Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Dutch delegation I would like to congratulate you with your designation as chairman of this first MGE meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action and in our opinion the excellent way you lead us through the discussions.

First of all I would like to express that the Netherlands is not a producer of SALW or craft production, so there is no Dutch industrial best practice to share on the marking of produced firearms. Although we are a small country, we do import, export, (trade) and transit a significant amount of SALW. Everyday the police confiscates illegal SALW that have been used in many types of crime.

On the issue of marking of SALW owned by government agencies, I would like to inform you about the following: SALW held by our Defense organization are uniquely marked and registered. The marking identifies the type, the country code, a serial number and the manufacturer of the item. In addition to the physical marking, each item of SALW is equipped with a passive, electronic ‘rfid’ (radio frequency identification) transponder. These transponders are read with the use of portable terminals before and after transportation and all data are stored in one centralized database. If a weapon in the armed forces depot turns out not to be marked, it will be considered illegal and it will subsequently be destroyed.

Each item which is part of the armament of the Dutch police is also uniquely marked and registered. The markings identify the type, serial number and manufacturer of the item of SALW. All service pistols of the Dutch police are additionally marked with a unique Dutch police acceptance mark. Illegal SALW confiscated by the police will, after investigations are ended always be destroyed.

Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the European Union The Netherlands has implemented all European guidelines that are based on the Firearms Protocol, the Program of Action, and the ITI.

In Directive 2008/51/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC of 19 June 1991 on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons, measures are laid down for the improvement of the marking and registration of firearms within Member States, including possible common guidelines on deactivation standards and techniques to ensure that deactivated firearms are rendered irreversibly inoperable. Furthermore EU Member States are committed to the rule that any firearm or part placed on the market has been marked and registered in compliance with the this Directive. The Directive states that Member States shall, by 31 December 2014, ensure the establishment and maintenance of a computerised data-filing system, either a centralised system or a decentralized system which guarantees authorities access to the data-filing systems in which each firearm subject to this Directive shall be recorded.
This filing system shall record and maintain information for at least 20 years, on each firearm’s type, make, model, calibre and serial number, as well as the names and addresses of the supplier and the person acquiring or possessing the firearm.

Throughout their period of activity, dealers are required to maintain a register in which all firearms subject to this Directive shall be recorded, as well as particulars enabling the firearm to be identified and traced, in particular the type, make, model, calibre and serial number thereof and the names and addresses of the persons supplying and acquiring it. Upon the cessation of his activities, the dealer shall deliver the register to the competent national authority. Member States shall ensure that all firearms may be linked to their owner at any moment. However, as regards to SALW, Member States shall, as from 28 July 2010, put in place appropriate tracing measures. As from 31 December 2014 a system has to be put in place that automatically links the owner to the firearms being placed on the market after 28 July 2010.

The Netherlands has already established such a national database. Legislation to align the Dutch Arms and Ammunition Act to the marking and tracing (EU) obligations is in the process to be passed. Some essential specifics still need to be worked out in a decree. Yesterdays and today’s discussions and the outcome of the meeting will certainly guide us by working out these details.

Thank you