Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects.

EU statement on the consideration on international cooperation and assistance for the full and effective implementation of the UN PoA and ITI.

United Nations, 8 June 2016

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes today’s opportunity to consider international cooperation and assistance for the full and effective implementation of the UN PoA and ITI. International cooperation and assistance remain key for the full and effective implementation of the PoA and ITI and their consideration is an essential topic on the agenda of any UN PoA meeting.

This statement will address EU cooperation and assistance activities that aim at strengthening the implementation of the UN PoA and ITI, and will present the EU’s view on how to ensure the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of cooperation and assistance.

To demonstrate the EU’s engagement, allow me to give an indication of the volume of assistance for UN PoA implementation that the European Union and its Member States have provided in the five years between 2010 and 2014. According to the Official Development Aid database of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) the EU-member states and EU-institutions have spent respectively €61,2 and €28,6 million EURO, totalling €89,8 million EURO or 120,5 million USD on reintegration and SALW-control projects across the world.

I will shortly describe the characteristics of 15 different SALW-control projects that received EU-support in 2015. The involved EU-institutions deal with the Common European Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), development cooperation (DEVCO), humanitarian aid (ECHO), law enforcement cooperation (DG Home), neighbourhood policy and peace & stability.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
The majority of projects - 9 out of 15 - can be considered as classic SALW-control projects that focus on collection and destruction of surplus SALW, physical security and stockpile management, capacity building for marking, record keeping and tracing, including the provision of equipment. The projects' activities are led by an integrated approach where physical measures (like fences and locks for stockpiles) are combined with legislation, management systems based on international standards such as the ISACS and IATG, information exchange between competent authorities, regional cooperation and involvement of civil society.

Most of these projects have a regional scope and are implemented by regional organizations. In Africa the EU works together with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA). Implementation is supported by UNDP, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Mine Action Group (MAG). In Europe the EU works via the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearing House for the Control on SALW (SEESAC) that is linked to the UNDP's regional centre in Istanbul. In Latin America the EU works with the Central American Program for the Control of SALW (CASAC) and the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

Two projects are related to capacity building for arms export control. Export control is crucial in preventing that SALW fall in the wrong hands and contribute to crime, violent conflicts and terrorism. The UN PoA is explicit in this regard. The projects support states, at their request, to strengthen their arms transfer control systems with a view to implement the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The projects' activities take place across the globe and include assistance for drafting of legislation, training and sharing of best practices among export control professionals. Implementer is the Federal Authority for Export Control of Germany (BAFA) thereby assisted by export control officers from other EU Member States. Besides using the ATT as export control standard, recipient countries in the EU neighbourhood can also request assistance to get acquainted with the EU’s export control system of Common Position 2008/944.

Then there are two projects that specifically aim at tracing illicit SALW: iArms and iTrace. Since 2011 the EU supports INTERPOL’s Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System. iArms is an electronic platform that facilitates information exchange and investigative cooperation between law enforcement agencies. iArms objective is to support criminal investigation of firearms trafficking. More information can be found in the working paper INTERPOL has submitted for this meeting. To complement efforts with regard to support for crime gun tracing, the EU is also supporting the conflict tracing. Since 2013 the EU supports iTrace which is a global reporting mechanism on illicit SALW and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition implemented by Conflict Armament Research. The system aims to track and trace illicit SALW and ammunition by means of in-field research in conflict-affected regions, where local law enforcement agencies often lack the capacity to trace. CAR works closely together with and provides technical assistance to governments, UN sanction monitoring groups and Peace Support Operations. It has MoU’s with MINUSMA (Mali) and MONUSCO (Congo DRC). The patterns of trafficking and diversion that are exposed by iTrace serve to
increase the effectiveness of arms control measures such as export control and stockpile management.

In 2015 the EU also supported the implementation of the UN Firearms protocol in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The projects activities were focused on support for drafting legislation and capacity building for law enforcement including training for investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking. In the context of this project UNODC published its Firearms Study that describes trafficking and diversion cases across the globe.

In 2013 the EU issued an internal Action Plan against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives that included a chapter on cooperation with 3d countries. After the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 the European Commission issued communication on this action plan stressing inter alia the need to map global firearms trafficking routes, to address online arms trafficking, to create standards on the deactivation of firearms, ensure interoperability between European and global databases and a call for stronger cooperation with third countries. This enhanced cooperation with third countries can happen in the line of the joint EU-Balkans Firearms Trafficking Action Plan for the South East Europe Region.

Mr. Chair,

On the EU’s view on how to ensure the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of cooperation and assistance the EU would like to see the following elements in the outcome-document of BMS6:

- The need for efforts towards improved donor coordination, in cooperation with relevant regional organisations and implementing agencies steered recipient states’ national action plans.
- Support for the UNSCAR UN Trust Fund.

The need to increase transparency on cooperation and assistance by means of reporting.