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Finland's EU Presidency

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First Committee

Explanation of Vote by
Ambassador Kari Kahiluoto, Finland,
on behalf of the European Union

On the draft resolution on
"Illicit Trade In Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects "

New York, 26 October 2006

Madam Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution L.15 entitled "Illicit Trade In Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects". The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

Madam Chair,

The European Union attaches great importance to the United Nations Programme of Action and supports all efforts aimed towards its full implementation. The EU is the largest donor of international assistance in actions contributing to the objectives of the UN PoA. The EU has adopted at the level of the Heads of Governments, in December 2005, an integrated strategy to fight the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Our broad-based approach to all issues covered by the PoA, including the Marking and Tracing Instrument are well known. Whilst the European Union appreciates the work that the three co-Authors, South Africa, Japan and Colombia have been doing, and their desire to secure a consensus text, it has been disappointing, yet again, that two modest yet highly relevant amendments proposed by the EU have not been included.

The EU proposal for two new preambular paragraphs covered two key issues. Firstly, to note the continued exchange of views on national and regional practices and lessons learned relating to national control on transfers of small arms and light weapons. Secondly, where appropriate, to encourage the continued integration of efforts aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons into relevant national and local plans and strategies.

Whilst we were disappointed with the outcome of the Review Conference this July, negotiations revealed that there was a broad range of support for transfer controls which would have been part of consensus language if a final report had been agreed. The EU

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

noted the considerable flexibility and spirit of compromise that many delegations showed. We noted also wide recognition of the importance and relevance of these issues to effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Madam Chair,

The EU supports the aims and principles of this Resolution and for that reason the EU will vote in favour, but we are unable to co-sponsor a text that does not contain two key features that have such importance and relevance, not only to the EU but to a wide range of delegations from all regions and perspectives.

Madam Chair,

We would like to make the following remarks relating to the operative paragraph 4. The EU regards the regular global exchange of views on implementation of the Programme of Action as essential to maintaining its momentum. It provides a much needed opportunity for all Member States to take stock of progress and to examine, at the global level, the actions we have taken nationally and at the regional level. Our view remains firm that such meetings, on a regular basis, are a part of the PoA. The operative paragraph 4 of the resolution under consideration provides a mechanism to set a date that we can all plan for.

Thank you, Madam Chair.