STATEMENT

On behalf of the European Union

by

H.E. Mr Magnus Hellgren
Ambassador

before the vote on L.38/Rev.1 "The arms trade treaty"

General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
New York

October 2009

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Mr. Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union in relation to draft resolution L.38/Rev.1 “The arms trade treaty”.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union attaches great importance to an Arms Trade Treaty and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Each day, everywhere in the world, people are affected by irresponsible transfers of arms. Unregulated transfers of conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market have a negative impact on peace, security, respect for human rights and sustainable development. Even though the negative impact from irresponsible transfers is most severe in developing countries, the problem is global. The European Union has consistently stressed that there must be a global solution to this global problem and we welcome that the report of the first two sessions of the OEWG also recognizes this fact.

It is the firm conviction of the European Union that only a comprehensive Arms Trade Treaty, in the form of a legally binding instrument, can prevent the unregulated transfer of conventional arms, by ensuring the use by all states of the highest possible common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

The commitment of the European Union to the elaboration of an Arms Trade Treaty, has been demonstrated inter alia by our active participation in the OEWG and by our support to the work of promoting the discussion on the subject worldwide, including through regional seminars.

Mr. Chairman,

After fruitful and exhaustive discussions in the General Assembly, in the GGE and most recently in the OEWG, there is now consensus that international action is necessary. Against this background, the European Union believes it is high time that real negotiations start on the elements of a treaty.

The draft resolution we have before us paves the way for the launch of the negotiating process, setting a clear timeline for the work ahead. The European Union strongly supports the convening of a UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012. It is crucial that the preparatory process leading up to this important Conference is inclusive and that it is able to make concrete recommendations on the elements of a future Treaty.

Our objective remains agreement at the United Nations Conference in 2012 on a strong and robust legally binding Treaty that will create real, credible and effective commitments for States to respect and implement agreed standards. We are confident that this is a goal shared by all United Nations member States.

Thank you.