

**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 in all its aspects  
  
(International Instrument to Identify and Trace SALW)**

Mr Chairman

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Croatia and Turkey, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, align themselves with this declaration.

1. The European Union welcomes today's opportunity to assess the state of play in the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI).
2. Mr Chairman, I would like to thank the facilitator of today's debate, Mr William Kullman of the USA for his valuable work in preparing a paper to guide our deliberations. The EU is a convinced supporter of the ITI. We consider it as one of the most important practical achievements of the UN Programme of Action. In adopting the instrument, UN Member States have committed themselves to taking a number of steps to ensure that SALW are suitably identified and recorded and to stepping-up cooperation in tracing illicitly manufactured and traded SALW. Despite the legally non-binding nature of the International Instrument, its provisions are precise and detailed, and call for a technical investment going beyond mere declarations of principle.
3. In this regard, the EU welcomes the working non paper drafted by the US Friend of the Chair. This document identifies specific measures for consideration by the BMS4, while providing a comprehensive overview of the practical steps that States could follow to ensure their national implementation of the ITI. In particular, we find it appropriate to focus the national,

regional and multilateral efforts on the establishment of appropriate legal, administrative and technical infrastructure that would allow complying with the requirements set by the ITI.

4. The EU is indeed convinced that States should ensure the widest possible exchange of information on traced arms. While bilateral arrangements for this purpose should be praised, regional and multilateral approaches should also be used, as information on arms tracing available to a state has often the potential of being used to trace other arms in other areas of the world. Similarly, mechanisms developed at a regional level have the advantage of addressing more systematically an issue, such as the illicit manufacturing and tracing of SALW, that, by its illegal nature, ignores national borders. The promotion of the ITI and the provision of assistance at national and regional levels to ensure its legal, administrative and technical implementation, are aspects that this BMS should consider as recommendations.
5. Mr Chairman, the EU is convinced that an equation between national and regional efforts is key to make concrete and sustainable progress in the marking and tracing of arms given the levels of illicit trade across borders and even across continents. In this regard, the EU has been at the forefront of the promotion of the implementation of the ITI through different initiatives. The objective is to support states in fulfilling their obligations deriving from the ITI at the national level and also to ensure a maximum degree of harmonization and exchange of information at the regional level about adequate tools and practices.
6. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to mention a few examples of the EU's continuous support to the ITI: in 2008, the EU implemented a tailored Joint Action, consisting of three regional workshops, presenting the main aspects and implication of the International Instrument to States in West Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In September 2010, we will organize, in cooperation with SEESAC-UNDP, a similar event for the countries of the Western Balkans. In the framework of another project to be soon finalized and to be implemented by UN ODA, the EU will support in West Africa the organization of regional training-of-trainers courses on essential aspects of the International Tracing Instrument, the provision of marking facilities and expertise in countries of the region lacking such equipment, including through acquisition of marking machines, and the establishment of record-keeping facilities, and training of law enforcement officials in marking and tracing. In the framework of its support to the Regional Centre on Small Arms, the EU also supports similar activities in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. In addition to the awareness raising, provision of equipment and training activities, it is foreseen to contribute

to the harmonisation of legislative and technical aspects at the regional level through intense dialogue and networks. For instance, the establishment of Joint Task Forces for the exchange and cross-examination of information in each sub-region should contribute to develop a regional understanding about these issues and bring concrete responses through enhanced coordination.

7. Finally, Mr Chairman, the EU would like to stress the importance of reporting on the implementation of the ITI, a commitment that UN Member States have undertaken to fulfil every two years. National reports on the ITI represent an exceptional tool to assess the needs and gaps that still exist to ensure the full implementation of the instrument. We recognize the risk of a reporting "fatigue" and of overburdening states who have limited capacity in this respect. This is why the EU supports efforts aiming at the rationalization of reporting commitments deriving from the UN PoA. We call on all States to continue to submit their national reports to the UN Secretary General, including relevant information on the implementation of the ITI.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.