



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°877  
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**EU Statement on the Preparation for the Third Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the guest speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their presentations.

At the outset, we would like to welcome the adoption of the Decision on the Best Practice Guide on Deactivation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe that it provides a response to the pressing security challenges related to the use of reactivated firearms, in particular in terrorist attacks and could constitute a basis for assistance projects to participating States in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, the EU and its Member States attach great importance to enhancing peace and security in the OSCE area by reducing the threat posed by the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition. This is fully in line with the EU SALW Strategy, currently under review, as well as with our commitment to fully implement the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW and the UN Programme of Action. Thus, we highly appreciate the attention given by the Slovak FSC Chair to the topic of SALW/SCA. We particularly welcome today's opportunity to discuss the preparation for the Third Review Conference on the UN PoA on SALW, including the role and the contribution of the OSCE to the process.

The EU will contribute actively and constructively to the efforts to achieve a meaningful and concrete consensus outcome at the Review Conference. It is important that the international community remains vigilant and actively contributes to the matter, given the devastating impact of illicit SALW and their ammunition on many societies, thus undermining security, stability and sustainable development. Subject to the adoption of

a formal EU position, we would like to highlight a few important points which would merit reflection in the Review Conference outcome document:

- i) A recognition that the implementation of the UN PoA is supported by synergies with international instruments with similar objectives, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Firearms Protocol;
- ii) The addition of the prevention, combatting and eradication of the illicit trade in ammunition to the scope of the UN PoA;
- iii) The acknowledgment 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;
- iv) A recognition of the differing impacts of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys, and promote the role of women in implementation of the UN PoA and gender awareness in SALW control actions as a condition for their effectiveness;
- v) Take action to preserve and increase the effectiveness of the UN PoA and its International Tracing Instrument (ITI) in light of developments in SALW technology and design. The EU is especially concerned that the growing trend of modular weapons lacks a global standard on how and where to mark these weapons. In order to preserve the capacity of law enforcement agencies worldwide to trace seized modular firearms, it is necessary to adapt or complement the ITI.
- vi) The 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;
- vii) 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;
- viii) Supporting SALW control activities in conflict affected areas, including by considering the inclusion of assistance to arms embargo monitoring and stockpile management when defining their mandate;

- ix) Highlighting the role of the UN PoA in the fight against terrorism. The effective implementation of the UN PoA contributes to thwarting the acquisition of SALW by terrorists, thus reducing the potential impact of their attacks;
- x) Support for the involvement of researchers, civil society and industry in UN PoA related activities in general.

In order to contribute to a successful and relevant outcome of the Review Conference, the EU Council last year decided to support a set of dedicated actions in the run up to this year's meetings. These project activities, with a total value of EUR 2.8 million, are being implemented by the UN Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), with the help of Small Arms Survey, and in close coordination with President-designate, French Ambassador Brunet.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministerial Council Decision 10/2017 tasked the FSC to promote OSCE achievements in combating illicit trafficking, reducing and preventing the excessive and destabilising accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW at the Third Review Conference. We also thank our Finnish FSC Co-ordinator on SALW/SCA for devoting the last meeting of IGoF SALW on 8 February to the discussion on OSCE's contribution to the RevCon3 process. We believe that the OSCE has an important role to play on both the normative and the operational side: through promoting norms, such as the OSCE Document on SALW, as well as best practice guides for participating States on SALW issues, which represent useful tools to encourage common principles to deal with each stage of a weapon's life. Furthermore, the OSCE can feed into the RevCon3 process by sharing experience and lessons learned from its assistance projects.

We would also like to use the opportunity and draw your attention to a side-event which France and Germany will be hosting at the PrepCom aimed at presenting the progress we have made within the OSCE in establishing common guidelines for the deactivation of weapons. The side-event will be held at lunch-time at the German House on 20 March.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we are grateful for the opportunity to share views on this important topic and we look forward to continuing our exchanges in this Forum, as well as within the IGoF on SALW.

The Candidate Countries 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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, mem-

bers of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.