Check Against Delivery

RegionalCooperationCouncil

11th JUMBO Regional Security Coordination Conference

Opening remarks
by RCC Secretary General Amer Kapetanovic

Tirana, 10 November 2026

Minister Demo,
Deputy Ambassador Simonetti,
Colonel Sarri,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the eleventh JUMBO Regional Security Coordination Conference.

Let me first thank **Minister Demo** and the Ministry of Interior of Albania for welcoming us to Tirana and for their close cooperation in preparing this conference.

I also wish to thank **Italy's** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for its financial support, and the Ministry of the Interior for its longstanding partnership. Italy has helped sustain this conference while remaining closely engaged in the security of our region.

Before turning to our discussions, I wish to remember the **four Italian personnel** serving with EUFOR Althea who lost their lives in the helicopter crash near Brčko in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 29 October: two members of the Italian Army and two of the Italian Red Cross Volunteer Military Corps. On behalf of the RCC, and through our Italian colleagues here with

us, I extend our **deepest condolences** to their families, colleagues and the people of Italy. We honour their service and wish all those injured a swift and full recovery.

Dear colleagues,

Regional cooperation is tested when an institution needs an answer from a neighbour and needs it quickly. When investigators need evidence before it disappears. When an essential service is interrupted and authorities must explain what is happening while they are still establishing the facts.

The question for us over these two days is **how reliably our institutions can work together** when that moment comes.

A criminal network can move money, recruit people and coordinate an operation across several jurisdictions. An investigation has to connect those same jurisdictions through lawful procedures. **Every delay or missing link** can give the network an advantage.

This gives JUMBO a **clear purpose**. It brings institutions from across the region and with different responsibilities into the same discussion, alongside the regional initiatives and European partners that support their work.

Our region already has substantial expertise in MARRI, RAI, SEESAC, WB3C and our own Security Governance Hub, previously known as IISG. Our responsibility is to **help these efforts connect** where their mandates meet and where cooperation can address a specific need.

Corruption belongs at the centre of this agenda. A compromised official can expose an investigation, facilitate trafficking, or allow criminal influence to enter public institutions. Institutional integrity determines whether citizens and international partners can safely rely on those institutions.

Dear colleagues,

Our discussion should also reflect how citizens experience security. Our public perception survey, SecuriMeter 2026, brings the views of **6,003 people** across the Western Balkans (WB) into this room.

There is some encouraging news. **49%** of respondents now consider the Western Balkans a secure region to live in, compared with **38% last year**. That improvement deserves recognition.

Yet, **48%** remain highly concerned about a potential war involving their own economy. These findings capture two different aspects of public opinion: people can feel more secure in their present circumstances while remaining **deeply uncertain about the future**.

That concern is **not a forecast of conflict**. It tells us something about the uncertainty people carry and the confidence they need from their institutions. Credible preparedness, concrete results and responsible political communication all matter.

Our new institutional analysis finds that confidence in one's own government and in EU institutions are **positively correlated**: citizens' **experience of their own institutions** remains central to how they assess the wider European project.

Experts at **last year's conference in Skopje** helped identify the factors that the new Security Model examines; the findings now return to this conference. My colleague **Aner Zuković** will present the preliminary results later this morning, and I encourage all four working groups to consider what they mean for their own areas of responsibility.

Today's discussion on **weapons, drones and criminal networks** asks us to look ahead and to distinguish documented developments from possible future risks.

Tomorrow's working groups will examine specific problems where cooperation is needed.

One will address **migration and border/boundary management**: cooperation against smuggling and trafficking, while ensuring that people who need protection are identified and supported. Another will examine how to obtain **digital evidence** across jurisdictions and make it usable in court. A further group will take up **climate-related risks** to water, food and energy security.

The group on **cyber and hybrid threats** will test decisions during the **first hours of a crisis**. Who takes the lead? What information should be shared? How do authorities maintain essential services and communicate when information is incomplete? These are questions best examined **before a real emergency** forces an answer.

This work also has a wider political value. Each time institutions exchange reliable information or solve a shared problem, they give their neighbours **another reason to trust them**. Sustained professional cooperation can build confidence even when political relations are difficult. In our region, that is a contribution to stability and to the conditions in which **reconciliation** can advance.

For our European partners, JUMBO offers an opportunity to work with the region on priorities that matter to our shared security and to the accession process. Regional institutions and practitioners should **help define those priorities**, and support should respond to the needs they identify.

We have a practical example in counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism. Under the EU-Western Balkans Joint Action Plan 2026–2030, individual Roadmaps translate common objectives into measures and responsibilities. WB partners and the European Commission recently welcomed our **Security Governance Hub's methodology** for monitoring and reporting their implementation. This provides a common basis for identifying achievements, remaining gaps and priorities for assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would therefore request each working group to offer us **up to five clear, non-binding recommendations**. For each proposal, tell us what needs to change, which institution or partner could take it forward, and what a realistic first step would be. At tomorrow's closing session, please **lead with your one or two most important**; the rest can go into the written report.

Kindly also look back at **last year's recommendations**. Where has progress been made? Where are we still blocked, and why?

RCC will bring your findings together in the **post-conference report** and use them in our follow-up with institutions and partners.

By the next JUMBO, we should be able to point to **specific improvements**: a procedure that works better, a contact that leads to a timely response, or a gap in preparedness that has been addressed.

Our citizens should be able to benefit from the cooperation we discuss here.