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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 954th MEETING OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION

16 September 2020

On small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition

Madam Chairperson,

The European Union and its Member States thank the speakers for their very interesting presentations on the important topic of the implementation of projects providing assistance in the fight against trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and in dealing with stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA).

The uncontrolled spread of SALW and of their ammunition is a major security and development issue, as highlighted by target 16.4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for arms flows to be significantly reduced by 2030. By adopting on 19 November 2018 a new strategy against illicit firearms, SALW and their ammunition, the European Union has acknowledged the importance of this issue.

The European Union and its Member States fully support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The European Union similarly supports the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, to which all its Member States are party and one of whose objectives is to prevent and tackle the diversion of conventional arms, including SALW, to unauthorized end-users. Moreover, we welcome the work being carried out within the United Nations framework by the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, which was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/55.

We support the continuation of SALW-related assistance projects, which are an important part of the OSCE's work and have a most tangible impact. Many regions within the OSCE area are severely affected by the problem of SALW, including mines.

The Member States of the European Union are actively involved in combating trafficking in SALW and in mine action through the implementation of projects – including some within the OSCE framework – with national or European funding. The European Union supports, in particular, 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 European Union 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 the Roadmap.

We look forward to this discussion with the keenest interest. It is essential to enhance the effectiveness of activities on the ground through assistance projects. The complementary perspectives that beneficiaries and donors have on such projects are crucial in that regard.

We hope that the Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, which is due to be held on 13 and 14 October, will help to enhance these assistance projects.

Thank you.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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