



12th MEETING OF WORKING TABLE III
Prague, 15 November 2005

Chair's conclusions

1. FIGHTING ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

In a keynote address to the Working Table meeting the Special Coordinator urged all partners to move fighting organised crime and corruption to the top of their agenda. Regional cooperation should become more action and result oriented, and the Stability Pact Task Forces - SPOC, the Police Forum and SPAI - should now concentrate their efforts to create and support the work of specific regional networks of law enforcement authorities and specialised public prosecutors. They should increase cooperation with the SECI Center, support efforts to make the operations of the Center more effective, and contribute to strengthening the Center as a regional counterpart for European and other international partners. He also advocated a more pronounced role for parliamentarians and the media to bolster national and regional action against transnational crime and corruption, and advocated for an increase in international support to SEE countries in this regard.

SECI Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime

The SECI Centre's acting-director expressed satisfaction for the support given by the Special Co-ordinator to the rapprochement between the SECI Center and the EU specialised institutions, which had resulted in an EU funded project to up-grade the Centre into a more effective tool for regional law enforcement cooperation in SEE. Also in the EUROPOL strategy for the Balkans, recently approved by the EU Council, specific references to action-oriented measures on short, medium and long term have been included.

The international legal status of the Center will be based on a new legal agreement, which is currently being prepared as part of the up-grading project. The Centre's management will take steps to strengthen the operational links with the National Focal Points within the SECI Member States, to increase the quality of regional operations. The newly elected Slovenian director of the Center is expected to further intensify dialogue with EU institutions and Member States and to strengthen cooperation with international law enforcement agencies.

The acting-director also expressed satisfaction about the increase in joint activities with the Stability Pact through the Police Forum, SPOC and SPAI. The on-going stolen vehicles project and the dialogue with the SPOC Secretariat were mentioned as good examples of increasing cooperation. The acting-director requested continued assistance by the Special Coordinator to move the rapprochement with the EU institutions forward and to keep contributing towards developing operational cooperation with EUROPOL.



Police Forum

The Chair noted progress in the implementation of the Police Forum Initiative's projects.

The OCTN (Organised Crime Training Network) had started; a fulltime project manager had been appointed, who had developed a training schedule, of which two training-modules had already been held, one in Pristina, the other in Chisinau. A third module would be held later this year. All three modules were related to fighting drugs trafficking. The Chair noted that one key objective of the OCTN was to establish through the trainings regional networks of police officers fighting specific types of organised crime.

The chair noted that Working Table III would continue to seek the active involvement of the one country from SEE, which so far had not engaged in the project. He expressed appreciation to the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland and Slovenia for their financial support and engagement and to the IOM Ljubljana for their administrative support.

The chair noted that cooperation between the Police Forum and the SECI Center, and between the Police Forum and the South Eastern Europe Chiefs of Police Association (SEPCA) was envisaged. With the SECI Center in particular cooperation on the Stolen Vehicle project had increased, but also regarding other crime areas increased cooperation was being considered.

The chair noted that the I-24/7 project, linking all main border checking points in SEE with the Interpol 24/7 IT data system, will soon start implementation. With access to this data system border police officers are able to identify within minutes wanted persons, stolen vehicles or stolen or forged documents. The chair encouraged interested donors to study the project document and to join the present donor group. He also applauded the cooperation between the Police Forum and Interpol in developing this successful project

The chair also requested donors to consider supporting the module 'maintaining public order' of the Regional Police Training. This module is relevant to better prepare police officers to counter groups of hooligans, aggressive demonstrators and other persons who are seriously disrupting public order and safety. For the other modules of the Regional Police Training, which have now all been concluded, an assessment will be held in the coming months.

The Initiative against Organised Crime (SPOC)

The chair noted that the SPOC Working Programme for 2006 had been recently adopted by the SPOC Board and that priority in 2006 will be given to legal assistance to the SECI Centre's activities and to assistance to regional networks involved in fighting organised crime: such as of prosecutors, parliamentarians, and law faculties.

The chair took note of the SPOC efforts to strengthen the regional authorities' commitment to fight organised crime at national and regional level. The absence of four regional partners at the latest Board meeting had, however, underlined the need to continue dialogue with the respective governments.

The chair noted that SPOC intended to further strengthen its Regional Secretariat in 2006 with some new staff members from SEE, to increase support to regional networks, the SECI Center, and to serve as a regional platform for legal capacity building and information exchange. Activities such as monitoring the implementation of the UN Palermo convention on trans-national crime, implementation of international



standards and the EU acquis on witness protection and personal data protection will be concentrated at the Bucharest-based regional office.

