

Workshop on “Security Sector Reform: Challenges and Priorities” 1 April 2009, Tirana, Albania

On April 1st, 2009 ELIAMEP coorganised a workshop on “Security Sector Reform: Challenges and Priorities” with the Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) in the framework of the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP).

IfP is a conflict prevention network funded by the European Commission that draws together the complementary geographic and thematic expertise of 10 civil society organisations (and their networks) with offices across the EU and in conflict-affected countries. Its aim is to develop and harness international knowledge and expertise in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to ensure that all stakeholders, including EU institutions, can access strong independent analysis in order to facilitate better informed and more evidence-based policy decisions.



IfP's security cluster aims at improving the impact of EU and Member State security-related programming through research which identifies the problems that prevent policy being implemented as intended, and at recommending alternative strategies. In this context, a number of reports and workshops on Security Sector Reform (SSR) have been organised by the IfP partners during 2009.

The Tirana workshop focused on current challenges and priorities for SSR. Politicians, SSR experts and academics were brought together to discuss and examine in more detail challenges faced in this field in Southeast Europe and particularly Albania, as well as EU priorities in the field of SSR.

The workshop was opened by the Albanian Minister of Defence, HE Gazmend Oketa, who spoke on Albania's military reform and the roadmap ahead.

The parliamentary dimension of SSR was the focus of the morning session presented by Marc Remillard from the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). The discussion that followed was led by Besnik Mustafaj, Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Board of Directors of AIIS and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Leonard Demi, Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Albanian Parliamentary Commission on Security.

Peter Gill from the University of Salford spoke on the reform of the intelligence services and their role in SSR. Arjan Dymishi from the AIIS and Arian Starova, Sali Shehu and Aldo Bumci, Members of the Albanian Parliament, commented more specifically on the situation in Albania and the current priorities for the Albanian intelligence services and SSR.

A paper on 'Challenges and opportunities for more effective SSR processes,' was introduced by Sebastien Babaud, from Saferworld in Brussels that is coordinating the IfP's security cluster.

Finally, the workshop included an in-depth discussion of SSR in Albania, introduced by Dr. Enika Abazi. Damian Gjikhuri - Security Expert, SP, and Arian Starova, Sali Shehu and Aldo Bumci, Members of the Albanian Parliament further elaborated on the current security environment in Albania, and the future opportunities for long term stability associated with further security sector reforms, the stabilization of Albania's legal environment, and the continued need to address corruption in a coordinated manner among all relevant actors operating at the local, national and international levels.

Over 40 participants took part in this one-day workshop that brought together all the members of the Albanian Parliamentary Commission on Security, experts from the Albanian Ministry of Defence and the Albanian Ministry of the Interior, EU and US diplomats in Albania, representatives of the NATO Office and other assistance missions in Albania (PAMECA, etc), as well as representatives from the civil society sector, academia and journalists.