



Towards a Sustainable Solution for Excess Weapons and Ammunition Policy, Logistical and Financial Aspects of Excess Weapons and Ammunition Disposal

Hosted by: Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia

Co-organized by: International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) and RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation

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Venue Croatian Armed Forces Club in Pula, Republic of Croatia

Background Aging, excess, and unstable stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions are recognized as posing a dual threat of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion, both of which can lead to causing humanitarian disasters and destabilizing individual countries or regions as a whole. Indeed, it is impossible to neglect a number of incidents involving uncontrolled explosions of obsolete ammunition surpluses which have taken place in the SEE region over the last decade, causing tragic losses of human lives and destruction of property. Furthermore, stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions pose a potent security threat even if an explosive incident does not take place: they represent a tempting bait for individuals and organized groups who either seek an illegal economic gain by selling stolen weapons and ammunition, or need them for perpetrating other forms of illegal activities. Thus, it is necessary to constantly guard such stockpiles with no defence value and maintain the storage sites, which represents an additional burden to often already tightened defence budgets. However, the most logical solution to the problem of excess and unstable stockpiles – their disposal – inevitably brings enormous financial expenses for each state in the Region. One of the main reasons is to be found in inadequate information exchange among the countries of the Region on their existing disposal capacities, especially if we take into account the existing independent quests towards development of disposal capacities. In this light, regional approach to excess weapons and ammunitions disposal is seen as the key to finding a lasting solution to this problem.

Purpose & Objectives The purpose of the Conference is to bring together representatives of logistics, policy/planning and finance departments in the MoDs of the regional countries and to provide them with an opportunity to exchange relevant information and experience regarding disposal of excess weapons and ammunition with a view to developing a shared vision of a future solution to this problem.

The objectives are:

- To briefly inform the participants on the current status of stockpiles of excess weapons and ammunition and national capacities for excess weapons and ammunition disposal
- To present relevant policies and plans for the future and to look into how well the process is connected with national cycle of defence budget planning and realization
- To identify possible areas of cooperation in this field
- To prepare relevant conclusions for the Defence Ministerial Meeting planned to be held in Slovenia in June / July 2011.

Participants The total number of participants should be up to 45, with three participants coming from each of the following countries: AL, BA, BG, GR, HR, ME, MD, MK, RO, RS, TK. The participants, civilian or military officials, should be heads of logistics departments and representatives of policy/planning and finance departments from respective MoDs. UNDP, NATO, Small Arms Survey and SEESAC will be invited to send their representatives as well. Representatives of other MAG countries and other relevant international organizations, NGOs and the media are also to be invited.

Methodology The conference will last three working days and will be conducted as a combination of presentations, speeches and exchange of information on national practices and positions. In view of the planned Defense Ministerial Meeting in Slovenia, appropriate conclusions will be made during the last working day of the conference. All materials presented or produced during the conference, will be distributed in electronic form on a CD. The official working language of the conference is English.

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