The chair noted that the SPOC Secretariat had supported the development of the SEE Public Prosecutors Advisory Group (SEEPAG) and was now actively involved in linking the SEE prosecutors specialised in trans-border crime.

The chair also emphasised the desirability of future cross-initiative activities between the Police Forum, SPOC and SPAI.

The Anti-corruption Initiative (SPAI)

The chair noted that the latest developments within the Anticorruption initiative (SPAI) had been welcomed, in particular the decision by the SPAI Steering Group that each country should identify and communicate three action-oriented measures for immediate implementation as follow-up to the Brussels SEE ministerial declaration adopted in May 2005 on Ten Joint Measures to Curb Corruption in South Eastern Europe. Participants recognised that this would demonstrate the government's commitment to fulfil one of the key requirements of the EU accession process and of the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans.

The Regional Secretariat's activities had been generally recognized as crucial towards creating real ownership. Priorities like ratifying and implementing the UN Convention on anti-corruption, like sharing best practices on fighting high level cases of corruption and developing networks among the specialised prosecutor's offices were welcomed and were confirming the transformation of the Sarajevo-based anticorruption office into a Regional Anticorruption Centre of Excellence.

The chair noted that for the time being continued support by international partners during would be needed. He welcomed the recent expression of interest by Bulgaria to resume its participation in SPAI's activities.

2. OHRID PROCESS ON BORDER SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

The chair noted the progress made by the five Western Balkan countries in the implementation of the commitments in the framework of the Ohrid Border Process. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has completed the handing over of border control from the military to the civilian authorities, but further steps to complete this process were still needed in some other countries.

The chair took note of the progress made in specific areas, such as consolidating and improving the implementation of legislation, target-oriented training, promoting and exchanging best practices among regional partners and developing IT&T systems. But there was a need for further progress in key areas in order for the countries concerned to comply with EU standards.

Emphasis should now be given to the implementation of the remaining commitments and the assessment of the quality of implementation and of the process as a whole. It was therefore agreed that the Ohrid border process partners would organise a fact-finding mission. With the aim of enhancing international cooperation, it will first use as a basis the results of the CARDS Regional Programme assessment mission, and will then organise visits to the countries for technical and political discussions on the Ohrid border process commitments, early 2006. A Special Review meeting at high political level would close this mission in the autumn and decide on the future of the process. At the recent Third Review meeting, the future of the process, after 2006, was discussed. The need for a leading role of the EC had to be considered, in line with the overall objective of the countries to comply with EU standards.



3. MARRI

The Chairman noted that the formal transfer of ownership of MARRI to the region had been completed in 2004, in line with the overall process of strengthening regional ownership of the Stability Pact's activities. MARRI as the first initiative transferred to and partly financed by the five Sap countries could be studied as a model for the transfer of other initiatives to regional ownership. MARRI's performance now is of critical importance to its medium term sustainability. The transition period from a donor dependent framework to a completely regionally owned co-operative process is expected to be completed by the end of 2007. The Chairman, taking into account this transition phase, called upon donors to continue their support for MARRI.

4. DEFENCE CONVERSION

The chair noted the update made by the representative of NATO on cooperation activities with SEE and with the Stability Pact. He welcomes as well the Alliance's support to the new role of RACVIAC in defence conversion issues and its strong interest regarding involvement of the countries of the region and development of a concrete ownership.

As far as the projects and programmes are concerned, the situation is the following:

- There had been major progress in the area of retraining and resettlement of redundant military personnel in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as part of the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) process. Downsizing should be finalised by 2007, representing a cut by about 50 % of the MoD and major cuts in the army.
- In the framework of the NATO Tailored Cooperation Programme with Bosnia and Herzegovina, a NATO Trust Fund will be launched serving mainly two causes: to provide assistance in retraining personnel already released, and to facilitate further downsizing of the army and MoD in 2006 and 2007. It will concern 10, 000 personnel.
- With Serbia and Montenegro, the PRISMA retraining and resettlement programme is on the track, with the support of NATO HQ, Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom. In addition, a CoE Development Bank grant for specific parts of the project has been given. NATO, Norway and IOM will soon start a NATO Trust Fund to enhance the socio-economic reintegration prospects of redundant military personnel, covering 1,850 military personnel, with a budget of approx. 5.9 million € over 2 years.
- The process of military sites / base conversion in Croatia is on the right track since the Base Conversion NATO Expert Team visit to Croatia in March 2005. First contacts with the European Investment Bank have been undertaken in this connection.

