

**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

*TRANS-BORDER CUSTOMS COOPERATION AND NETWORKS FOR INFORMATION-SHARING
AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT, BORDER AND CUSTOMS CONTROL AGENCIES*
~~(Prevention and combat of illicit trade of SALW across borders)~~

Mr Chairman

1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries xxx, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries xxxx, as well as xxxx align themselves with this declaration.

2. As this is the first time I take the floor during this biennial meeting of States, allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson. The EU supports the innovative approach launched by your predecessor and consistently followed by you to focus discussion of this meeting on specific topics identified in advance. We remain convinced that the ultimate goal of each biennial meeting is to agree on precise and operational recommendations aiming at ensuring the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action. Such an approach becomes even more appropriate with the perspective of the 2012 Review Conference on the UN PoA. We also welcome the Working Papers developed by you and the Friends of the Chair, which provide a good basis and several ideas to develop our work during this week.

3. Mr Chairman, I would like to thank the facilitator of today's debate, Mr Federico Perazza of Uruguay for all the work he has done in preparing a paper to guide our deliberations. The EU considers that the issue of the prevention and combat of illicit trade of SALW across borders deserves our utmost consideration. It lies at the core of most of the challenges that UN Member States decided to address nine years ago when adopting the UN Programme of Action. The activities of the EU in this field are guided by the EU SALW Strategy, adopted at the level of Heads of States, in December 2005. This Strategy clearly identifies the need to strengthen border and export controls to prevent the illicit trade in SALW, as one of the priorities for EU action.

4. The EU adopted in 1998 a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, establishing common criteria for all EU Member States, to regulate their exports in conventional weapons. In 2008 the Code of Conduct was replaced by a legally binding Common Position on conventional arms exports, including brokering activities in its scope. These instruments have allowed our Member States to reinforce their controls over exports of weapons, including SALW, and to increase coherence in the export policies of our Member States. During the past three years the EU has also been promoting the application of the Common Position by countries neighbouring the Union, through outreach events and the provision of technical assistance.
5. The European Union has developed an EU Integrated Border Security Model covering all aspects of border policy in order to prevent and combat illicit trafficking. In addition, in the framework of development and cooperation assistance, the EU has contributed to the elaboration of an OECD-DAC manual on security sector reform, including some recommendations on integrated border management whose principles constitute a reference for the handling of goods and persons across borders. The EU encourages the implementation of these principles which should be systematically applied in order to fight illicit trafficking whilst addressing corruption.
6. Mr Chairman, the EU's experience in the field has proved that the exchange of information among relevant national and regional authorities regarding movements across borders of illicitly traded SALW is key in eradicating the trafficking of weapons. We are convinced that inter-agency consultations and coordination, involving customs, justice, border, police and military personnel should be reinforced at national and regional levels. Therefore, we welcome any initiative in this direction. The exchange of information on tracked illegal SALW, as part of un-authorized re-export, should not be limited to the bilateral level. The availability of this information at regional and global level can significantly contribute to preventing other SALW from being trafficked elsewhere.
7. I would also like, Mr Chairman, to underline the importance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime as well as the Firearms Protocol as two legally binding instruments allowing better monitoring of the illicit manufacturing and trade. In this regard, the European Union is considering to take further action to support the full implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Firearms Protocol.

8. In the EU SALW Strategy, our Member States agreed to promote the inclusion of common international criteria for controls on SALW transfers in the UN PoA. We continue to consider this issue an important one that deserves further consideration from all UN Members States. We are pleased to see that this question is among those referred to in the document prepared by the facilitator for the agenda item we are discussing today. Let me also add that we remain convinced that any initiative in this regard has the potential to positively contribute to the wider process aiming at establishing common international standards for the transfers of all conventional weapons, through the adoption of an Arms Trade Treaty.

9. Finally Mr Chairman, I would like to devote a few words to a specific aspect of today's agenda item where the EU has the potential to bring concrete added value. In recent years, the EU has been undertaking several measures to prevent the illicit trade of SALW via air transport. As an example of these measures, specific warning systems have been developed within the Union to this extent. We are now concentrating on the development of specific risk assessment tools that would enhance cooperation and coordination among customs, border controls and police authorities, and make it easier for competent authorities to identify and seize weapons illegally traded via air. The EU plans to share its know-how in this field through a series of outreach and technical assistance activities, to be undertaken in the framework of a new project. The EU has also been at the forefront of the development of air-safety mechanisms in order to indirectly target air cargo carriers smuggling weapons which usually goes hand in hand with holding poor safety records. In the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership, concrete measures are being explored for the reinforcement of civil-aviation, police and customs capacities of our partner countries. In addition, the EU is examining the opportunity and modalities of supporting measures in Eastern Africa at the national and regional levels to fight arms trafficking via air, *inter alia* through the promotion air safety regulations, the strengthening of air surveillance systems and the reinforcement of law enforcement capacities.

Thank you, Mr Chairman