Statement on behalf of the European Union

by

Carolin Thielking
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

at the

Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

on

Agenda Item 7.a.ii.: Implementation, international cooperation and assistance

New York

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

2. The possibilities for international cooperation and assistance of the Programme of Action (PoA) represent a key value of the PoA. They also play a central role in the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition, which was adopted in December 2005. The EU is promoting the implementation of the PoA in third countries in particular through its Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as its development and cooperation policies. Allow me, Madam Chair, to briefly mention some of our currently ongoing projects as examples of the EU’s continued support to the implementation of the PoA and of those areas where we believe enhanced international cooperation and assistance are urgently required.

3. In July 2011, the EU adopted a new Council Decision in support of activities of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs to implement the PoA. The project formally started in December 2011 and aims specifically at promoting the regional implementation of the PoA, the International Marking and Tracing Instrument (ITI), and the UN technical guidelines for ammunition stockpile management. The project includes, inter alia, regional training-of-trainers courses on the ITI for countries in West Africa, and the setting-up of marking facilities and expertise in countries of the region lacking such equipment. Moreover, the project supports the implementation of UN technical guidelines for ammunition stockpile management, in particular in the Great Lakes region and Latin America. Finally, regional seminars are organized to advance the implementation of the UN PoA at regional level. The first of these seminars took place at the beginning of this month in Bali. Before the start of the Review Conference in the summer, seminars in Kingston, Kenya and Kairo will take place.

4. With the help of another Council Decision and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the EU is providing assistance to counter illicit trafficking of SALW via air. This initiative aims at improving tools and techniques for international, regional and national actors to effectively screen and target suspect aircrafts likely to be involved in the illicit trade of SALW. A software and databases have been completed and by monitoring incidents, patterns, companies and flights, a threat picture has been developed of companies and aircrafts involved in destabilizing SALW and military equipment transfers via air. The
first expert seminar was held in Kiev at the beginning of this month. A large number of current and former members of UN Groups and Panels of Experts participated in the seminar and focused on recent investigations and field research as well as on long-term solutions. The event showed that increased information-sharing with other agencies is crucial to solve cases of illicit trafficking and that better coordination with peacekeeping and peace-support missions on monitoring air transport actors and flows of SALW and ammunition is necessary.

5. In the framework of its Instrument for Stability, the EU is also providing financial assistance to INTERPOL for the development of a database to collect data on lost and stolen firearms. No single repository of information for lost and stolen firearms exists today in spite of the fact that such a system would be of great value to report and query lost, stolen, smuggled and trafficked firearms. The database is to set up a tool for tracing and tracking illegal arms and its flows via the Interpol I24/7 system.

6. These are only a few examples of the assistance that the EU can provide in the field of SALW and the priority areas for cooperation that the EU has identified.

7. Both the United Nations system, in particular the Office of Disarmament Affairs with the help of the PoA Implementation Support System, and regional organizations should continue playing a central role in helping to coordinate the implementation of the PoA and in matching needs and resources. Mechanisms such as the Group of Interested States and, for instance, the OECD Development Database on Aid from DAC Members are valuable tools to effectively support the implementation of the PoA and we should use them even more effectively in the future. An important element in this overall context is effective national needs assessments to set appropriate priorities. We also need to improve our assessment tools in this respect to improve the possibilities for international cooperation and assistance and to yield effective and sustainable results.

Thank you, Madam Chair.