REGIONAL CENTER FOR COMBATING TRANSBORDER CRIME -
SECI CENTER BUCHAREST
ANNUAL REPORT 2006
Director’s Foreword

I am honored to present the Annual Report 2006, outlining the SECI Center achievements.

Throughout past year, our work remained focused on the organization’s two core functions: operational information exchange services for police and customs and support to the regional law enforcement operations against trans-border organized crime. Each of the core functions advanced considerably in 2006, thanks to the dedicated work of the national expert representatives, National Focal Points, SECI Center Liaison Officers, management and staff.

I am particularly pleased to report that the number of assistance requests and information shared via the SECI Center raised by nearly 30% in 2006 to more than 5,500 and that more than 10,000 operational messages were generated during the cooperation process.

Our efforts to support 23 joint investigations and 3 region-wide operations showed a real improvement and allowed our member law enforcement agencies to better target criminal organizations involved in areas such as drugs trafficking, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, stolen vehicles, cigarette smuggling and financial crime.

Such actions resulted in better coordination among national agencies for the dismantling of several criminal organizations and also led to significant seizures and many successful arrests and imprisonments.

We also moved closer to our goal of connecting our Member Countries with best available communications equipment. A step ahead was achieved in autumn 2006 when the SECI Center video-conference system was made available at National Focal Points to law enforcement and prosecutors.
The year 2006 has marked a continuation of the excellent cooperation relations established in the previous years with our strategic partners, national and international institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Poland, Slovakia, the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine and UNDP Romania were granted the status of observer at the SECI Center, thus raising to 20 the number of observers. The future membership of Georgia and Montenegro will increase the number of Member Countries to fourteen.

The SECI Center intensified relations with the EU Presidencies, EU Council’s General Secretariat, Europol and European Commission. Plans for the development of a new SECI Convention and upgrade of the organization moved further on the way to become a reality, and the EU Council Conclusions as well as the Conclusions of the SECI High Representatives adopted at the end of the 2006 year provide landmarks for the future cooperation and development of the Center.

We do not stop here. We rely on the recognition, understanding and involvement of our partners to continue to improve our services to the police and customs agencies in the region. Law enforcement at all levels, along with organizations such as the SECI Center, must continue to work together to undermine and reduce the impact of trans-border crime. The continuing challenge is to keep united across South East Europe and beyond, with the right tools and services, and deliver successful results in this battle.

Mitja Močnik
Director of the SECI Center
Contents

Director’s Foreword.....................................................4

List of abbreviations....................................................7

1. Introduction................................................................8

2. Information Exchange Services..................................10

3. Common Action against Trans-Border Crime..............12
   3.1 Drugs................................................................13
   3.2 Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.............15
   3.3 Stolen Vehicles..................................................17
   3.4 Smuggling and Customs Fraud............................18
   3.5 Financial and Computer Crime.............................20
   3.6 Terrorism..........................................................21
   3.7 Container Security.............................................22
   3.8 Analysis...........................................................23

4. Strategic Cooperation and Development....................24

5. Corporate Governance............................................26
   5.1 Budget.............................................................26
   5.2 Human resources..............................................26
   5.3 Organization’s Chart..........................................26
   5.4 Communication and Public Affairs.......................27

6. Contact information................................................28
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADTTF</td>
<td>Anti Drug Trafficking Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTF</td>
<td>Anti-Terrorism Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSEC</td>
<td>Black Sea Economic Cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Drug Enforcement Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUBAM</td>
<td>EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europol</td>
<td>European Police Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCTF</td>
<td>Financial and Computer Crime Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpol</td>
<td>International Criminal Police Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCC</td>
<td>Joint Cooperation Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHA</td>
<td>Justice and Home Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>National Focal Point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECI</td>
<td>Southeast European Cooperative Initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECI Agreement</td>
<td>Agreement on Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Transborder Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECI Center</td>
<td>SECI Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>South East Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEECP</td>
<td>South East European Cooperation Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEEPAG</td>
<td>South East European Prosecutors Advisory Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOC</td>
<td>Stability Pact Initiative against Organized Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIK</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Kosovo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSS</td>
<td>United States Secret Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCO</td>
<td>World Customs Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

The role of the SECI Center is to assist an effective cooperation between the customs and police authorities of the Member Countries in combating trans-border crime. This is excellently done by offering a venue and proper conditions for information exchange among Liaison Officers and by supporting the international investigations and operations through a dedicated Operational Support Department.

Over the years, the SECI Center has fully accomplished its mission by playing an important role to the development of the law enforcement cooperation in South East Europe, and by contributing to the overall regional security and stabilization.

