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FSC.DEL/280/21  
12 July 2021

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

**STATEMENT BY  
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 982<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

7 July 2021

**On small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition**

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union and its Member States thank the speakers for their very interesting presentations on the important subject of the implementation of assistance projects to combat trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA).

The uncontrolled spread of SALW and of their ammunition is a major security and development issue, as is made clear by target 16.4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for arms flows to be significantly reduced by 2030. In adopting a new strategy against illicit firearms, SALW and their ammunition on 19 November 2018, which replaced the previous road map, the EU has acknowledged the importance of this issue. Furthermore, in order to reduce the risk of diversion of conventional weapons and ammunition, the EU recently adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/38 of 15 January 2021, which establishes a common approach regarding end-user certificates in the context of the export of SALW and their ammunition.

The EU and its Member States fully support the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It commends the OSCE for having submitted a report to the UN Secretariat last year on its implementation of this Programme of Action, thereby supporting the development of measures at the regional level. It attaches great importance to the issue of preventing and combating diversion, which will be the focus of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to be held in late July 2021.

The EU also supports the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, to which all its Member States are party. One of the objectives of this Treaty is to prevent and combat the diversion of conventional weapons, including SALW, to unauthorized end-users. Moreover, we welcome the work being carried out within the UN framework by the Group of Governmental Experts, which was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/55 to address the problems associated with the management of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

We support the continuation of SALW assistance projects, which are an important part of the OSCE's work and which produce some of the most visible outcomes. Many regions in the OSCE area are severely affected by SALW-related issues such as mines.

EU Member States are actively engaged in the fight against trafficking in SALW and in demining activities through the implementation of projects, also within the framework of the OSCE, with national or European funding. The EU also supports various OSCE activities aimed at improving the control of SALW and their ammunition in Ukraine, the Republic of North Macedonia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, for example. Lastly, since the start of 2020, the EU has been playing a greater role in steering and following up on the implementation of the regional Roadmap aimed at strengthening the co-ordination of efforts to combat illicit firearms trafficking in the Western Balkans by 2024. We welcome the contribution that the OSCE, following the example of several other international organizations and donors, is making to the implementation of this Roadmap.

We welcome this discussion with great interest. It is essential to enhance the effectiveness of actions on the ground through these assistance projects; the – complementary – views of the beneficiaries and contributors to these projects are crucial in this regard.

We hope that the biennial Meeting to Review the Implementation of OSCE Assistance Projects in the Field of SALW and SCA, to be held on 5 and 6 October, will contribute to the strengthening of assistance projects.

Thank you.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Serbia<sup>1</sup> and Albania<sup>1</sup>, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

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