

## 9. Conventional arms control and military confidence building

### Overview

*In 2012 openness and restraint to provide reassurance that military capabilities will not be used for political gain—which is a broad definition of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs)—made a valuable contribution to reducing tensions and preventing the escalation of incidents in several regions of the world. As well as playing their part to prevent specific incidents from escalating into something worse, CSBMs are being developed more broadly in several regions as a positive tool to enhance cooperative relations among states based on partnership, mutual reassurance and transparency. While CSBMs cannot shoulder the burden of promoting cooperative security alone, in several regions they make a useful contribution to promoting and fostering stability and creating the conditions for positive growth and development.*

*In South Asia the ‘hotline’ for direct communications between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan was used to reduce the risk that incidents across the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir would escalate into more serious military engagements. In South East Asia the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) established a process for bilateral consultations with China on a binding code of conduct to regulate maritime incidents that have become a significant source of tension in the South China Sea. In the interim period an ASEAN–China dialogue will continue to discuss the Guidelines to Implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that were agreed in July 2011.*

*As a contribution to the development of a South American security community, the members of the Union of South American Nations (Unión de Naciones Suramericanas, UNASUR) continued to implement measures agreed in 2011 and to elaborate new CSBMs.*

*In Europe the states participating in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) agreed on a ‘Helsinki+40’ process to develop practical measures to implement the 2010 Astana Declaration by 2015. The process will include discussions on the further evolution of the catalogue of CSBMs already undertaken in the framework of the Vienna Document.*

*As regards arms control—binding commitments to self-restraint in the structure, equipment or operations of armed forces—the situation in 2012 was less encouraging.*

*In the area of humanitarian arms control (in which states forgo capabilities that have indiscriminate or inhumane effects, regardless of their military utility) the pace of implementation of existing agreements remains slow and uneven. Interested states continue to address the difficulties in finding broad agreement on new measures to restrict landmines other than anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. However, in 2012 no consensus was reached on a way forward.*

*In Africa arms control processes have taken account of the mosaic of different security challenges posed in various subregions. In particular, arms control measures need to take into account the use of conventional arms to commit crimes, the cross-border dimensions of many incidents involving the use of force and the presence of multiple armed factions, some under state control but others acting independently. In contrast to arms control in other regions, which is carried out on a state-to-state basis by the national authorities tasked with providing military security, in Africa efforts have a regional and subregional character and also engage law enforcement communities.*

*In South Eastern Europe the measures that have successfully reduced the excessive stocks of conventional arms of all kinds over a 20-year period are increasingly under the full ownership and control of local states. The direct engagement of armed forces in the processes of mutual inspection, information exchange and joint implementation effectively eliminates any suspicion that a state will suddenly be surprised by a new and unexpected military development in a neighbour. The value of these measures has been demonstrated to the point where the states in the region continue to support them and participate in them even after integration into institutions, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), that provide them with a security guarantee.*

*There was no significant progress in developing arms control at a European level in 2012. Differing views about the objectives of arms control are unresolved. However, at the end of 2012 Ukraine, the incoming OSCE chair, made progress on conventional arms control one of its main priorities for 2013 and put forward ideas that could be the basis for progress. The Ukrainian proposals open the opportunity for a thorough review of the role of conventional arms control in the OSCE area without being tied to finding solutions to unresolved problems that have stopped the momentum in the existing regime.*

IAN ANTHONY