The operational activity of the SECI Center is conducted based on the Annual Action Plan, approved by the Joint Cooperation Committee (the highest decision making body of the SECI Center, comprising high representatives of the Member Countries). The activities stipulated in the Action Plan are then implemented by the SECI Center Director, assisted by the management, Liaison Officers and staff.

The operational support to all Member Countries and sector partners was maintained at a high level during 2006. All operational performance targets have been achieved as at 31 December 2006.
Introduction

The SECI Center is a jointly operated and funded regional organization that was launched in 2000, based on the international Agreement on Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Transborder Crime signed on 26 May 1999 in Bucharest.

Today the SECI Center membership is as follows: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey. Each Member Country is represented at the SECI Center premises in Bucharest by two Liaison Officers seconded by the respective national customs and police authorities.

Besides the Member Countries, there are 20 observers - Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, the United States of America, EUBAM, UNDP Romania and UNMIK.

It is thus for the first time that 32 international actors are cooperating to combat trans-border crime in South East Europe in the framework of a permanent information sharing and operational base, where customs and Police officers work together.

Italy (Guardia di Finanza - Italian Economic and Financial Police- and the Italian State Police) and the United States (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, United States Secret Service and the US Department of Justice) have maintained a permanent representation at the SECI Center.

Interpol and the World Customs Organization are permanent advisors to the SECI Center.
2. Information Exchange Services

During 2006, there were 20 Liaison Officers posted at the SECI Center by the customs and police authorities from South East Europe, who received constant support during the year from twelve National Focal Points established in the capitals of their countries.

Due to the secure and fast communications systems (encrypted virtual private network over internet, voice and fax communications systems which are provided with the most advanced encryption facilities and data communications systems which are compatible with the most advanced networks of similar organizations in the world), the information exchange through the SECI Center was very much appreciated by its users.

The number of assistance requests and information shared via the SECI Center raised by nearly 30% in 2006 to more than 5,500 and more than 10,000 operational messages were generated during the cooperation process. The regular information exchange through the SECI Center led to the development of important investigative cases and arrests.

In autumn 2006, the SECI Center made available a video-conference system to be used by law enforcement and prosecutors from the Member Countries. This modern equipment was installed at the National Focal Points in each member country.

The first video conferencing bridge between SEE law enforcement institutions was demonstrated on the occasion of the 7-th Meeting of SEEPAG on 9 November 2006.
In January 2006, warning information was initiated by the Romanian Customs about a suspect maritime cigarette consignment legally declared for export to Montenegro. The information was disseminated to all SECI countries and national measures were taken to monitor the suspect transport alongside its route.

An operation was coordinated between Romania and Greece (Operation Karelia), which led to the seizure of 37 million cigarette units while attempting to illegally unload the consignment in Greece. Four suspects were arrested and investigated by the Hellenic Police.

Based on information provided by the Moldavian Police through the SECI Center, the Turkish National Police implemented an operation in Antalya. The operation was enforced in June 2006 and resulted in the arrest of one trafficker and the rescue of 7 victims of Moldavian and Turkmen origin.

In February 2006, the Serbian police requested all SECI countries to check a list of vehicles suspected to be stolen. As a result of the information received from SECI countries, 6 vehicles were identified as being stolen from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Serbia and Sweden. Three persons were arrested in Serbia in connection with a vehicle insurance fraud scheme.
3. Common Action against Trans-Border Crime

The profits to be made from trans-border organized crime ensure that the various activities continue to be attractive, and the overall threat to the South East European countries has remained high and increasing in scope and complexity. Local criminal networks have become more fluid, extended, flexible and capable to operate abroad in part due to the specialist ‘service providers’ to assist with money laundering, logistics, documents and other criminal elements.

Meanwhile, the increased movement freedom in the region as well as the availability of information technology and modern communications has facilitated both an import and export of criminal knowledge, and spawned new forms of illegal trans-border activities.

The SECI Center remit is to enhance cooperation among South East European police and customs authorities and to reduce the harm caused by trans-border organized crime. Aside from the main threats of drugs trafficking, human trafficking, illegal immigration, and smuggling of highly taxable goods such as cigarettes and stolen vehicles, other trans-border criminal activities cause a range of harms, from direct and indirect financial losses to fear of terrorist attacks and damage to the reputation of legitimate manufacturers through counterfeiting and pirating products.

