Draft EU statement at the Fourth Biennial
Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action to prevent,
combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons all its aspects

(International cooperation and assistance)

Mr Chairman

1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

2. Mr Chairman, I would like to thank the facilitator of today's debate, Ms Sarah de Zoeten of Australia for all the work she has done in preparing a paper to guide our deliberations. The European Union is arguably in a position to contribute substantially to the subject which concerns us today. The European Union has always been aware of its responsibilities and commitments under Chapter III of the United Nations Programme of Action. That is why assistance and cooperation hold a key role in the objectives and means contained in the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition, adopted in December 2005. Since the 2008 Biennial Meeting of States, the EU Member States have continued to provide bilateral funding for a large number of projects, contributing to the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action. Some EU Member States will be speaking during this session to provide information on this. The EU has also continued to be substantially involved, both through its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its development and cooperation policies.

3. Mr Chairman, the European Union is promoting the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action in all its political dialogues with third countries. The EU has also mainstreamed the different aspects of SALW threats and responses into bilateral -national,

* Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
regional and continental development policies and programmes. It implies that the political dialogue with third countries addresses both the issue of respect for international commitments as well as possible operational activities related to identified needs. In this context, the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace and Security deserves a specific mention because of its ambitious objectives, notably through a specific priority area dedicated to SALW, the implementation of which is ongoing in the framework of a dedicated Action Plan.

4. The EU’s full commitment to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action, is also testified by the preparatory work for the adoption of an ambitious project, to be implemented by UN ODA over two years, and foreseeing several measures in support of the full implementation of the UN PoA. These include the promotion of the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALW both at global and regional levels through the organization of eight regional seminars between 2010 and 2012. This new project, to be finalised in the next months, will also support the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), by providing training-of-trainers courses on the ITI for countries in West Africa, and by setting up marking facilities and expertise in countries of the region lacking such equipment. Finally, it will finance the completion of UN technical guidelines for ammunition stockpile management, and their implementation in particular in the Great Lake region and in Latin America.

5. The EU is similarly at the forefront line in promoting regional cooperation in the field of SALW, which is a key aspect to achieving sustainable results and support states in respecting their obligations deriving from the UN Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. In addition to a long-standing support to strengthen capacities of several Regional Economic Communities in Africa in the field of SALW, the EU launched in March 2010 an ambitious project to support the fight against the illicit accumulation and trafficking of firearms in Africa, via the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA). This project inter alia aims at raising the awareness and knowledge of relevant institutional and civil society actors on legislative and institutional aspects and at strengthening the African Regional Police Chiefs Organisations (RPCOs) and the capacity of law enforcement agencies to fight cross-border trafficking. The Steering Committee for this project has formally decided to consider the recommendations made by the BMS3 within the planning, setting up and implementation of the project. Also at regional level, the EU has just launched a new project, to be implemented by SEESAC-UNDP, and providing support to countries in the Western
Balkans to fully implement their obligations deriving from the UN Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including through the support to national demilitarization efforts in the region, improvement of weapons registration process, and of the management and security of unsafe and unstable stockpiles of weapons and ammunition.

6. These are only few examples of the assistance that the EU is providing and can provide in the field of SALW. In this regard, I would like to invite you, Mr Chairman, and all the representatives of UN Member States, to attend a side-event on 15 June at lunch time, organized by the EU in cooperation with UN ODA. On that occasion, further information will be provided on the type of assistance provided by the EU in several regions of the world, and assistance opportunities in the field of SALW that the EU offers through its several financial instruments.

7. The European Union is convinced that only an integrated approach, at national and regional level, can make a real impact in the prevention and eradication of illicit trade of SALW. In this context, we welcome and support national and regional efforts to establish relevant coordinating bodies and strategies. I would like to mention in this regard the political and financial support the EU has provided to the development of an African Union SALW Strategy, which will hopefully be adopted at the beginning of 2011. We encourage states to enhance their inter-agency cooperation, at all levels, in tackling the illicit trade and trafficking of SALW, as such an approach can yield effective and sustainable results. International cooperation in the harmonization of tools and in the exchange of relevant information that could help track illicitly traded SALW is also an area that deserves further collective efforts, if we want to achieve real progress in the eradication of SALW trafficking.

8. The EU considers that it is essential to improve the capacity of recipient countries and the coordination of donor countries to identify specific assistance needs and offers. This is why we welcome the establishment of the Implementation Support System for the Programme of Action and we continue to support the use of national reports as a tool to identify assistance and cooperation opportunities among states. We look forward to the finalization by UN ODA of project outlines to identify assistance needs and to an enhanced coordinating role of the ISS in this regard.

9. Mr Chairman, the European Union looks forward work ahead of us in the remainder of this week and will spare no effort to ensure that this meeting will agree on substantial and result-
oriented recommendations reinforcing the process that we launched in 2001 with the adoption of the Programme of Action.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.