Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/2111 of 9 December 2019 in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South-East Europe reducing the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2019/2111

of 9 December 2019

in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South-East Europe reducing the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 28(1) and 31(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

(1) On 19 November 2018, the Council adopted the EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition entitled 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens' (the 'EU SALW Strategy').

(2) The EU SALW Strategy recalls that while significant progress has been made in recent years, especially in South-East Europe, the scale of accumulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition, inadequate storage conditions, widespread illicit possession and gaps in implementation continue to limit the effectiveness of firearms and SALW control efforts in parts of the Western Balkans, impacting security in that region as well as in the EU.

(3) On 10 July 2018, the 'Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024' (the 'Roadmap') was adopted at the Western Balkans Summit in London.

(4) The EU SALW Strategy notes that the Union will continue its support to the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) for SALW control activities and take into account regional initiatives, such as the Roadmap.

(5) The goals of the Roadmap agreed by the Western Balkans partners are consistent with the efforts within the Union and the United Nations (UN) to combat the trafficking of SALW and their ammunition. In his 2018 Agenda for Disarmament entitled 'Securing our Common Future', the UN Secretary#General specifically called for the excessive accumulation and illicit trade in conventional arms to be addressed, and for support to country#level approaches on small arms.

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(6) The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the '2030 Agenda') affirms that combating the illicit trade in SALW is necessary for the achievement of many sustainable development goals, including those relating to peace, justice and strong institutions, poverty reduction, economic growth, health, gender equality and safe cities. Therefore, in target 16.4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda, all UN Member States have committed to significantly reducing illicit financial and arms flows.

(7) On 30 June 2018, the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted an outcome document in which UN Member States renewed their commitment to preventing and combating the diversion of SALW. UN Member States reaffirmed their willingness to pursue international cooperation and to reinforce regional cooperation, through improved coordination, consultation, information exchange and operational cooperation, involving relevant regional and sub#regional organisations, as well as law enforcement, border control and export and import licensing authorities.

(8) The project supported by this Decision aims to deepen and complement the assistance by the Union to SALW control. To date, that assistance has been provided by the Union through Council Decisions in support of SEESAC's work in the Western Balkans region, namely Council Decisions 2004/791/CFSP[(1)], 2010/179/CFSP[(2)], 2013/730/CFSP[(3)] and (CFSP) 2016/2356[(4)] and contributes to the achievement of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Roadmap goals supported by Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788[(5)],

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1 With a view to the implementation of the EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition entitled 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens', the overall objective of the project supported by this Decision and set out in its Annex shall be to further contribute to improved security in the South-East Europe region and in the Union by combatting the threat posed by illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in and from South-East Europe, Belarus and Ukraine.

2 The project, which shall take into account other regional initiatives, in particular the Western Balkans Roadmap, the work of the Organization for Security and Co#operation in Europe (OSCE) and relevant European Commission activities in the South-East Europe region related to arms control and illicit arms trafficking, shall have the following specific objectives:

— to contribute to strengthened regional cooperation, knowledge exchange and information#sharing on SALW control;

— to further support the development of a legislative and regulatory framework on SALW, firearms and explosives, and its harmonisation with the Union framework and standardisation in South-East Europe;

— the continuation of support to evidence#based policy#making on SALW control addressing the needs of both men and women;

— to build the capacity of border police and criminal police services of the Western Balkans to counter illicit trafficking and possession of firearms;

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— to improve capacity for physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) through infrastructure security upgrades, surplus reduction and training;

— to build on the current work on the establishment of the Firearms Focal Points in South-East Europe.

Article 2

1 The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative') shall be responsible for implementing this Decision.

2 The technical implementation of the project referred to in Article 1 shall be carried out by SEESAC, where necessary in coordination with the Driver of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) Firearms.

3 SEESAC shall perform its tasks under the responsibility of the High Representative. For that purpose, the High Representative shall enter into the necessary arrangements with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which shall act on behalf of SEESAC.

Article 3

1 The financial reference amount for the implementation of the project financed by the Union referred to in Article 1 shall be EUR 11 819 605,2.

2 The expenditure financed by the reference amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the Union budget.

3 The Commission shall supervise the proper management of the expenditure referred to in paragraph 2.

4 For that purpose, the Commission shall conclude the necessary agreement with UNDP, which shall act on behalf of SEESAC. That agreement shall stipulate that SEESAC has to ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution, appropriate to its size.

5 The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the agreement referred to in paragraph 4 as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Decision. The Commission shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of conclusion of that agreement.

6 A detailed description of the project is set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 4

1 The High Representative shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of regular quarterly reports prepared by SEESAC.

2 The Commission shall report on the financial aspects of the project referred to in Article 1.

Article 5

1 This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

2 This Decision shall expire 48 months after the date of conclusion of the agreement referred to in Article 3(4). However, it shall expire six months after the date of its entry into force if no such agreement has been concluded within that period.

Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/2111. (See end of Document for details)*

Done at Brussels, 9 December 2019.

For the Council

The President

J. BORRELL FONTELLES

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ANNEX

Project in support of reducing the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in South-East Europe

1. Introduction and objectives

Significant progress has been made in recent years in South-East Europe (SEE) in respect of enhancing arms control and countering illicit arms trafficking, not least because of sustained Union support. The SEE region, however, remains an area of concern and has been identified as a priority area in the EU Strategy of 19 November 2018 against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition entitled 'Securing arms, protecting citizens' (the 'EU SALW Strategy'). Illicit firearms have a clear impact on internal and external security, by fuelling organised crime and terrorist acts in the SEE region and the EU. Therefore, establishing strong and efficient control mechanisms relating to arms transfers, use, possession and stockpiling of arms constitutes a significant contribution to regional, European and global peace and security.

In order to address the remaining challenges relating to SALW control, further support the authorities in addressing these challenges and reinforce the commitment to combatting illicit trafficking and misuse of SALW and firearms, a Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 (the 'Roadmap') was adopted at the Western Balkans Summit in London on 10 July 2018. The Roadmap has seven goals covering all functional areas of arms control and envisions a Western Balkans which is a safer region and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms, fully harmonised with EU standards and other international standards, are in place to identify, prevent, prosecute and control the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives. The Union adopted in 2018 a Council Decision in support of the implementation of the Roadmap (Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788[(6)]).

The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), as the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (the 'Regional Implementation Plan'), supported the development of the Roadmap. Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788 mandated SEESAC with the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap. Coordination among institutions, international organisations and donors under the Roadmap framework is mainly ensured through formal regional Roadmap coordination meetings focusing on taking stock of progress and information exchange, and through provision of expert and technical support to local Roadmap coordination meetings. Monitoring of implementation of the Roadmap is ensured through the development of biannual monitoring and evaluation reports documenting progress, challenges and needs in that implementation based on the commonly# agreed Key Performance Indicators. In addition, SEESAC holds the secretariat role of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi#Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) set up to support the implementation of the Roadmap. SEESAC is working closely with the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission (DG HOME, DG NEAR), Europol, the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Interpol, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co# operation in Europe (OSCE) and other relevant donors and international organisations that support disarmament and arms control activities in SEE.

The overall objective of this action is to further contribute to improved security in the SEE region and in the EU by combatting the threat posed by illicit SALW and their ammunition in and from SEE, Belarus and Ukraine. Its implementation will deepen and complement the Union assistance