The SECI Center Task Forces point to the priorities set by the Member Countries for common action against trans-border crime and terrorism. Seven Task Forces were working during 2006 with direct participation of the national expert representatives and Liaison Officers with the aim to delivering successful output of regional law enforcement cooperation.

The SECI Center Task Forces employ basic law enforcement working methods such as regional operations, joint investigations, criminal analysis and trainings in the following areas:

1. Drugs Trafficking
2. Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling
3. Smuggling and Customs Fraud
5. Stolen Vehicles
6. Terrorism
7. Container Security
3.1 Drugs

The Balkan Route has traditionally served as a major two-way corridor for moving drugs between Europe and Asia. The South East European drug trafficking organizations have specialized as major illicit transportation providers for various drugs, utilizing the region as a station to warehouse and stockpile heroin from Afghanistan, cocaine from South America, and synthetic drugs from Western Europe on the way to the well-established drug consumption markets.

The most used modus operandi for drug smuggling across borders remains concealment within the bodies of TIR trucks, within their commercial consignments, passenger cars and buses.

At least 120 tons of drugs were seized in South East Europe during 2005 and 2006, while heroin seizures (in excess of 20 tons) almost doubled in comparison with the past years. During 2006, the SECI Center continued to successfully impact on the police and customs cooperation to combat drug trafficking in South East Europe.

This impact was mainly achieved by exchanging case information, coordinating a regional drug interdiction operation and supporting three joint investigations among the member countries. Drug information was exchanged among countries in 1,955 cases and twelve international meetings and activities were supported by the SECI Center in the framework of the Anti-Drug Task Force (coordinated by Bulgaria). Also three assessment reports were released to the Member Countries and strategic partners on South East European drug trafficking issues.
In July 2006, the SECI Regional Center coordinated the Operation Containment V. During a total period of 7 days, law enforcement authorities in South East Europe targeted trucks, busses and passenger cars at the national borders.

The primary goal of the operation was the interdiction and seizure of illicit products transiting South East European countries, deterrence and apprehension of criminals transporting illegal drugs. The secondary goal was to gather intelligence aimed at criminal enterprises which regularly use land vehicle transportation to move drugs through the region.

Operation Containment V focused on interdiction at the land border checkpoints specifically designated by the participating countries.

All SECI countries plus Georgia and the United States (Drug Enforcement Administration) participated in Operation Containment V. The highest ever number of information requests (324) initiated and exchanged during a Containment-type operation proved the commitment of the participants and advantages of the cooperation through the SECI Center.

A substantial amount of drugs (218 kilograms) was seized during Operation Containment V. Significant seizures were made in Bulgaria (9.2 kilograms of heroin and 35.3 kilograms of ecstasy), Greece (140.7 kilograms of herbal cannabis) and Moldova (3.5 liters and 1 kilogram of opium and 32.5 kilograms of opium poppy). Twenty-three (23) persons were arrested during this regional effort.
3.2 Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling

Migrant smuggling involves the facilitation of illegal migration for profit, normally of individuals who have sought help to migrate. Human trafficking involves the facilitation of illegal migrants, including of those who have been coerced or lured, with the purpose of exploiting them as sexual slaves or cheap labor, often forced.

All the indications are that the scale of migrant smuggling far exceeds that of human trafficking. There was a decreasing trend of human trafficking cases in South East Europe and an increasing number of illegal immigrants detected in the region in 2005.

Several countries in the region continued to be origin for trafficking in human beings mainly to Southeastern and Western Europe. The Eastern migratory pressures over the SECI region appeared to increase.

Thus it was a priority for the SECI Center to continue to support the actions of the member countries to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling during calendar year 2006. The SECI Center capabilities, supported by the United States (Federal Bureau of Investigation) were made equally available for information exchange and coordination of joint investigations.

This positive impact was mainly achieved by exchanging case information and supporting 13 joint investigations among the member countries, sometimes with the participation of observer states. Information was exchanged among the SECI Center Member Countries in 236 cases and a number of 27 international meetings and activities were supported by the SECI Center in the framework of the Task Force on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (coordinated by Romania).

As a result of the decision to continue focusing on joint investigations cases, three sub-regional meetings were organized in the second part of the year 2006, grouping the member countries according to the main regional migration routes. During these meetings the connections among cases under investigation in different countries were identified.

Operational information was exchanged, and decisions were made on the prioritization of regional joint investigations that were supported by the SECI Center.

In 2006 the SECI Center continued its special witness program in supporting the regional judicial process, and one victim of Romanian citizenship testified in a court in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the traffickers who had exploited her.
Forty-eight (48) persons were arrested within the Operation Grof in October 2006 after completion of a joint investigation on illegal immigration initiated by Slovenia.

