, existing procedures and equipment, and institutional and administrative capacities. The needs assessment of criminal police service in Moldova is currently ongoing. <sup>(3)</sup> This project envisages support to Moldova in line with the findings of the needs assessment, as well as a needs assessment for Ukraine and support in line with assessment findings. <sup>(4)</sup>

The proposed activities will complement and be closely coordinated with the ongoing Union-supported actions in South-East Europe, primarily the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, Europol, Frontex and Interpol and the operational action plans of EMPACT Firearms. Finally, the activities under this component will contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy Against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms and Light Weapons and their Ammunition and the EU Action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025.

It will do so through:

- Needs assessment of capacities for combatting illicit arms trafficking in Ukraine
- Provision of advisory support, equipment and training for institutions in Moldova and Ukraine, in line with the findings of the needs assessments.

Project results/implementation indicators

- Needs assessment of law enforcement institutions in Ukraine in countering illicit arms trafficking conducted;
- Relevant Standard Operating procedures developed;
- Equipment for suppression of arms trafficking procured;
- Training organized.

#### 3.4. Capacity development of law enforcement services including ballistic laboratories and customs services of the Western Balkans for countering illicit trafficking and possession of firearms

##### *Objective*

To reduce the threat of illicit trafficking of firearms by enhancing the capacities of ballistic laboratories and identifying needs of customs services in the context of integrated border management.

##### *Description*

In line with recommendations of needs assessments of Criminal Police services in the Western Balkans conducted under Decision (CFSP) 2018/1778 and limited support provided to ballistic laboratories in the context of establishment of Firearms Focal Points under Decisions (CFSP) 2016/2356 and 2018/1778, and complementing the assistance provided to selected ballistic laboratories through projects implemented by UNDP <sup>(5)</sup>, targeted support will be provided for capacity development of ballistic laboratories. Ballistic laboratories have a crucial role in analyzing evidence related to illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW. This component will contribute to standardization of practices across the region and provide grounds for a more efficient adjudication of criminal cases related to illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW.

Based on deliberations under the South-East Europe Firearms Experts Network, where customs officials from across South-East Europe are regularly taking part together with investigators, ballistic experts, border police officials and prosecutors; their regular participation in Regional Border Meetings that SEESAC is organizing annually; results and recommendations of the Needs Assessments of capacities of Border Polices Services in the Western Balkans region and following the EU standards on Integrated Border Management (IBM) adopted in the IBM Strategies of Western Balkan jurisdictions, a need has emerged, followed also by the specific requests of several Western Balkans customs authorities, to involve them into activities related to border control as a key part of combating illicit trafficking of

<sup>(3)</sup> These assessments have been implemented as part of implementation of the EU Council Decision 2018/1788.

<sup>(4)</sup> The assessment of capacities for countering illicit arms trafficking for Ukraine planned under EU Council Decision 2018/1788 has not been implemented.

<sup>(5)</sup> Projects funded by the Western Balkans Multi Partner Trust Fund.

firearms. Apart from participation in regional processes, the Customs Authorities in most of the jurisdictions have not been involved in any capacity development activities related to detection of firearms, essential components, ammunition and explosives in border crossing points, and it is crucial that Border Police and Customs authorities have a joint and coordinated response to all criminal activities related to illicit trafficking of firearms. This why a similar approach has been envisaged for the customs authorities based on the best practices earlier implemented and ongoing, for border and criminal police, through EU CDs 2018/1788 and 2019/2111.

It will do so through:

- Support to capacity development of ballistic laboratories
- Needs assessment of capacities of Customs Authorities to counter trafficking of firearms.

Project results/implementation indicators

- Equipment and training to ballistic laboratories provided
- Needs assessment conducted.

#### 4. **Beneficiaries**

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be the institutions responsible for SALW control in the Western Balkans. The authorities for home affairs, police services, border guards and customs authorities of the Republic of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova 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 Roadmap, as well as partners' priorities on SALW control.

The general population of Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Union, at risk from the widespread proliferation of SALW, will benefit from this project indirectly.

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

SEESAC shall take all appropriate measures to publicise the fact that the action has been funded by the Union. Such measures will be carried out in accordance with the Commission's Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions. SEESAC will thus ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution with appropriate branding and publicity, highlighting the role of the Union, ensuring the transparency of its actions and raising awareness of the reasons for the Decision as well as Union support for the Decision and the results of this support. Material produced by the project will prominently display the European Union flag in accordance with Union guidelines for the accurate use and reproduction of the flag.

Given that planned activities vary greatly in scope and character, a range of promotional tools will be used, including: traditional media; websites; social media; and informational and promotional materials including infographics, leaflets, newsletters, press releases and others, as appropriate. Publications, public events, campaigns, equipment and construction works procured under the project will be branded accordingly. To further amplify the impact by raising awareness among various national governments and the public, the international community and local and international media, each of the project target groups will be addressed using the appropriate language. Particular focus will be placed on new media and online presence.

#### 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 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 Europe region, including facilitating 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 authorities for home affairs of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, and relevant institutions in 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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