Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Let me now elaborate on some matters of particular importance to my country.

The illicit flows of arms and ammunition fuel conflicts, exacerbate violence, impede humanitarian assistance and undermine respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. The easy availability of weapons and weak arms control systems both prolong conflicts and increase the risk of relapse. The destabilizing effect often extends far beyond the borders of one country or region.

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December will undoubtedly mark a new chapter in international community’s efforts to ensure a more transparent and responsible international arms trade. Yet a lot more remains to be done, as the Treaty’s full potential can only be reached if it is universally applied and robustly implemented. In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of Mexico in convening the First Round of Informal Consultations in preparation for the Conference of the States Parties and look forward to the Second Round to be held in Germany next month. Lithuania will continue to work towards ensuring that national reports on arms transfers were made available to the public, in particular the academia and civil society that often have the best capacity to analyse and utilize them. The bar is already set quite high with the UNODA’s excellent website on the Global Reported Arms Trade and an indispensable SIPRI’s Arms Transfers Database. We also welcome the initiatives to establish a civil society-led mechanisms, which proved instrumental in monitoring compliance with Anti-Personnal Landmine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We welcome the consensus outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which highlighted the importance of improving stockpile management, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. In the future we should step up our efforts to be more specific on how we are going to implement the provisions of the PoA, including through assessing impact of existing initiatives through measurable benchmarks and indicators. It is also important to acknowledge that while PoA remains the only global framework dealing with the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects, it does not operate in a
vacuum. Opportunities to foster its synergies with other instruments should not be missed. The ATT, the Firearms protocol and the UN Register for Conventional Arms are all key components in combating the illicit arms trade and should be used comprehensively. National reporting is one area that could benefit from such harmonization.

More than a year ago the Security Council adopted its resolution 2117 – first ever to be dedicated exclusively to small arms and light weapons. It contains important provisions recognising the impact of small arms on the protection of civilians and emphasizing the need to better monitor and strengthen the implementation of arms embargoes. It might now be time to look at what more needs to be done by the Council in this field, as well as how the provisions of the resolution could be operationalized.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE area from Vancouver to Vladivostok has once been a proud example of vigorous regional mechanism for conventional arms control and confidence and security building measures. With the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and continued military stand-off in the east of Ukraine this architecture is under increasing pressure. Russian Federation’s suspension of the CFE Treaty since 2007 and, lately, selective implementation of the OSCE Vienna Document provisions on confidence and security-building measures is counter-productive. We are concerned that overall level of trust and confidence in Europe is diminishing. For example, in April this year Russian Federation unilaterally terminated a bilateral agreement with Lithuania on additional confidence and security building measures. The agreement was concluded in 2001 and envisaged information exchange and one additional evaluation visit per year to Lithuania and Kaliningrad Region respectively. Russian Federation’s decision to abandon this bilateral agreement decreases the level of military transparency on conventional forces.

In the context of international community’s efforts to strive for more responsible and transparent arms transfers, reports on the flows of weapons and military equipment from the Russian Federation to illegal armed groups across the Ukrainian border are deeply concerning. We call on the Russian Federation to stop the flows of weaponry and equipment to the sovereign territory of Ukraine, secure its borders and urgently end all support to the illegal armed groups in the east of Ukraine.

Thank you.