The successful completion of the case was a result of coordinated work of the police agencies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, together with Austria and Germany with the support of the SECI Center.

The Slovenian police filed crime reports at the competent prosecutor office against 32 persons. Twenty-two house searches were carried out.

Ten persons were brought before the investigating judge and three other were listed as wanted. Members of this criminal organisation were arrested in other countries as well, seven of them in Germany, six in Austria and three in Croatia.
3.3 Stolen Vehicles

The SECI Center focus on the problem of stolen vehicles has been a priority since 2002, when a specialized Task Force was established under the coordination of Hungary.

A new approach against smuggling stolen vehicles in South East Europe was proposed by the SECI Center, by shifting from time-limited operations to a larger strategy that will allow for structural and legislative changes of the national systems.

This new strategy has already started to be implemented in 2006, by supporting joint investigations between member countries on stolen vehicles, by assisting to get an overview of the legislation in the region, by reporting on vehicle crime situation in the region and also by supporting the idea of a standard Vehicle Registration Project.

One (1) joint investigation on stolen vehicles between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia was supported by the SECI Center in 2006. In this first ever case assisted by the SECI Center in the area of stolen vehicles, data on hundreds of suspicious cars found on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was sent to Slovenia for checks.

Vice versa, data on vehicles reported stolen in Slovenia over the past 5 years was sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina for detection and seizure. In this case technical expertise and equipment was provided by the Slovenian Police in order to advance the investigation.

In October 2006, the Operation Catch against international trafficking of stolen vehicles was implemented with the participation of six SECI Member States and close support from Europol. A number of 745 information requests were initiated during the operation, most of them generated with the aim to check suspected vehicles against national and international databases. Ten vehicles were seized during the Operation Catch (6 in Serbia, 3 in Moldova and 1 in Croatia).
3.4 Smuggling and Customs Fraud

South East Europe has been strongly affected by smuggling of highly taxed goods such as cigarettes and fuel, as well as by the counterfeit and pirated goods involving transiting through many countries. In several cases huge quantities of cigarettes departed from China to the region in 2005 that involved more than 30 millions of counterfeit cigarettes.

Trucks and vessels were mostly used to move the contraband consignments throughout the region and cover loads were usually employed by smugglers. Beverages, cigarettes, textiles, mobile phones and their accessories, bags and leather articles, shoes and cosmetics were the most seized counterfeit goods during 2005-2006. Import and transit schemes are most used for smuggling counterfeit and pirated goods in South East Europe.

During 2006, the SECI Center was effective in assisting Member Countries to combat smuggling and customs fraud. The positive influence was mainly achieved by exchanging case information, coordinating a regional anti-smuggling operation and supporting three joint investigations on cigarette smuggling among the Member Countries.

Assistance requests on ongoing smuggling investigations were initiated in 358 cases, and 1,638 information on cigarette seizures incidents were shared. Also three analytical reports were released to the Member Countries and strategic partners on counterfeit and pirated products and cigarette smuggling issues.

In late autumn 2006, the Operation Hurricane on counterfeit and pirated goods was implemented during a period of five days with the participation of all SECI Center Member Countries and using WCO’s CEN Comm system as a communication tool.
Operation Hurricane was effective from numerous points of view. It not only resulted in seizures of a larger number (24) in the SECI region than ever reported before, but also revealed the smuggling of counterfeit perfumes as a new phenomenon.

During the operation the previously determined features of smuggling of goods were confirmed. Counterfeit products mostly arrived in the SECI region from China by vessels, and they were afterwards transported by trucks.

However, airplanes were also identified as a frequent means of transportation.

In April 2006, intelligence disseminated by the Romanian Police led to an important joint investigation targeting cigarette smuggling between Romania and Serbia and supported by the SECI Center.

The investigation resulted in 15 traffickers being prosecuted on the territories of the two countries (11 persons in Romania and 4 in Serbia), as well as seizures valued at 250,000 Euro (boats and cigarettes).
3.5 Financial and Computer Crime

South East Europe has increasingly become the home region of criminal groups dealing with fraud schemes and the utilization of information technology for criminal purposes. These groups rapidly exploit the new technological development and free movement opportunities, engaging their resources to transfer knowledge across borders and commit crimes in their native economic and financial environments.

Over the past years, complex internet and plastic card frauds committed in the Western Europe and United States of America have been connected to criminal networks in the region. These crimes have spread to all countries with the widening of Internet access and development of national payment card markets.

