EU Statement

By

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at the

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Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons

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Check against delivery
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The EU warmly welcomes the entry into force, officially this December, of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty It is the outcome of a comprehensive and inclusive process of which the international community can feel full ownership. We all stand much to gain from it. The ATT will significantly contribute to international peace and security by establishing robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, making it more responsible and transparent and reducing the illicit trade of arms. It represents a major success of effective multilateralism.

We warmly welcome the signatures and ratifications deposited from all regions so far and call on all States who have not yet done so, to become signatories and States Parties to the Treaty. All EU Member States are signatories of the Treaty and so far 23 have ratified it. The remaining ratifications are expected shortly. Thus, EU Member States have

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
contributed significantly to the global effort to reaching the threshold of
the 50 ratifications needed for entry into force.

We express our gratitude to the Government of Mexico for holding the
first round of informal consultations which made good progress on the
necessary elements for a successful preparatory process leading to the
First Conference of States Parties. We believe that the success of this
Conference will be of great importance in maintaining political
momentum and assuring effective implementation of the Treaty. We
look forward to the second round of informal consultations to be held in
Berlin next month. Further to the Treaty's entry into force, its effective
implementation and universalization will be essential for its success and
relevance. Recognizing this, the EU adopted an ambitious and tangible
implementation support programme for third countries with overall
funding of 6.4 million euros.

Next, we wish to underscore the importance of UN Security Council
Resolution (SCR) 2117, the first ever resolution adopted by the Security
Council dedicated exclusively to the issue of Small Arms and Light
Weapons. Both the ATT and SCR 2117 recognise that illicit or poorly
regulated transfers fuel armed conflicts and have a wide range of
negative human rights, humanitarian, development and socio-economic
consequences, in particular on the security of civilians in armed conflict,
including on violence perpetrated against women and girls, and exacerbating sexual and gender-based violence and their devastating consequences on children.

The EU continues to consider the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on small arms and light weapons (SALW) a key universal tool to respond to the challenges posed by the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of SALW at national, regional, and global levels. The EU remains also strongly committed to the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. We welcome the adoption of the Fifth Biannual Meeting (BMS5) outcome document. We are pleased to note that a number of EU priorities are reflected in the document, such as stockpile management, cooperation on tracing, the importance of developing common technical standards and guidelines in these areas, the references to the participation of women and SCR 1325 and to the devastating consequences of illicit trade of SALW on children. We also particularly welcome BMS5's tasking of the 2015 open-ended meeting of governmental experts to consider the implications of recent developments in SALW-related technologies. Furthermore, the EU will continue to call, amongst others, for the inclusion of ammunition as part of a comprehensive approach to SALW control; for the further developing and use of databases and technologies aimed at compiling and facilitating the exchange of information relating to tracing results and illicit trade in general (such as
iArms and iTrace); as well as for a further consideration of the synergies and complementarity with the Arms Trade Treaty which would be supporting its effective implementation. In this sense a number of EU Member States have made national contributions. We are pleased to announce that we are hosting a side event on i-Trace on 23 October.

The European Union is united in pursuing the objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) with all 28 EU Member States as States Parties. Most recently in June 2014, the EU and its Member States reaffirmed their political commitment and support to the Convention. The successful Third Review Conference of the Convention held in Maputo agreed on concrete plans and a realistic set of activities to ensure further progress in the next phase of the implementation of the Convention. States Parties to the Convention reaffirmed their commitment to never, under any circumstances, use anti-personnel mines. In that context, the EU appeals to all States and non-State actors to refrain from their use. In particular, the EU is deeply concerned about allegations of use of anti-personnel mines by States Parties.

We are committed to promoting the universalisation of the Convention, to provide resources to fund mine action including clearance, and
concrete and sustainable assistance to anti-personnel mine survivors, their families and communities. Since 2010-2013 alone, the EU and its Member States have contributed more than 500 Million Euro to projects in the mine action area in its wider sense, in heavily affected countries and areas of the world. These significant contributions are paving the way for reconstruction and economic and social development.

The European Union has consistently supported international efforts addressing the humanitarian, socio-economic and security impact of conventional weapons and halting their indiscriminate use. The respect for relevant International Law is crucial to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

We support the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned about reports of alleged use of cluster munitions against civilian populations in Syria and we call upon all concerned to refrain from such use. We are also deeply concerned about worrying reports concerning South Sudan and Ukraine. We take note of the San Jose Progress Report and we think that the first Review Conference in Croatia next year will give the opportunity to States Parties to further assess progress and address the remaining challenges with regard to implementing their commitments.
With a view of strengthening international humanitarian law, the EU remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols, which provides a unique forum to gather diplomatic, legal and military expertise, and to address emerging issues. We believe that these instruments also constitute an effective means to respond in a flexible way to future developments in the field of weapons technology, and above all, represent an essential part of International Humanitarian Law. For the EU, universalization of the CCW and its Protocols is an issue of high importance. We stress also the importance of compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its annexed Protocols. We welcome the constructive discussions during the informal meeting of experts on the technical, ethical, legal, operational and military aspects of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems held in Geneva earlier this year. Those exchanges helped to lay the ground for a better common understanding of the issue, with a view to possible further discussions. We look forward to the next meeting of the High Contracting Parties in November for further consideration of this issue.

Where possible, we support the development of synergies as applicable. We also wish to highlight the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which provides a wider framework to address comprehensively the needs of survivors, the realisation of their
political, social and economic rights, and to ensure respect for their inherent dignity.