Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Ioannis Vrailas
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a landmark instrument which provides for robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, making it more responsible and transparent and reducing the illicit trade of arms. Importantly, the ATT introduces the concept of serious acts of Gender Based Violence as a factor to take into account when making export assessments.

The EU warmly welcomes the successful outcome of the First Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Cancun in August this year. The Conference took important substantive and operational decisions including workable rules of procedure, sound financial and management rules, clarity on the seat of the Secretariat and the appointment of its interim Head. These decisions provide solid foundations for a functioning ATT regime. It is our collective responsibility to preserve this momentum for the considerable work ahead towards increasing transparency, effective implementation and universalization.

The EU and its Member States are committed to actively contributing to this end. The EU implements a dedicated EU programme that is so far activated in 9 partner countries and which can assist a number of third countries in strengthening their arms control systems in line with the requirements of the Treaty.

We want to congratulate Switzerland on the selection of Geneva for the seat of the ATT Secretariat and we would like to congratulate M. Dladla for his appointment as the first interim Head of the Secretariat.

We are looking forward to the extraordinary meeting of States Parties, to be held in Geneva in early 2016 to decide on budgetary issues and consider for adoption the draft proposal on the administrative arrangements concerning the newly established ATT Secretariat. We are also looking forward to the next Conference of States Parties in Geneva in 2016, under the Nigerian presidency, to concentrate on the substantive work.

We welcome UN Security Council Resolution 2220 (2015), on Small Arms and Light Weapons calling for increased cooperation stemming from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of SALW and emphasizes their impact on civilians in conflict, in particular on groups in potentially vulnerable situations such as women and children.

The EU continues to consider the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) an important tool to respond to the challenges posed by the illicit trade and

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
excessive accumulation of SALW at national, regional, and global levels. The EU and its Member States remain also strongly committed to the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. We believe that the Chair's summary at the second open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2) represents a solid basis for further consideration and a helpful tool in the preparations to Sixth Biennial Meeting of States in 2016.

We share the view that the ITI could be strengthened by taking into account new developments in technology in the marking, record-keeping and tracing of the SALW. We confirm our continuous support to international cooperation in the field of SALW, by providing substantive financial assistance for the implementation of concrete projects in the most affected regions. For instance we are supporting the further development and best use of existing tools for the tracing of illicit SALW, in particular the iArms and iTrace instruments. The EU will continue to call, amongst others, for the inclusion of ammunition as part of a comprehensive approach to SALW control, and support the synergies and complementarity between the PoA and the ATT, which would be supporting its effective implementation.

The European Union and its Member States are united in pursuing the objectives of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention with all 28 EU Member States as States Parties. Significant progress has been achieved, but we are also mindful of the remaining challenges to complete the task of ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. The successful Third Review Conference held in Maputo last year agreed on concrete political measures and a realistic set of activities to ensure further progress in the next phase of the implementation of the Convention. During the new review cycle States parties will have to translate the commitments undertaken in the Maputo Action Plan into tangible results. The EU is deeply concerned about allegations of use of anti-personnel mines by States Parties and appeals to all States and non-State actors to refrain from their use.

We are committed to providing resources to fund mine action including clearance, and concrete and sustainable assistance to anti-personnel mine survivors, their families and communities, paving the way for reconstruction and economic and social development. We will also continue promoting the universalisation of the Convention. The European Union is considering funding new projects in support of the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan.

The European Union has consistently supported international efforts addressing the humanitarian, socio-economic and security impact of conventional weapons and halting their indiscriminate use. The respect for relevant International Law is crucial to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

In this context, the European Union and its Member States support the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We are deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions against and affecting civilian populations in different parts of the world. We call upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully observe the principles of International Humanitarian Law. The EU is grateful to Croatia for successfully hosting the First Review Conference of the CCM in Dubrovnik, where States Parties took political decisions regarding the practical implementation of their commitments under the Convention which will guide them during the next five-year period.
With a view to strengthening international humanitarian law, the EU and its Member States remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols, which provides a unique forum to gather diplomatic, legal and military expertise, and to address emerging issues. We believe that these instruments also constitute an effective means to respond in a flexible way to future developments in the field of weapons technology, and above all, represent an essential part of International Humanitarian Law. For the EU, universalization and compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its annexed Protocols of the CCW are issues of high importance.

Where possible, we support the development of synergies as applicable. We also wish to highlight the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We welcome the constructive ongoing discussions in the CCW on the technical, ethical, legal, operational and military aspects of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Those exchanges help to lay the ground for a better common understanding of the issue.

We are concerned at the world-wide indiscriminate use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and their effects particularly at national and regional level, including on civilian populations. We highly value the discussion and the substantive exchange of views on this topic in the CCW.