EU Statement

By

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on the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat
and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects
(International Instrument to Identify and Trace SALW)

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As delivered
Mr Chairman

1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland† and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

2. The European Union welcomes today's opportunity to assess the state of play in the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI).

3. Mr Chairman, I would first of all like to thank the moderator of today's debate, Mr Anthony Simpson of New Zealand, as well as his predecessor, Mr Wolfgang Bindseil of Germany, for their efforts in preparing our deliberations on the International Tracing Instrument.

4. The EU is a convinced supporter of the ITI. We consider it as one of the most important practical achievements of the UN Programme of Action. In adopting the instrument, UN Member States have committed themselves to taking a number of steps to ensure that SALW are suitably marked and recorded and to stepping up cooperation in tracing illicit SALW. Its provisions are precise and detailed, and call for a substantial technical investment.

5. The EU considers that BMS5 should look at ways to enhance the compilation of information and exchange between authorities at the national, regional and international level related to tracing results as well as other information relevant to the illicit transfer, diversion, destabilising accumulation or misuse of small arms and light weapons, including by further developing and making full use of databases and online technologies in order to increase the effectiveness of arms control measures and prevent diversion of SALW.

6. The EU supports the further developing and use of databases and technologies aimed at compiling and facilitating the exchange of information

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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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.
relating to tracing results and illicit trade in general. I would like in particular to draw your attention to the EU-funded INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System ("iARMS"), which provides a common global platform for firearm-related information exchange and cooperation in the field of criminal investigation. The EU welcomes that iARMS is being used by law enforcement agencies in more and more states, and that it has already recorded its first operational success.

7. Mr Chairman, in the European Union's view, special attention should be paid to the issue of tracing of SALW in conflict and post-conflict contexts. We are all aware that effective tracing in conflict zones can contribute to contain the flows of illicit arms into other conflict zones and has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement and arms control such as export control and stockpile management, also contributing to reinforce security at regional level. "Conflict tracing" also serves broader conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building objectives. For these reasons, the EU welcomes the adoption by the UN Security Council of resolution 2117 (2013), which refers to the possibility of mandating peacekeeping operations with arms and ammunition tracing tasks, notably with a view to a more effective monitoring of arms embargoes. We would call on States to discuss this matter, notably on the first experiences gained in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

8. If you allow, Mr Chairman, I would like to mention a new initiative, called iTrace, which receives financial support from the EU and which is highly relevant for "conflict tracing". iTrace will be a global reporting mechanism on illicit SALW and other conventional weapons and ammunition flows, focused especially on conflict and post-conflict zones. The objective of iTrace is to provide policy makers, arms control experts and PSSM planners with systematically compiled, relevant information on diversion track records and illicit flows of weapons and ammunition. Our hope is that iTrace will increase the capacity to assess the risk of diversion and, by doing so, increase the effectiveness of export control and other arms control measures, all with the objective to prevent diversion of SALW. We hope that it will be a useful tool for states, regional and international organisations in their efforts to implement their PoA and ITI commitments. [For more information on this project, I would kindly like to invite you to the launch event of iTrace, which will take place in this room on Tuesday 17 June at 1:15 pm].
9. Mr Chairman, in the EU's view, another key issue when it comes to the implementation of the ITI concerns the implications of technological developments in small arms manufacturing and technology for marking, record keeping and tracing. The EU welcomes the recently released initial report of the UN Secretary General on the subject, which provides an excellent basis for discussion and for further research on this issue. We would encourage States to request further technical work on the matter, notably in the context of the 2015 Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts.

10. Finally, I would like to reiterate the EU's continuous commitment to provide assistance to support states in fulfilling their obligations deriving from the ITI. In the context of a project implemented by UNODA, the EU has for example supported, in West Africa, the organization of regional training-of-trainers courses on essential aspects of the International Tracing Instrument, the provision of marking facilities and expertise in countries of the region lacking such equipment, including through acquisition of marking machines, and the establishment of record-keeping facilities, and training of law enforcement officials in marking and tracing. In the Western Balkans, the EU has recently decided to continue its assistance to a regional project conducted by SEESAC/UNDP, which aims notably at improving capacities for SALW marking, tracing and record-keeping.

11. Mr Chairman, the EU intends to remain at the forefront of the promotion of the implementation of the ITI, and hopes that we will have productive exchanges on the matter.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.