



**15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Working Table III  
Tirana, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

**Progress Report  
(Period November 2006 – December 2007)**

**The Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI)**

On September 24, 2007 in Zagreb, government representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania and Slovenia have taken an important step forward in their efforts to improve the region's disaster preparedness, prevention and response capability and co-ordination by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Institutional Framework of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe. The remaining countries of the Stability Pact DPPI SEE initiative, i.e., Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, are committed to sign the MoU after completing the internal procedures for decision-making in their countries.

Out of 14 training events of the Disaster Management Training Program 2007, 8 training events with 171 participants have been conducted, 4 training events planned for 2007 were postponed for 2008 due to organisational difficulties and other unforeseen priorities and 2 training events were cancelled. NATO Committee for Science for Peace and Security Program accepted the project 'Harmonization of Seismic Hazard Maps for the Western Balkan Countries'. The total project budget is €638,000. 6 DPPI SEE member countries are involved in the project: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as experts from Turkey, Greece and Slovenia, NATO and Danish Emergency Management Agency. The 'Project for establishing Joint Emergency Response Units in case of floods in SEE', initiated in 2006, was recognised as a high priority regional project. In 2007, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia joined the project. DPPI SEE still looking for potential donors. The DPPI SEE Work Plan for 2008 has been agreed and adopted at the XV DPPI SEE Regional Meeting held in Zagreb, Croatia on September 24-25, 2007.

According to the DPPI SEE MoU, the DPPI SEE member countries shall contribute to the financing of the DPPI SEE Budget for 2008. The European Union, European Commission - Civil Protection, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, NATO SfP Programme, NATO EADRCC, IFRC, UN OCHA, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, World Bank, DEMA and SRSA have announced their readiness to contribute in kind and with providing experts and lecturers to the DMTP as well as to DPPI projects, with no additional fee costs. Moreover, international partners should support regional countries through bilateral programs/agreements with the possibility to contribute directly to the projects implementation

Strengthening links with international organisations, non-governmental organisations and other initiatives is of strategic importance. In the period between the two Working Table meetings and after more than two years, the DPPI SEE Advisory Board was reconvened. The DPPI SEE AB is composed of experts and representative from



international and regional institutions and organisations with functional expertise and representing both their institutions and regional countries.

Croatia will take over the Chairmanship of DPPI as of 1 January 2008.

### **The Migration, Asylum and Refugee Return Initiative (MARRI)**

The important value of MARRI derives from its regional ownership and the fact that it is a unique forum intended for cooperation on migration issues, important for the SEE region, as a vital part of EU integration process and in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans. MARRI is now under regional ownership but unfortunately finds itself in financial difficulties because of the lack of funding both for the running costs of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje and for the project implementation since the beginning of 2007. The MARRI Member States have agreed in principle to fund the running costs of the MARRI Regional Centre from January 2008 onwards but there is still a financing gap until the end of 2007. The decision taken by the Member States will therefore ensure regional ownership in the financial area. A new Director of the Centre, coming from the region, was also elected in June this year (Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Macedonian Ministry of Interior). The difficult financial situation unfortunately diverted attention from the implementation of relevant MARRI activities.

The current MARRI Presidency, held by Croatia (April 2007 – April 2008) is building upon the valuable achievements of the previous Presidency, held by Bosnia and Herzegovina, adding a new value to MARRI by introducing new activities and setting high standards for the initiative. Contacts and meetings were made with MARRI Member States, EU member states, EC, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, OSCE, IOM, RACVIAC, SEEGROUP, UNHCR, AENEAS programmes etc. In general, relations between MARRI and other structures dealing with migration issues remain important for the work of MARRI, while cooperation with and assistance from the Stability Pact for SEE also continue to be important for MARRI activities.

