

**Draft EU statement at the Fourth Biennial  
Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action to prevent,  
combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons all its  
aspects**

**(Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism on preventing,  
combating and eradicating the illicit trade on small arms  
and light weapons and  
preparations for the 2011 Experts Group meeting and  
the 2012 Review Conference)**

Mr. Chairman

1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia<sup>\*</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.
2. The EU is pleased that following the proposed agenda for the BMS4 the issue of Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade on small arms and light weapons is finally addressed in this forum.
3. The EU welcomes your non-paper, Mr Chairman (“Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade on small arms and light weapons and preparations for the 2011 Experts Group meeting and the 2012 Review Conference”) and considers that it represents a thought-provoking starting point to be used as the basis for today's debate.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

4. Mr Chairman, an overarching debate on the issue addressed in your non-paper, supported by the political commitment of the UN Member States, has indeed the potential to pave the way for the further implementation of the PoA. This debate should result in a thorough diagnosis of the level of implementation of the UN PoA and help identify the needs and solution to fulfil the goals of the Program.
5. Furthermore, today's debates should provide the main guidelines for the 2011 Experts Group meeting and the 2012 Review Conference. At the end of this Biennial Meeting of States we should be able to agree on these guidelines in order to ensure that next meetings of the PoA are successful in fulfilling their agenda and, more generally, the goals of the PoA as a whole. The decision contained in the UN General Assembly resolution 63/72, and recalled in resolution 64/50, to convene an open-ended meeting of governmental experts in 2011 represents a break-through. It will be crucial to work on the preparation of this meeting, following a pragmatic and operational approach.
6. The commitment of the EU towards the full implementation of the PoA is part and parcel of our actions and policies to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW. The adoption of further concrete and tangible measures aiming at fully implementing the PoA will benefit from our active support. Nevertheless, to date we have also observed a lack of concrete proposals aimed at strengthening the follow-up mechanism. Such a mechanism remains one of the foundations in the implementation process.
7. Mr. Chairman, the EU would like to address some of the issues referred to in your non-paper. These are some of the main tools of the follow-up mechanism agreed upon by States:
  - First, the annual reports: this tool represents the main instrument to assess the national implementation of the UN PoA. We support the recommendation to further develop this tool by elaborating standard reporting formats that should also improve the comparability of national reports, and ensure complementarity with other relevant reports, such as the ones for the ITI. While the EU calls on all UN Member States to submit their annual reports to the UN Secretariat, consideration should also be given by states in a position to do so, to undertake outreach activities aimed at achieving the universalization of these reports;

- Second, the biennial meetings: these should be able to assess the status of implementation and impact of all the aspects of the PoA and therefore to be able to address the actual needs of States in implementing the commitments stemming from the reports of the meetings. In this regard, the early designation of a Chair and agreement on a detailed agenda are recent examples which deserve to be followed and further elaborated. States in a position to do so should consider the appropriateness of supporting the universal participation of UN Member States in the BMS, following practices that are common to other international instruments, such as the CCW. It is also essential to ensure the early definition of clear mandates for the BMS, tasked to assess the implementation of the UN PoA, and Review Conferences, mandated to identify or strengthen concrete measures to further progress in the implementation of the UN PoA;
- This brings me to the third point the EU would like to stress in today's debate, the Review Conferences: the work and results of these Conferences are indeed conditioned by the progress achieved in the functioning of the two mechanisms previously mentioned. Defining and putting into practice the mandates of the biennial meetings will indeed help establish a coherent link between the efforts and resources that States make available to implement the PoA and its actual state of implementation. On the basis of this preparatory work, Review Conferences should be able to identify and adopt further measures to address gaps and needs indicated in the BMS and national reports. On the basis of such a clear view of what has been done, how it has been done and what should be done, Review Conferences should become the appropriate forum where concrete and substantial action can be taken to make progress in the implementation of the PoA.

8. The EU would also like to underline the importance of establishing and developing useful and effective tools that serve to identify needs and available resources to fulfil the goals of the PoA. Such tools should also include mechanism to assess what is being done to implement the PoA and which kind of specific activities and measures are needed to fill specific gaps. But to date, no specific tool has been even been identified to this purpose. Maybe, it is time to open the discussion on the need to support full secretarial functions, like the PoA-ISS, that would ensure, inter alia, the analysis of national reports, coordinate outreach activities, and provide technical advice.

9. Mr. Chairman, we hope that at the end of this day, the ideas and proposals that will surely come up during the discussions will help us to readdress the focus and commitments of states towards the needs of the implementation of the PoA.