Financial crimes, such as plastic card fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash payments undermine public confidence in the victimized payment system or financial instrument and the costs of verifying and securing all financial transactions, legitimate or not, are then passed on to all citizens in the form of higher prices and interest rates.

The Second Task Force Sub-Group Meeting on Credit Card Fraud was organized on 14 March 2006 in Skopje, under the coordination of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Proposals for implementing region-wide operations on credit card fraud were discussed. The operations would focus on sharing information between public and private sector, and participants would be law enforcement agencies, prosecution offices, Bank/Industry and Fraud Forums of the SECI member countries, as well as observers to the SECI Center.

The First FCC Task Force Sub-Group Meeting on Money Laundering was held on 25 September in Chisinau under the coordination of the Republic of Moldova. The meeting was attended by expert representatives of the police agencies, prosecutor offices and national authorities on money laundering from all SECI Member States, several Observer States as well as Europol and Interpol. Advantages such as the SECI Center information exchange and joint investigation mechanisms were underlined as very useful for combating money laundering. Presentations were delivered on national systems of identifying, tracing and seizing the proceeds of crime, cooperation mechanisms and successfully solved cases. Proposals were made for further work.

Three (3) joint investigations on financial fraud (counterfeit currency, money orders and credit cards) were supported by the SECI Center during 2006 that led to the arrest and prosecution of 23 persons in several South East European countries.
3.6 Terrorism

An expert working group meeting on terrorism was organized by the SECI Center in March 2006, with the support of the Romanian Presidency and the EURISC Foundation.

Experts from the European Union, NATO and United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, as well as from Austria, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America and Romania, alongside with representatives of relevant universities and research centers, put together their efforts aiming to identify the appropriate and feasible measures to be undertaken by the South East European countries.

Recommendations issued by the Working Group included both conceptual developments and practical measures for further cooperation aimed at a more proactive strategy against organized crime and terrorism, based on enhanced intelligence and shared information, knowledge and professional expertise.

The Third Anti-Terrorism Task Force Meeting was held on 7 December in Istanbul, under the coordination of Turkey, with the participation of national representatives of intelligence services, prosecution offices and police authorities from the South East European countries.

The main conclusion of the meeting was that the SECI Center should be further developed as a strong regional Center for fighting organized crime and terrorism, by carrying out strategic assessments on organized crime and terrorist threats, identifying and promoting a common understanding of best practices for fighting organized crime and terrorism, and by enhancing cooperation between national law enforcement agencies, including customs and border police.

These aims should be achieved by creating a network of national contact persons related to terrorism, including police and prosecutor offices, which should meet regularly and exchange information within the framework of SECI Center Anti Terrorism Task Force.
3.7 Container Security

Aiming to progressively enhance Container Security and to highlight the new Customs role in the region, the Task Force on Container Security was set up at the SECI Center in November 2005 under the Hellenic Customs and Excise Duties coordination, with support from the US Department of Homeland Security.

A Regional Assessment Report on Container Security was developed by the SECI Center during 2006. This report showed that countries in Southeast Europe lack coherent and uniform legislation related to container security issues. Also, their infrastructure and technical detection equipment need serious improvement.

Some countries perceive the terrorism threat (posed by the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, etc.) to be closely connected with containers. Nevertheless, the infrequency of this type of violation in practice appears to have resulted in an under-usage of container screening technology against terrorist threats, and its greater use to target drugs, weapons and explosives.

All SECI Member Countries were unanimously voicing their hopes and trust that the activity of the newest Task Force at the SECI Center can help their efforts to improve container security mainly by conducting operations.

Initial training opportunities and technical assistance are also positively viewed by the vast majority of the countries.

The 1st Task Force Meeting on Container Security was held on 29 June 2006 in Athens. It was decided by the national representatives that a regional training on container security would be held in the beginning of 2007, in preparation of further operations.

This Task Force is intended to protect containerized shipments in the regional supply chain against smuggling of weapons of mass destruction, chemical, bacteriological, radiological and nuclear materials, and all other materials which can be used for terrorist activities.
3.8 Analysis

Analysis at the SECI Center aims at supporting the customs and police work in South East Europe by revealing the latest trends of the prioritized criminal areas.

It also supports decision makers within the Task Forces by providing timely and accurate situation reports and assessments on various issues.

Situation reports on human trafficking and migrant smuggling, drug trafficking and cigarette smuggling in South East Europe are developed every six months and released to the Member Countries.

