

SOUTH EAST EUROPE
REGIONAL APPROACH TO STOCKPILE REDUCTION (RASR)
OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND MUNITIONS

SUMMARY:

The goal of the RASR Initiative is to continue the development of a long-term, coordinated, regional approach to address the threats posed by excess, unstable, loosely secured or otherwise at-risk stockpiles of conventional armaments and munitions held by the governments of South East European (SEE) nations. RASR workshops allow regional governments, organizations, and other interested parties to come together and exchange information and develop practical solutions to address the challenge posed by conventional weapons stockpiles.

BACKGROUND:

Many of the countries of SEE have aging, excess, and unstable stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions. These stockpiles pose dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion. These threats have the potential to cause humanitarian disasters and/or destabilize individual countries or the entire region. Since 2006, ammunition stockpile explosions in Albania, Bulgaria, and Serbia have caused large numbers of casualties, significant damage, and displaced many civilians.

At the September 2008 Adriatic Charter Chiefs of Defense Conference, a Chief of Defense suggested a regional approach to the common challenges of excess munitions disposal. With many ongoing national and international projects, a regional approach has the capacity to improve efficiency and extend limited resources. The inaugural RASR Workshop, held in Zagreb, Croatia, government representatives and regional organizations realized this initiative and identified issue areas in which the RASR Initiative could facilitate greater coordination among regional governments and organizations involved in conventional-weapons reduction.

VISION:

This effort will continue to facilitate dialogue among senior General Staff and MoD officials from the region so they can share information, advice, and lessons learned, as well as coordinate efforts when and where appropriate. Providing information on existing technical and financial capabilities and assistance structures in the region is also an important function of the initiative. Workshops are a key piece in maintaining this flexible network while sustaining dialogue to disseminate information, develop cooperative strategies, and coordinate efforts among regional governments and organizations, when and where appropriate, in order to address the threat posed by conventional weapons stockpiles.

EXECUTION:

The inaugural workshop was held in Zagreb, Croatia on May 5-7 resulted in the identification of five essential areas in which stockpile reduction must focus in the region of South East Europe. These issues are: national and regional policy; infrastructure; training, education, and building related capacity; sharing information and best practices; and standardization.

On November 3-5, 2009 the second workshop took place in Budva, Montenegro. This iteration focused upon developing effective, practical steps which will contribute to progress in the issue areas identified by the first RASR workshop. The approaches and solutions developed by this consortium of governments, organizations, and interested parties will continue to contribute to the progress of stockpile reduction and the mitigation of proliferation and accidental explosion.

Participants are key personnel in MODs and security forces from SEE countries, as well as technical and policy experts from agencies and organizations directly engaged in managing national stockpiles and supporting reduction plans.

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