The MARRI Regional Centre is currently implementing one project (on document security – UK funded) and is a junior partner in two other projects on human trafficking (implemented by ICMPD). The MARRI Regional Centre also developed three major projects that were submitted to potential donors for implementation in 2008: "MARRI Migration Interactive Map," "Building Capacity of MARRI Member States for Successful Implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission" and "Assessment of Identity Documents in MARRI Member States." Stronger institutional ties with relevant international organisations and regional organisations are also envisaged, including the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). A draft MoU was exchanged with ICMPD and additional steps were made towards concluding the MoU with SEPCA and the Swedish Migration Board (AENEAS Project "Strong Institutions and a Unified Approach in the AMV in the Western Balkans").

### **The Ohrid Process on Border Security and Management**

In November 2006, the countries and partner organisations of the Ohrid Border Process (OBP) agreed at the Fourth Review meeting in Podgorica that the process should be prolonged for another year, given the positive impetus and results brought by the process. In 2007, a study visit to Slovenia was jointly organised by OSCE and DCAF, focusing on cross-border cooperation. In October 2007, the four partner organisations and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia organised a Workshop on the harmonisation of the Integrated Border Management strategies and



Action Plans in the region. Taking into account the progresses achieved by the countries and the subsequent evolution of their priorities, the partner organisations, in consultation with the countries, will soon have to discuss about the future of the process. It is understood by all parties that whatever the process might become, more progress is needed in the area of cross-border cooperation (at operational and higher political level) and in adopting a more integrated approach, including other agencies involved in border management.

### **Police Forum Initiative (PFI)**

During the reported period, the Police Forum Initiative has been strictly focusing on handing over its activities to the Southeast Europe Police Chief Association (SEPCA), and on pre-empting its future co-operation with the RCC. The PF initiated a project to legally underpin SEPCA with new statutes and to rebuild the association's structure. The main objective is to create a new security environment in SEE together with the SEECP Ministers of Interior, RCC, SEPCA and the SECI Centre, to co-operate and strengthen the fight against organised crime and to enhance public security in SEE.

The Organised Crime Training Network (OCTN) focused primarily on smoothening trans border co-operation and on developing the practical skills and capacity of target groups on EU and international standards. OCTN will continue until 2011 and will also integrate capacity building for policy makers referring to organised crime.

All foreseen activities were implemented in accordance with the time schedule as follows: two Standard training Courses for operational managers in the area of organised crime ("Tackling extreme violence" and "Investigating organised crime"); one meeting with the local contact points; training programme for target group "policy makers" has been prepared; an evaluation report on project activities has also been prepared.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Bled Process meeting on Stolen Vehicle Crime concluded to implement the National Action Plans tackling stolen vehicle crime to integrate all national authorities and to amend the legislation. A twinning system has been created together with the regional countries and Europol member countries as well as a peer review system with SEPCA to monitor the implementation process. The Interpol I-24/7 IT system project started from practical point of view, with the connection of main border control points. In this respect, Interpol set up a project team in close contact with national NCB (Interpol) offices. The project's phase I will be finalised shortly after the reporting period has ended.

The Crime Analysis project gathered information, through a questionnaire, about the current state of play of crime analysis structures and capacities in SEE and will draft an assessment report. This report will then be presented to donors for possible financial support to start the project. Such a project also aims at demonstrating the decisive value of crime analysis in the success of investigations against trans-border and organised crime.

### **RACVIAC**

The recently adjusted mission of RACVIAC is to foster dialogue and cooperation on security matters in Southeast Europe through a partnership between the countries of



the region and their international partners. This led to slightly revised strategic objectives mainly focused on specific aspects of Defence and Security Sector Reform as well as on providing a platform for discussion on politico-military issues in SEE. The 27 planned activities for 2008 carefully derived from a solid needs assessment. In order to meet these requirements, RACVIAC is transforming into a regionally owned Centre for Security Cooperation. The new orientation is not only characterised by the “civilianisation” of its leadership - Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić took over from General Stergios Papatīs on October 11<sup>th</sup> - but also by the introduction of the position of a Dean of Academics. When the Regional Co-operation Council opens its doors, RACVIAC will have finished its transformation at the right time to make significant contributions upon request, while preserving its autonomy. Working more closely with the European Union and NATO is, on the one hand, a way to raise RACVIAC’s visibility inside and outside the SEE region, and on the other hand, is a prerequisite to remain a credible and valuable tool for regional dialogue on all security matters supporting the regional cooperation process. RACVIAC will in this way, soon become the leading platform for dialogue on security cooperation in Southeast Europe.

