

# CONCLUSIONS

Corrupt interdependencies between the economy of crime and the security sector in Southeast European countries result from the unfinished transition to democracy and the delayed reforms in former secret services. Alongside trends similar to all post-communist states, the countries in the Western Balkans have had to bear the specific consequences of the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation, the ensuing regional conflicts and the boom of organized and trans-border crime.

The delay of security sector integration is evident at all levels, specifically:

- individual security services, where the transformation of old communist secret services has not been completed
- coordination between the security services
- institutional (democratic) control and oversight of security services.

The problematic definition of overall security priorities, and, therefore, of the functions, objectives and tasks of security institutions, posed the risk of “transformation without reform”. The Bulgarian example shows that, although the fight against organized crime was defined as a priority at the earliest stages of transition, strategic security views have continued to focus on traditional threats, while the newly-established institutions have replicated the old models. This is especially relevant to the dominant attitude toward systemic corruption, which has not been perceived as integral to organized crime, let alone a threat to national security, until very recently.

Radical reform should be based on an objective assessment of the new threats to democratic rule, especially in transition countries, where liberalization, disorder and corruption multiply the destructive effect of crime. A new perspective should be used to define distinctive ways of countering military and civilian, domestic and external security threats. Diminishing military risks and soaring trans-border crime should be met with corresponding laws and institutions. The enemy is no longer a neighboring country. It is rather non-state formations and crime groups. To combat these, different types of organizations and functions should be established. Commendable relevant reforms would be the integration of foreign intelligence and anti-trans-border-crime efforts, as well as the involvement of counterintelligence in tackling organized crime. However vital to the national security anti-terrorist endeavors might be, organized crime and corruption should not be allowed to continue without response.

The necessary steps to a satisfactory security sector management and coordination are: a working operational information exchange system, abolition of rivalry between security institutions, and a coordination mechanism for joint anti-crime efforts. The divide between the interior and defense ministries is another challenge; the functions of relevant military structures should be transformed so that they contribute to curbing trans-border crime.

The following conclusions may be drawn from the debate on security sector restructuring in Bulgaria so far:<sup>211</sup>

- All reform proposals, in varying degrees, envisage a basic structural division of security forces into security services and public order services (police).
- Most proposals argue that security forces should be governed by the executive (the prime minister) and coordinated by a special body attached to the government, namely a security council. Many experts agree, however, that the current situation, in which the National Intelligence Service and the National Guard Service are accountable to the president, would not hamper improvement of the overall coordination.
- All proposals stress the necessity of parliamentary control on security services, also exercised by specialized committees with the National Assembly.
- Security service activities should be regulated in special laws.

There exists a consensus on the main standards of security sector institutional development. This conclusion is all the more valid as the authors of security sector reform proposals, apart from being security experts, are supporters of different political parties, yet they agree on this point.

Both in management and control, clear and transparent criteria for security sector assessment should be introduced, including a financial efficiency criterion. Up to now, assessment has been based on abstract internal or statistical criteria and the sector has been evaluated in a positive light despite the fact that only few of the large-scale smugglers or drug bosses in Bulgaria, for instance, have been sentenced.

The implementation of civilian oversight after the model of democratic states will be a crucial measure for security sector reform success or failure. Certain security sector activities should no longer be secretive, but should be made transparent enough to allow objective assessment, at the same time keeping the public interest unharmed. This will also curb abuse of discretionary power by corrupt officials.

The aim, however, should not be an all-powerful system of civilian control penetrating the specific activities of the security sector. It should be

---

<sup>211</sup> See main proposals in on p. 35 of this paper.

considered that society still is not interested in what exactly happens behind the scenes or in the exact figures in security service budgets, but it must be informed whether this budget is spent in compliance with the law and if it can guarantee the peace and security citizens have paid for.

It is advisable to draft a law on the control of security services, authorizing parliament to appoint two expert commissions competent to investigate problematic issues – classified or unclassified, respectively. The commission inquiring into unclassified matters should make public all its disclosures, while the one dealing with secretive material should report to parliament at closed-door sittings.

First and foremost, the main political parties should declare their consent on the basic principles of interaction with security forces; that is: non-interference into their work, prohibition over party-membership of security servants, and control, through budget assessment, that should be exercised by independent expert bodies.

Last but not least, the security sector must be integrated in the new international security system. Bulgaria and Romania's accession to NATO and the EU will, without a doubt, further the reform of their security institutions. The prospect for the states in the Western Balkans to follow in their footsteps will be a definitive factor for stability in Southeast Europe.