



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Small Arms and Light Weapons / Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their presentations. We share the approach that complex regional problems require comprehensive solutions and that is why we continue to deepen our partnership with the OSCE in the area of control on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Ammunition. We therefore recognise the great value not only of the multi-dimensional approach to security applied by the OSCE, but also this deeper cross-sectoral approach and practice towards SALW and SCA control.

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 illicit trafficking of SALW and conventional ammunition. We remain committed to full implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW, and the UN Programme of Action, which provide both a valid and effective strategy to fight the illicit trade in SALW, and a global forum to share and develop further actions at national, regional, and international levels.

The EU has incorporated a comprehensive perspective on SALW and SCA at all levels – strategic, policy and operational. At the strategic level, in November 2018, the Council adopted the EU Strategy against illicit Firearms, Small Arms & Light Weapons and their Ammunition, "Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens". The purpose of the Strategy is to guide integrated, collective and coordinated European action to prevent and curb the illicit acquisition of SALW and their ammunition by terrorists, criminals and other unauthorised actors, and to promote accountability and

responsibility with regard to the legal arms trade. Furthermore, it is important to stress that the EU SALW and Ammunition Strategy takes into account the guiding principles of the 2016 EU Global Strategy that requires an integrated approach across external policies between Member States and EU Institutions and between the internal and external policy dimensions.

The EU SALW strategy also takes into account the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which affirms that "combatting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is necessary for the achievement of many goals, including those relating to peace, justice and strong institutions, poverty reduction, economic growth, health, gender equality, and safe cities and communities." This strategic guidance shapes both our policy and operational response. To illustrate this, allow me to highlight several projects in which EU financial support for SALW control addresses higher outcomes.

In August 2017, the Council decided to support OSCE activities to reduce the risk of illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition in the Republic of North Macedonia and Georgia. This funding aims to remedy safety and security concerns related to prevention of organised crime and anti-terrorism in the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as security, safety and environmental concerns in Georgia.

In South East Europe, the EU maintains its longstanding and wide ranging support to small arms control capacity building at both national and regional level through the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), including for the implementation of the Regional Roadmap, the initiative launched by France and Germany, on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, which operates under the UN Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council. Adopting a multi-dimensional approach, SEESAC also runs the "Gender and small arms" project, which intends to examine gender differences on issues related to light weapons, security and armed violence.

The Regional Roadmap aims at tackling the security issues related to the illegal possession, misuse and illicit trafficking of SALW in the Western Balkans by 2024. It sets a range of goals in terms of harmonisation of the legislative and regulatory framework, fighting against illicit arms flows, education and awareness raising, and destruction of seized SALW and ammunition. The Roadmap emphasises the

importance of coordination between relevant stakeholders and ownership by regional and local authorities. The EU and its Member States encourage and support the Western Balkan States in their efforts to adopt and implement national action plans within the framework of the Roadmap. The EU will take over the monitoring of this Roadmap in January 2020.

In cooperation with the OSCE Secretariat, the EU is currently working on the “OSCE Comprehensive Programme on Supporting Ukraine’s Efforts to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives in All its Aspects”. This project will be based on a needs assessment of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, which was conducted by the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman, we thank you for the opportunity to exchange perspectives on this important topic. Thank you for your attention.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH 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 UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.