European Union
Statement by

Mr Andras Kos, Minister Counsellor,
Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention
on Certain Conventional Weapons

(Geneva, 13-14 November)

Geneva, 13 November 2014
Mr President,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this statement:\footnote{The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.} the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

Mr President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of our Meeting and by pledging our full cooperation and support in your endeavours. It gives us great pleasure to see the representative of an EU Member State presiding over our proceedings.

We have always supported international efforts to address the considerable security, humanitarian and socio-economic impact of conventional weapons and to halt their indiscriminate use. Promoting effective international multilateralism is a key priority for us. With a view to supporting the implementation of International Humanitarian Law, we remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Protocols thereto which provides a unique forum to gather diplomatic, legal and military expertise, as well as to address existing and emerging issues. We believe that these instruments also constitute effective means to respond in a flexible way to future developments in the field of weapons technology, and above all, to support the implementation of an essential part of International Humanitarian Law which contributes to both preventing and reducing the suffering of civilians and combatants.

For us, universalization of the CCW and its Protocols is an issue of high importance and we support the Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization with the goal of achieving global adherence. We welcome the accession of Iraq to the Convention and its annexed Protocols. A lot has been done but further work is still needed. We urge all States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention and the Protocols in the near future, with a view to achieving the widest possible adherence at an early date and ultimately achieve the goal of universalisation. We welcome the continued efforts by the Secretary General and by past and present Presidents to that end.

We stress once again the importance of compliance with the provisions of the Convention and the annexed Protocols and, in particular, the transparency mechanism established with the annual compliance reports. We encourage States parties which have not yet done so to submit compliance reports as soon as possible.

We welcome the informal discussions held from 13 to 16 May 2014, which allowed us to have four days of substantive discussion on the issue of emerging technologies in the area of
Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems (LAWs). We thank France for leading this productive meeting. It has provided an important opportunity to exchange preliminary views and explore fundamental technical, legal, ethical and societal, operational and military aspects in this area and helped to lay the ground for a better common understanding of the issue. Important questions, though, still remain. We are looking forward to the discussion of this important issue this afternoon and we support the renewal of the mandate of another informal Meeting of Experts in 2015 in the framework of the CCW, in order to continue the debate and further enhance our common understandings.

With regard to Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) and the protection of civilians, we would like to reiterate our concern on the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences on social and economic development caused by the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of these weapons. At the same time, it is important to seek a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations acknowledging that MOTAPM can be used as legitimate weapons provided appropriate safeguards are present to ensure the protection of civilians in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. We therefore believe that further discussions on MOTAPM in the framework of the CCW could be valuable. We are looking forward to the presentation of the conclusions of the recently completed study on this issue undertaken by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

We had constructive discussions on Protocol V and Amended Protocol II earlier this week. We are concerned at the world wide Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) threat and the growing political and humanitarian impact of IED use particularly on civilian populations. We highly value the discussion and the substantive exchange of views on IED during the meeting of Experts held in April. This discussion contributed to increasing awareness of the IED threat.

We consider the contribution of civil society and NGOs as a valuable part of the work of the CCW and also an important support for the effective implementation and improvement of International Humanitarian Law. Their participation brings additional expertise and knowledge from the field and has a positive impact on our work. Therefore, we support the continued participation of civil society and NGOs in the CCW in accordance with its rules of procedure.

We are looking forward to a constructive and productive annual meeting to discuss further relevant topics on the use of conventional weapons and seek to develop effective options to advance our common objectives.

Thank you Mr President