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del Consiglio dell'Unione Europea*

ITALIAN PRESIDENCY  
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**FIFTY-EIGHT SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**FIRST COMMITTEE**

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**Cluster n. 4**

**"Conventional Weapons"**

**General statement**

**By**

**H.E. Ambassador Carlo Trezza  
on behalf of the European Union**

**NEW YORK  
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*Check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on the resolution L.1 entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". The Acceding Countries (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia) align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU and its Member States can legitimately claim to be at the forefront in the fight against the illicit trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. All EU Member States and all Acceding Countries have co-sponsored this resolution. The EU remains committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in all its aspects and believes that the results of the July 2003 Biennial Meeting of States were very positive.

Through its political support and its financial contribution to SALW initiatives the EU has proven the consistency of its engagement. We believe that the momentum of this important multilateral initiative should be maintained and enhanced.

In this light the EU welcomes draft resolution L.1 "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" and wants to assure of the EU's full support. As it was stated in the general debate the EU attaches great importance to the biennial meeting of 2005 which will represent a crucial step towards the preparation of the 2006 Review Conference and intends to propose an EU Member State to chair the 2005 Meeting.

The problem of Small Arms and Light Weapons presents many different aspects, therefore the issue has to be addressed accordingly and at different levels, globally, regionally and nationally.

We wish to draw the special attention of the First Committee on the fact that further substantive work is required on export controls which is an essential tool to curtail the illicit trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. At the 2001 UN Conference on SALW it was agreed that one measure to combat the illicit trade of SALW is to use authenticated end-user certificates. Such certificates help to prevent the illegal diversion and re-export of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The EU has promoted the inclusion of a paragraph on this issue in this year's resolution on the basis of language that was taken directly from the Programme of Action. From the many consultations we conducted with countries from all geographical groups we know that there is a large support for taking this issue forward. The EU plans to come back to this issue over the coming year, in close consultations with delegations.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Governmental Group of Experts, the resolution L.1 postpones the question of the nature of the instrument on tracing and marking which will be negotiated in 2004. The EU believes it would be helpful to clarify this ambiguity. The EU is convinced that a multilateral, legally binding instrument in this field would yield considerable progress, first and foremost in enhancing the means and quality of establishing evidence against illegal traders and those engaged in terrorist activities.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.