EU Statement

By

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Preparatory Committee

for the UN Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

United Nations

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- As delivered -
Mr. President,

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, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Third Review Conference of the Programme of Action. The EU commends you for the inclusive and transparent preparatory process carried out over the course of the past year. The EU welcomes the preparatory documents which you have submitted. We consider that the updated outline of elements provides a good basis for our discussions at the Third Review Conference in June 2018.

Illicit SALW and their ammunition continue to contribute to instability and armed violence, thwarting sustainable development and crisis management efforts, further destabilising entire regions, the states therein and their societies, fuelling organised crime and amplifying the impact of terrorist attacks. The EU considers the UN Programme of Action as the universal framework to counter the threat posed by illicit SALW and supports its full and effective implementation at national, regional, and global levels.

The EU will and has been contributing actively and constructively to your efforts to achieve a meaningful and concrete consensus outcome at the Review Conference. In this regard allow me to recall the EU’s decision to support a series of thematic symposia and regional conferences in the run up to the Review Conference. We want to thank the implementers, UNODA and Small Arms Survey, and contributors to these events for their efforts and we also want to thank you for your participation in these events.

The EU is currently preparing a common position for the Review Conference. Pending a formal decision by the EU Council, allow me to provisionally share the following 10 objectives that the EU considers to pursue for the outcome of the Review Conference:

1. Recognition that the implementation of the PoA is supported by synergies with international instruments with similar objectives such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Firearms Protocol, inter alia on reporting obligations.

2. The addition of the prevention, combatting and eradication of the illicit trade in ammunition to the scope of the PoA.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
3. Acknowledgement that, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, development cannot be realised without peace and security and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development and that curbing the illicit trade in SALW and ammunition is crucial in this regard.

4. Recognition of the differing impacts of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys, and promote the role of women in implementation of the PoA and gender awareness in SALW control actions as a condition for their effectiveness.

5. Take action to preserve and increase the effectiveness of the PoA and its ITI in light of developments in SALW technology, design, manufacture and trade, including by supplementing the International Tracing Instrument with guidance that would effectively address these developments. In relation to this, the EU is especially concerned that the growing trend of modular weapons and the absence of a global standard on how and where to mark these weapons, risk gradually undermining the capacity to trace these weapons. So, in order to enable and preserve the capacity of law enforcement agencies worldwide to trace seized modular firearms, it is necessary to adapt or complement the ITI. The EU considers that it is the responsibility of the Review Conference to take up this issue.

6. Promotion of the systematic tracing of seized illicit SALW, the exchange of information between competent agencies on a national, regional and global level, in accordance with national legislation, and the use of this information to identify and stop diversion.

7. Underlining the role of responsible arms export control practices in preventing and combatting the illicit SALW trade, including by means of assessing the risk of diversion prior to granting export licences.

8. Supporting SALW control activities in conflict affected areas through an increased role for UN and regional peace support operations, considering on a case-by-case basis also the inclusion of assistance for arms embargo monitoring and stockpile management when defining their mandate.

9. Highlight the role of the PoA in the fight against terrorism. The effective implementation of the PoA contributes to thwarting the acquisition of SALW by terrorists, thus reducing the potential impact of their attacks.

10. Support for the important role played by regional organisations in implementing the PoA as well as for the involvement of researchers, civil society and industry in PoA related activities in general.
Mr President,

These are the provisional objectives of the EU. A formal position will be presented to the Review Conference in June.

Besides this, the EU also plans to present its new Strategy against illicit SALW and their Ammunition that is currently being revised and a working paper with an overview of past EU-support for SALW and ammunition control projects worldwide.

Thank you Mr President.