Assessment reports on Container Security, Counterfeit and Pirated Products and Drug Controlled Deliveries in the region were compiled during 2006 as a base for decisions on further operational action.

Overviews on the SECI Center operational activity are provided two times per year.
4. Strategic Cooperation and Development

The year 2006 has marked a continuation of the excellent cooperation relations established in the previous years with the strategic partners – United States of America, Germany, The Netherlands, Interpol, World Customs Organization, and other observer countries, international and national institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Poland, Slovakia and the EU Border Assistance Mission in Moldova and Ukraine were granted the status of observer at the SECI Center, thus raising to 20 the number of observers. The future membership of Georgia and Montenegro will increase the number of Member Countries to fourteen.

In August 2006, the EC presented the Draft Convention of the future legal status of the organization and, in October 2006, the first meeting on the future of the SECI Center was held in Brussels.

The parties represented at the Meeting - EU Presidency Troika, SECI Center, Romania, Europol, EC, the Council of the European Union, United States of America and SPSEE - decided to set up an “EU - SECI Support Group”. It is expected that the established Support Group will work on the political, legal, administrative and financial aspects of the further development of the SECI Center, including the future SECI Center Convention.

One more important event in the development of the SECI Center took place on 29 November 2006 by organizing the First SECI Center High Representatives Conference in Bucharest with the participation of representatives of all the SECI Center Member Countries (Chiefs of Police, and the Heads of Customs) as well as the representatives of the US Government and the Council of the European Union.

In the final document adopted by the Conference, the high Customs and Police representatives renewed and affirmed the commitment of their authorities to further support SECI Center and to continue joint efforts of cooperation.
The international importance of the SECI Center in the law enforcement arena has been recognized by heads of states and other high level officials who paid official visits at the SECI Center last year.

The President and the Chairman of the Parliament of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Ministers of Interior from Bulgaria and Moldova, the Directors of EUROPOL and FBI, the Secretary General of the World Customs Organization and the Vice President of the EC and Commissioner for Freedom, Security and Justice are among the high-level officials who endorsed the SECI Center importance by visiting its premises.

At the same time, the SECI Center Management representatives and Liaison Officers had been invited and participated in a large number of international gatherings. These facts reflected an increasing image of the SECI Center as a valuable partner organization for fighting organized crime in Europe.
5. Corporate Governance

5.1 Budget

The SECI Center Budget for 2006 amounted to 400,000 Euro as contributions from the Member Countries.

Additional to the organization’s Budget, the SECI Center had also benefited in 2006 of a significant financial support from the Government of the United States of America.

5.2 Personnel

The total number of personnel working at the SECI Center during 2006 was 39, out of which 3 managers, 20 Liaison Officers from the customs and police authorities of the Member States, 6 seconded agency representatives from Observer countries and 10 supporting staff (experts and administrative staff).
In 2006, the SECI Center continued to consolidate its public image, with a special focus on the growing capacity of the Center in coordinating efforts to fight transborder crime in the region.

The numerous visits paid to SECI Center by top level officials representing governments and law enforcement institutions during the year 2006 represented a confirmation of the high appreciation received by the Center and its activities.

A significant number of national and international media, non governmental organizations and academic institutions representatives were hosted during the 2006 year by the SECI Center. They were briefed on the relevant activities conducted by the Center over the years by the SECI Center management and Task Force Project Managers.

SECI Center issued 32 press releases in 2006 and received over 300 public information and media requests addressed by journalists, governmental institutions, NGOs, academic representatives or citizens from all over the Member and Observer Countries, as well as from the European Union Member Countries and from the United States of America and Canada.

Broadcasted and printed interviews with representatives of the management or Liaison Officers were published in various media institutions in the host and Member Countries.

The webpage of the SECI Center was upgraded in the second half of 2006 year and a documentary movie on SECI Center history and its activities was produced and disseminated at the end of the year.

Anti Drug and Human Trafficking Task Force Project Managers briefing the Reuters representative (left) at SECI Center on 9 November 2006
6. Contact information

Postal address:
13 Septembrie Cal., no. 1-5
Palace of Parliament, 10th floor
Sector 5
050 711, Bucharest
ROMANIA

Phone numbers:
(40 21) 303 60 82
(40 21) 303 60 09

Fax numbers:
(40 21) 303 60 75
(40 21) 303 60 77

Website:
www.secicenter.org

E-mail:
apoffice@secicenter.org  (Public Affairs Officer/ Spokesperson)
secretariat@secicenter.org