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**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR  
FOR COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN BALKANS  
EXPORT CONTROL OF DUAL-USE ITEMS AND ARMS: INDUSTRY OUTREACH"**

**OPENING ADDRESS**

**BY MS EVGENIA KOLDANOVA, DEPUTY-FOREIGN MINISTER OF BULGARIA,  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE  
INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION ON EXPORT CONTROL AND  
NON-PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

**Sofia, Bulgaria**

**22 - 23 May 2006**

22 May 2006

Dear participants, experts and guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the privilege of opening the international seminar on industry outreach in export control of dual-use items and conventional arms for countries in the Western Balkans.

I am glad that His Excellency, Ambassador Karl Diem of Austria has kindly accepted the invitation to address this seminar - as our guest of honour - on behalf of the Austrian Presidency of the European Union.

I am pleased to welcome the participants from five neighbouring countries in South-Eastern Europe -Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. We are happy that your governments have nominated you to take part in the Sofia seminar organized jointly by Bulgaria and Hungary within the framework of the regional outreach programme of the Australia Group.

I wish also to welcome the experts nominated by a number of other States participating in the Australia Group, by States Members of the European Union, and by several renowned international research institutes and arms control organisations like SIPRI in Stockholm, the Wassenaar Arrangement in Vienna, and SEESAC in Belgrade. We are grateful to them for agreeing to support our seminar by sharing with us their professional knowledge and extensive experience in applying export control arrangements for non-proliferation purposes.

I equally welcome my fellow citizens from export control agencies and business circles in Bulgaria, who have shown interest in attending the seminar during the next two days. Apart from discussing how countries in the Western Balkans may wish to organize their export control programmes on industry outreach, this seminar would also serve as yet another national event reaching out to dual-use and arms business in Bulgaria.

You will be aware that this seminar is just a step in the on-going implementation of the joint initiative of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and Hungary dealing with regional assistance to the Western Balkans on issues of export control. It gives me pleasure to welcome amongst us our Hungarian fellow organisers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Hungarian Licensing Office in Budapest. I wish to mention with gratitude the important role played by the staff of the Bulgarian Center for the Study of Democracy, who have made the preparations technically possible.

Our gathering today continues the work started at similar events in Budapest last June and in Sofia last October, which were attended by participants from the same neighbouring countries. While the work in Budapest focused on legislative and administrative aspects of export control, the emphasis during the seminar in Sofia was on issues of border customs control of shipments of dual-use goods and technologies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The current seminar will address issues of industry outreach in export control of sensitive trade, covering both dual-use items and conventional arms. Among other aspects, the agenda provides for discussion of the experience gathered by EU Member States and the two Acceding Countries in applying the Code of Conduct on Arms Export. The seminar will also start addressing - in a more systematic way - modalities for automation of export licensing procedures, which aims at adding greater efficiency to export licensing work. We expect that this complex subject will be further considered - in a greater depth and details - at yet another joint multilateral event in Budapest later this year.

The international seminars sponsored by Bulgaria and Hungary are part of the concerted actions undertaken by a number of States taking seriously both the growing proliferation threats and their international obligations on export control. These States are willing to continue to assist the on-going efforts of the countries of the Western Balkans to meet the high standards established by the international export control regimes. We will be glad to discuss together and to help further progress made by our neighbours in shaping their contribution to the global non-

proliferation and anti-terrorist efforts.

We, in Bulgaria, take pride in being able to enlarge the scope of our regional policy of political cooperation and assistance with the specific area of export control of dual-use items and arms. We are willing to continue to work together with countries in the Western Balkans to strengthen the foundations of our common security and regional stability and foster the process of their Euro-Atlantic integration.

I am glad to note that the countries that have sent experts to this seminar are willing to assist both licensing authorities and business circles in their efforts to secure a responsible export control. We will all gain from seeing the dual-use and arms business in this region on the side of the global quest for peace, security and stability.

This task is a serious challenge at times of a change in international life. The winds of change impact on economic and security interests as well. In these circumstances, governments are expected to jointly create conditions where the challenges can be met in ways that not only promote legitimate sensitive trade but also remain consistent with international obligations on non-proliferation and export control. Understanding better the nature and scope of the export commitments of our governments and making progress towards fully meeting export control requirements will continue to be one of the keys to success.

The message is clear and loud. If business is to align itself with the high standards of a responsible export control policy as required by international and national laws, the companies trading in dual-use items and arms will be expected to fully reorient their attention to "safe destinations" of export and to safe conditions of "end-use". This would help companies avoid inadvertently contributing to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to regional destabilisation resulting from inappropriate arms exports. Full alignment with responsible policies on sensitive trade would spare business companies from wasting their material resources, production efforts and money in licence applications that have little chance of being approved.

What is required from governments on the other hand is to develop relations of partnership with sensitive business for the benefit of economic prosperity, international peace and security. The manufacturing and trading companies will gain a lot from learning to do business from a position of full awareness and respect for the rules of the game, for all the "musts" in export control, be it internationally agreed or enacted unilaterally through national laws. They need to understand that the harmonisation of export control arrangements is a never-ending process permanently stimulated by the changing international environment.

I am sure that the mutual exchange of knowledge and experience during the next two days will make both governments and companies better equipped to fight together the newly emerging threats to our common security and stability. Let me assure you that business can still make serious profits in investing in responsible and stabilising trade.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The nature of this seminar, which focuses our attention on the needs of our neighbours in the Western Balkans, makes it inappropriate for me to dwell upon export control activities in Bulgaria.

I only wish to encourage the business representatives at this seminar to make full use of the presence of qualified and experienced foreign experts. You may wish to learn more about responsible trade in dual-use items and arms. Please speak up and seek answers to your burning questions.

As an Acceding Country to the European Union, Bulgaria has adopted and applies an export control policy, which is aligned with the European Union "acquis" dealing with sensitive trade. The national export control structures are increasingly acquiring new experience in applying the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Export and the Council's regulations on dual-use items and technologies. This is now a matter of law and its enforcement in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government is determined to continue to meet the established legal requirements - in a harmonized and coordinated way with the common policy of all EU Member States.

Concluding my opening remarks, I would like to voice my belief that the countries represented

at this seminar - both European and non-European - will continue to act together in fighting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms destabilisation and terrorist threats.

I wish success to the work of the seminar. Thank you for your attention.