## **SEESAC**

During the reporting period, SEESAC focused on the implementation of the EU Western Balkans SALW Support Plan and on meeting the objectives of the Regional Implementation Plan for ‘Combating the Proliferation and Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons’ (RIP). The main areas of involvement consisted of: 1) further development of the regional co-operation among the national institutions on SALW control; 2) providing assistance for the harmonisation of national SALW legislation with the EU policy framework, including the development and implementation of primary and subsidiary legal acts; 3) technical support to the governments in South Eastern Europe for national SALW control interventions; and 4) strategic research in SALW functional areas.

The transition process towards the establishment of the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC) will have an impact on SEESAC regarding its institutional framework. An amendment to the Letter of Agreement between the UNDP and the Stability Pact has been drafted. It will regulate the relations between SEESAC and the RCC. It is envisaged that the Regional Steering Group will continue to provide strategic guidance to SEESAC regarding the implementation of the RIP and the Team Leader of SEESAC will report to the meetings of the RCC. The UNDP and RCC could explore possibilities of signing a Memorandum of Understanding or any other relevant instrument that would regulate their co-operation with respect to SEESAC. The changes of the institutional framework governing SEESAC will be reflected in the RIP. SEESAC will submit the revised version of the RIP to the Regional Steering Group for approval.

SEESAC’s main objectives for 2008 are to build on the increased regional and bilateral co-operation between the countries of SEE and finalise ongoing projects resulting from regional or bilateral partnership in the areas of adoption and implementation of SALW legislation and its alignment to the European Union’s policies in the field of SALW. SEESAC plans to continue providing technical assistance to national SALW projects and serve as a clearinghouse for national requests and donor offers related to the establishment of functioning SALW control mechanisms in the South Eastern Europe.



## **SP Anticorruption Initiative (SPAI)**

The focus has been the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the SEE countries in Zagreb, April 2007. Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Romania already sent their financial contribution to the Sarajevo-based office. The Steering Group decided to change the name of the initiative to the Regional Anticorruption Initiative, in line with the transformation from the Stability Pact to the Regional Cooperation Council. Simultaneously, a Chairman from the region has been elected to replace the Italian Chairman, Professor Ugo Draetta. A new Albanian Head of the Secretariat has been appointed, together with a new Bulgarian expert. The basic documents of the initiative have been up-dated and a new work plan has been adopted for 2008-2009.

The Secretariat of the Regional Anticorruption Initiative, fully owned and supported by the SEE countries, is one of the pillars of the JHA area in SEE, together with the Bucharest-based Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime and the MARRI Centre in Skopje.

The summer school for junior magistrates was organised for the second year in Romania and gathered enthusiastic young students selected from the many who had applied throughout the entire region.

## **SP Initiative Against Organized Crime (SPOC)**

WT III continued its efforts towards strengthening the relationships between the Bucharest-based secretariat and the SECI Centre. During the reporting period, the Head of the SPOC Secretariat and the SECI Centre management initiated the consultation process for the merging process, as requested by the Joint Cooperation Committee members. The experts of the SPOC Secretariat continued the legal research related to the priority areas identified jointly with the SECI Centre's management on personal data protection, witness protection and stolen vehicles. In parallel, the research work continued for updating the Matrixes on UN Conventions related to Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism. Assistance was given to the working group on the new convention of the SECI Centre. An expert of the SPOC Secretariat assisted the organisers and actively participated in a seminar related to investigation and prosecution of offences related to illegal exports of dual use items in EU member states, where he made the connection with the SEE prosecutors network, SEEPAG. Also, the SEEPAG awareness seminars successfully continued in SEE countries.