

**Making Montenegro safer – a process that needs to continue**  
by OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier

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Montenegro's long process of transformation into a secure and stable society is well on its way. Work to bring it in line with international and European standards is proceeding, important legislation is being adopted, and relations with its immediate neighbours are proving the country to be a catalyst for positive changes in the region. Work still needs to be done – no transformation process was ever swift, especially in times of economic constraint – yet progress is being made to tackle the challenges and meet the highest standards.

Yet one of the most beneficial on-the-ground projects for the people of Montenegro remains unfinished: the country's demilitarization programme, MONDEM, a partnership of the Government, OSCE and UNDP, to remove and destroy surplus ammunition and hazardous toxic waste, is only half over. Today I join a donors' conference in Podgorica to seek funds from the international community to ensure its completion.

MONDEM came into being in 2006 when the Montenegrin government compiled a list for defence reform and demilitarization. It sent this to the OSCE to seek the Organization's expertise in destroying surplus small arms, light weapons, and conventional ammunition, and in disposing of hazardous toxic waste.

The project proper began the following year, and resulted in one of the best ever examples of co-operation between a government and the international community. During the first years, 3,300 tonnes of heavy weapons were destroyed, including 60 battle tanks, 900 artillery pieces and rocket launchers and 120 tonnes of toxic hazardous mélange oxidizer and rocket fuel. Wisely, the government decided to redirect the proceeds from the recycled metal back into the project, injecting around 0.75 million extra Euros.

In 2010, 430 tonnes of surplus ammunition were destroyed, along with 715 tonnes of unstable surplus ammunition between 2010 and 2012. At the same time, the "Taras" ammunition depot was up-graded at a cost of Euro 1.23 million to improve stockpile management.

The result is a safer environment not only for Montenegro's citizens but for the whole region. Previously, communities were under constant threat not only of explosion from unstable ammunition stores, but from poisoning due to the toxic materials that leaked into the ground and the water table.

The partnership between the OSCE, the UNDP and the Montenegrin government has achieved a lot, but more needs to be done. Over a thousand tonnes of unstable and obsolete ammunition must be destroyed by the end of 2014, and for that a further Euro 1 million will be needed. Also outstanding is the infrastructure upgrade of "Brezovik" Montenegro's largest military ammunition depot, costing an estimated Euro 2.4 million.

Seeking this financial support is the purpose of today's donor's conference. The OSCE is hoping that more support will be pledged, adding to the one million Euros provided by the government, 2.6 million by UNDP, as well as donations from the OSCE participating States - Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

The generosity of those who contribute today will go a long way to assist Montenegro in creating a safe and secure future both for today's citizens and for the coming generations.