



9th Workshop
of the PfP Consortium Study Group
„Regional Stability in South East Europe“

**"Transforming National Armed Forces
in South East Europe –
from the Social to the Military Challenge"**

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PREFACE

The transformation of the national armed forces in South East Europe is one of the key elements in the stabilization process. The reasons for the armed forces reform in the individual Balkan countries have been different: post-totalitarian, post-conflict, good governance and counter-terrorism. The drive for NATO, PfP and EU membership strongly stimulated the reform processes in the security sector in South East Europe.

The specific features of the reform of the armed forces in these different contexts and with different meaning of the incentives of institutional memberships for the different Balkan countries were discussed at a workshop, held by the working group *Regional Stability in South East Europe* of the PfP Consortium in Sofia 21 – 23 October 2004. Military experts from the NATO countries in South East Europe as well as from the Western Balkan countries that in the meantime are also on the path of EU and NATO integration in this study especially focus on the following issues:

- How is the mentality of the public and of the politicians changing from the traditional territorial defence concepts to the concept of expeditionary forces?
- How should the expeditionary forces be subsidized – by the Ministry of Defence budget or by a separate one, run by the Government?
- Should there be an international pooling of the budgets for expeditionary forces, including by countries that do not provide forces but are potent to provide money?
- Is there a shift of the geopolitical focus eastwards from the Balkans – to the Caucasus, Caspian Sea area and the broader Middle East and is this reflected in any way on the armed forces reform in South East Europe?

- And finally, how to combine national capabilities assigned to NATO and EU – a problem that more countries in South East Europe will be facing sooner or later.

It is important to admit that many of these questions are not topical for post-conflict countries, facing other issues and tasks. Further more it is obvious that there are different armed forces reform agendas in the different countries in the region and this creates disparities and eventually - tensions. Yet there is the opportunity to set objectives and implement tasks that could homogenize the armed forces reforms in the broader context of the indispensable security sector reforms in each of the Balkan countries. Modernizing the national armed forces and the Ministries of Defence; adapting the armed forces to the new global, regional and local strategic environment; making them capable to deal with the new kinds of security threats and conflicts; acquiring adequate capability for international interoperability and for contributing to solving crises and tackling with the terrorist threat by individual and collective acts – these are directions of the thought and actions that could lead to certain improvements

Beside a more effective fight on terrorism it is a big challenge to achieve a higher level of homogenization of concepts, doctrines and strategies for the security and defence of the individual Balkan countries and of the region in general. The societies in the Balkan countries should be given good explanations why the existence and transformation costs of the armed forces are needed.

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