The chair noted that the continued involvement of the Alliance into the questions of **resettlement and retraining as well as in the field of military sites and base conversion** is considered crucial, and he noted that these issues are directly linked with the defence reform process as a whole. In this connection the activities of the two



existing NATO Expert Teams, and NATO's cooperation with RACVIAC, as well as with other relevant SP initiatives and activities have the full support of the Working Table.

The chair noted the special role assumed by the **Zagreb-based Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC)** in developing an integrated regional approach towards **Defence Conversion**.

RACVIAC and the member states of its Multilateral Advisory Group (MAG) had been working hard to define this new role for RACVIAC and to secure the support of international partners for it. The MAG had decided to establish a defence conversion cell to support the work of three Working Groups (WGs), which tasks will include the development regional support networks, concentrate and share know-how on defence conversion and promote an integrated donors approach in the key areas of defence conversion, i.e. resettlement / retraining, military sites / base conversion and defence industry conversion. The first meetings of the WGs will be held on 6 – 7 December in Zagreb. All interested countries and institutions are invited to participate in this event. Activities of the Working Groups should generate concrete projects and, therefore, support from the side of IFIs and other SP international partners including bilateral and multilateral donors is of great importance.

The chair noted that participants appreciated the new role of RACVIAC in Defence Conversion. The involvement of RACVIAC in defence conversion also motivated some countries to seek closer cooperation in the future, as it is the case with Ukraine.

The representative from the Geneva based Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) reminded the participants of DCAF's support for the activities carried out by RACVIAC and its partners in the area of Defence Conversion. He also reminded that the findings of the DCAF Working Group on Demobilisation and Retraining should be included in the future RACVIAC WG 1, in order to avoid starting the work from scratch on these subjects.

The representative from the Council of Europe Development Bank provided the participants with an update on the ongoing activities and ensured of the readiness of the Bank to further support some activities in the area of Defence Conversion, given the obvious existing links with social cohesion and economic development.

The representative from BiH presented the latest developments of the country in the defence reform area, but also the current and future needs to achieve its goals. He referred to the new RACVIAC Defence Conversion cell as a “enormous step forward” which deserves to be further supported by all the actors involved.

The Austrian Delegation supported the extended role of RACVIAC, in particular in the area of Defence Conversion and reminded the participants about the important role of the process covered by the Dayton Article V Annex 1-B.

5. SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS / SEESAC

The chair reminded that the activities undertaken by the South Eastern European Small Arms Control Clearinghouse (**SEESAC**) in the area of combating the threat of uncontrolled and excess **SALW** in the SEE region are an integral part of the SP's strategy for fighting organized crime.

The chair took note of Clearinghouse's activities since the previous WT III meeting. SEESAC has continued the development of operational support tools and has provided technical assistance to SALW control projects throughout the region.

One of the major challenges remained the fact that a number of the National Focal Points (NFP) have a very low profile and receive insufficient support within their own governments and agencies. Increased commitment and active participation from national governments is needed. At the same time, the chair noted that the issue of



adequate SALW policies had become an element in EU accession processes, and that the political and financial support for SEESAC by the European Commission had increased considerably.

The chair welcomed SEESAC's inputs in the area of defence conversion, in the form of a study regarding the disposal and demilitarisation of heavy weapons systems, and requested SP WT III to follow this up through cooperation and coordination with other international actors, such as NATO, OSCE and UNDP. He also requested SEESAC to continue focusing on assisting in SALW and military ammunition destruction, and stockpile management.

The Special Coordinator invited SEE governments to announce a voluntary moratorium on the export of redundant military weapons, a subject about which SEESAC had prepared a background paper.

6. DPPI

The chair welcomed the new Executive Secretary of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative, Sergej Anagnosti, and noted that the DPPI Secretariat had been transferred from Brussels to Sarajevo.

The chair noted that SEE had been hit by a series of flooding disasters in the past half year and welcomed the fact that the DPPI Regional Meeting had unanimously subscribed to the need to strengthen regional cooperation on disaster preparedness, prevention and response, recognizing that SEE Governments should make optimal use of existing international disaster response mechanisms, such as UN, EU, NATO and IFRC, and recommending that these mechanisms should be easily accessible to responsible authorities from all SEE countries.

The chair noted that the Regional Meeting had also decided to establish a legal working Group, to develop proposals for the transfer to full regional ownership through an adequate legal framework and through increased contributions by its member countries in terms of financial resources and personnel.

The chair noted that DPPI will maintain its program activities aimed to building up human capacities and capabilities of the Civil Protection/disaster Management Agencies, and to facilitating the establishment of joint response mechanisms, the harmonisation of standards and the development of bilateral and regional, legal and procedural agreements.