



Study Group Information

Anja H. Ebnoether
Ernst M. Felberbauer
Mladen Staničić

Security Sector Reform in South East Europe – from a Necessary Remedy to a Global Concept

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Editors:

Anja H. Ebnoether
Ernst M. Felberbauer
Mladen Staničić

Managing Editors:

Karin Grimm
Benedikt Hensellek

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Introduction

This publication is based on the results of a seminar that took place in October 2006 in Cavtat, Croatia. The partners to this project, the PfP Consortium Security Sector Reform Working Group (under the chairmanship of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces – DCAF) and the PfP Consortium Study Group on Regional Stability in South East Europe (under the chairmanship of the Austrian Ministry of Defence), together with the Croat Institute for International Relations – IMO – Zagreb, together with the Western Balkan policy community, reviewed the democratic standards for security sector reform and governance and the development of the pre-accession SSR conditionality in the light of the evolving Security Sector Reform concepts of NATO, the EU and other International Organisations.

The project objectives were to have experts from Western Balkans countries report on the status of defence, intelligence, border security and police/internal security reform in their country on the basis of a pre-established questionnaire and to document these reports on behalf of the international community in a publication.

DCAF's core business is Security Sector Reform and Governance. Since 2000 DCAF is chairing the PfP Consortium's SSR-Working Group, which allows DCAF to share its experience with another community of interests. The SSR-WG brings together Security Sector actors (AF, BG, police, intelligence agencies, parliamentary oversight structures, academic and civil society networks) that otherwise do not meet. Being one of the groups that internalized the NATO-PfP "Defence Institution Building" concept, the SSR-WG links SSR with the conditionality of PfP and NATO about democratic defence institutions. It helps identify the gaps in different topical areas and geographic regions (with this publication devoted on South-Eastern Europe), highlighting the need for implementation and education and training. Therefore the PfP Consortium with its training and education angle, as well as NATO/PfP's "education for reform"-initiative present a platform to bring these concepts closer to those that have to work with them.

Since 1999, the Austrian Ministry of Defence and the National Defence Academy have been supporting the Study Group Regional Stability in South East Europe of the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes. The cooperation between the Swiss and Austrians has helped in combining our forces over the past years, wherever DCAF – with its globally acknowledged role in SSR concepts and training – and Austria – generally accepted as one of the EU countries with predominant experience in SEE matters – have managed to generate an added value.

The Austrian European Union Presidency decided to put the case of furthering the Stabilisation and Accession processes of the Western Balkans high on the agenda of its presidency. Within the Austrian MoD, the topic of Security Sector Reform became one of the prime objects for research and policy, defining a comprehensive SSR concept for SEE as an essential element in ensuring security, democracy and a productive social and economic development in the entire region. To that end, the collaboration with DCAF became even more meaningful, having had DCAF assisting the EU-presidency in the preparation of the documents needed in order to present the way ahead in SSR and SSG in the Western Balkans.

The perspective of accession into Euro-Atlantic structures constitutes one of the most powerful and convincing incentives for reform in the region. EU insistence on SSR and support for relevant efforts is geared towards accelerating the accession process through need-oriented advice as well as human and financial support. A comprehensive but nevertheless flexible strategy for SSR in the countries concerned is therefore an essential part of EU efforts to help enhance stability as well as social and economic progress in the Western Balkans. From a European Union perspective, this workshop can be understood as a further stepping stone in taking stock of the progress made in SSR throughout the region, especially in the tour d’horizon of the four key SSR areas: defence, police and justice, border and intelligence reform.

Anja H. Ebnöther, Assistant Director, DCAF
Ernst M. Felberbauer, Bureau for Security Policy, Austrian MoD