

JOINT STATEMENT

SEDM MINISTERS OF DEFENSE MEETING

Tirana, 12th October 2010

The Defense Ministers of the Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM) Process:

His Excellency, Mr. Arben IMAMI

His Excellency, Mr. Selmo CIKOTIĆ

His Excellency, Mr. Anu ANGELOV

His Excellency, Mr. Branko VUKELIĆ, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Pjer ŠIMUNOVIĆ, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence

His Excellency, Mr. Zoran KONJANOVSKI

His Excellency, Mr. Evangelos VENIZELOS

His Excellency, Mr. Ignazio LA RUSSA, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Guido CROSETTO, Undersecretary of State

His Excellency, Mr. Boro VUCINIC

His Excellency, Mr. Gabriel OPREA, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Viorel OANCEA, State Secretary for Defense Policy and Planning

His Excellency, Mr. Dragan ŠUTANOVAC, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Dušan Spasojević, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence

Her Excellency, Ms. Ljubica JELUŠIČ, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Uroš KREK, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence

His Excellency, Mr. Mehmet Vecdi GÖNÜL

His Excellency, Mr. Mykhailo YEZHEL

His Excellency, Mr. Robert M. GATES, represented by Ambassador Alexander VERSHBOW, Assistant Secretary of Defense

together with the Ministers of Defense from the SEDM Observer Countries:

His Excellency, Mr. Bachana AKHALAIA, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Nikoloz VASHAKIDZE, Deputy Minister of Defence

His Excellency, Mr. Vitalie MARINUTA, represented by His Excellency, Mr. Igor PANFILE, Deputy Minister of Defence

met in Tirana on 12 October, 2010 strongly determined to promote enduring peace, stability and security in Southeastern Europe.

The Ministers welcomed Montenegro and Republic of Serbia into SEDM as full-fledged members contributing to the security and cooperation at the regional level.

SEDM ministers welcomed representatives from NATO - Ambassador Lawrence G. ROSSIN, ADM Sam LOCKLEAR, JFC HQ Naples, COL Atle STAI, JFHQ Lisbon to participate and contribute to the meeting.

SEDM Ministers took note of the report presented by the Chairperson of SEDM Coordination Committee (SEDM – CC) and the MPFSEE Politico Military Steering Committee (PMSC) Mrs. Avgustina Tzvetkova, Deputy Minister of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria. In the presentation she provided a summary of the Chairmanship's accomplishments and priorities, presented all the activities that followed the last SEDM Meeting in 2009.

The Chairperson provided an update on the status of current SEDM Projects:

- Southeastern Europe Simulation Network Exercise (SEESIM-10)
- Interconnection of Military Hospitals (IMIHO)
- Defense/Military Support for WMD Counter Proliferation, Border Security and Counter Terrorism (CBSC)
- South-Eastern Europe Military Education Cooperation (SEMEC)

SEDM ministers expressed their satisfaction with the progress of last year's SEDM projects. They noted that these activities are continuing to contribute to strengthening the security, cooperation and stability in the region.

The Ministers were unanimous that duplication of efforts must be firmly prevented and Working Groups deemed ineffective should be suspended.

SEDM Ministers appreciated the report of COMSEEBRIG, Brigadier General Zyber Dushku, on future activities and the significant SEEBRIG achievements following the last SEDM Meeting.

The MPFSEE Ministers agreed that all states should maintain basic combat and disaster-relief capabilities that could be offered to SEEBRIG in order to be used in specific operations.

The MPFSEE Ministers agreed that in order for SEEBRIG to be more adaptable and deployable in a wider range of situations, it has to be properly resourced and properly managed.

The MPFSEE Ministers approved the HQ SEEBRIG Annual Plan (Main activities, Training and Travel Plan) for 2011 and SEEBRIG's Budget for the Fiscal Year 2011 (438,750 Euro).

The MPFSEE Ministers reemphasized the commitment of SEEBRIG to the broad and cooperative approach to security in the Euro-Atlantic area. They are committed to SEEBRIG's development and progress, to increase its efficiency and value as an instrument of practical cooperation. The Ministers also welcomed the way-ahead identified in the document "SEEBRIG PERSPECTIVES", concerning the possibilities of SEEBRIG's future development, and endorsed it. They highlighted the strong political will for improving SEEBRIG capabilities and indicated that the outstanding requirements of HQ SEEBRIG must be fulfilled. They emphasized that the MPFSEE Nations should jointly endeavor to meet these requirements to guarantee SEEBRIG's readiness for deployment. In this regard, the Ministers expressed their continuous support for SEDM activities including participation in PSOs.

The SEDM Ministers took note of Bulgaria's proposal for permanent SEEBRIG HQ location in Bulgaria. The MPFSEE Ministers tasked PMSC to analyze this offer and other possible offers on rotation order in the light of the legal framework and the spirit of the Agreement on the MPFSEE. The PMSC will report to the next ministerial meeting.

SEDM Ministers reached a consensus regarding the threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion posed to the security of Southeastern

European citizens, by the accumulation of obsolete and/or excess weapons, munitions and explosives, as well as their detrimental impact on defense readiness.

Ministers expressed their understanding concerning the negative impact of the enduring existence of large amounts of small arms and light weapons on the security environment of the SEE region, as well as their will to work on coordinating the control and downsizing of small arms and light weapons in the region, in order to substantially reduce the risks stemming from uncontrolled transfers and use of armaments.

They affirmed that regional security in Southeastern Europe can only be achieved by working together.

In addition to that, SEDM Ministers reiterated the will to work together and render assistance to requesting member states to destroy excess national stocks of conventional weapons and munitions, to strengthen the implementation of national and international standards, as quickly and safely as possible, consistent with safe and secure disposal procedures, and to secure and manage the stockpiles that remain for legitimate national defense.

SEDM Ministers endorsed the “open door policy” for all the aspirant countries from the region and beyond that need to be part of SEDM initiative, which share and contribute to peace and stability.

SEDM Ministers expressed their continuous support for ongoing NATO-led operations and reiterated their commitment to contribute to NATO's efforts strengthening security and stability in Southeastern Europe. In this regard, Ministers thanked ADM Locklear JFC HQ Naples Commander for his contribution to this meeting and his update briefing on the “Update on NATO operations in the region, and maritime security operations”.

The SEDM Defense Ministers expressed their appreciation for the contributions of the EU-led operations to the security and stability in the Southeastern Europe.

Finally, SEDM ministers expressed their appreciation to the Minister of Defense of Albania, Mr. Arben IMAMI, for his warm hospitality in hosting this meeting. They also expressed gratitude for the efforts of his staff in preparing and organizing all the details connected with the Ministerial events.