

Summary: 13 May 2015, New York – Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States by H.E. Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, head of the Delegation of the European Union, at the Security Council Open Debate on “The human cost of illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons”

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

1. We wish to thank you for convening this important open debate, for [CONTINUING](#) Australia's pioneering work on SALW in the [SECURITY](#) Council in 2013 and for your excellent concept paper. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive biennial report on small arms and light weapons to the Security Council and, in particular, for the fourteen pertinent recommendations for consideration by the Security Council.
2. We very much welcomed the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2117 in 2013 and its decision to remain seized of the matter of SALW. SALW are still the most frequently used weapons in the majority of recent armed conflicts and the consequences of the illicit spread, widespread availability and trafficking of SALW and ammunition remain a highly disturbing and lasting problem and thus a major challenge for the international community. The sheer number of Security Council Resolutions repeatedly expressing its concern over the threat to peace and security arising from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of SALW which have been adopted since 2013 illustrate the size of this challenge.
3. They also reflect the conviction that a specific focus on adequate SALW control measures is required if we want to effectively tackle conflict and post-conflict settings. We therefore strongly [SUPPORT](#) the Secretary-General's recommendation that the wide-ranging impact of the illicit circulation and the misuse of SALW needs to be consistently addressed by the Security Council when considering geographic and thematic issues on its agenda.
4. The wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of illicit SALW and the serious threat that they pose to peace, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels require a comprehensive and multidimensional approach.
5. Resolution 2117 represented a major step forward in international cooperation on SALW control by bringing together a wide range of tools and actions for the [SECURITY](#) Council, UN Member States, UN entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations to use in order to prevent and combat the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of SALW in many regions of the world.
6. The EU Strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition seeks to ensure that the EU's security policy and its development policy are consistent and to fully exploit the means available to it at multilateral and regional levels to develop a comprehensive and coherent approach which harnesses all forms of leverage at the EU's disposal. It is based on the recognition that human security and human development are interdependent and covers preventive and reactive measures.
7. many issues are of key concern to us that have been singled out by Lithuania's concept note and the Secretary-General's report and please allow me to mention at least some of them:
8. We will continue to call, amongst others, for the inclusion of ammunition as part of a comprehensive approach to SALW control. SALW can only be operated and misused if ammunition is available. Effective SALW controls therefore also need to include significant efforts to regulate and control their ammunition. The relevant provisions of the UN Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and [TRADE](#) in Firearms, their

Parts and Components and Ammunition and the Arms Trade Treaty are a step in the right direction, but further measures are required by the international community to deal with the issue of ammunition.

9. In order to effectively combat diversion and illicit trafficking of SALW, marking, tracing and systematic and appropriate record-keeping is essential. Weapons need to be marked upon production and import and existing stocks should also be marked. The secure and effective management of stockpiles is also central to curb the illicit spread of SALW, including destruction of surplus.
10. The EU regularly offers assistance to improve physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) of SALW. Limited PSSM infrastructure leaves countries especially vulnerable to diversion of SALW when these are stored in small armouries in remote locations, including in volatile border regions, and during transfer. New mobile and flexible technologies may offer solutions to effectively secure SALW in instances when the risk of diversion is at the highest. The EU will [SUPPORT](#) such initiatives on the use of new technologies to secure SALW in order to concretely demonstrate their potential.
11. It remains essential to fully integrate the gender perspective into all efforts of preventing and combating the risk of the misuse, diversion and illicit circulation of SALW so that the gendered aspects of armed violence are adequately addressed. They also require the full and [ACTIVE](#) participation of all, men as well as women.
12. We firmly believe that the Arms Trade Treaty, when effectively and widely implemented, will make a major contribution towards more responsible and more transparent international arms transfers. We therefore warmly welcome the signatures and ratifications deposited from all regions so far and call on all States who have not yet done so, to become signatories and States Parties to the Treaty. All EU Member States are signatories of the Treaty and so far 26 have ratified it. The remaining ratifications are expected shortly. The EU assists a number of third countries in strengthening their arms transfer controls system in line with the requirements of the Treaty. The EU also remains committed to providing, upon request, further assistance to countries that have identified needs in their national system against the obligations of the ATT.
13. We support the view that it is necessary to integrate SALW-related issues into the planning and when drafting or [UPDATING](#) mandates of UN operations. It was in 2010 that the EU Foreign Affairs Council underlined the importance of considering, in the planning of future EU civilian and military Common Security and Defence Policy missions, the appropriateness and feasibility of including in the mandate of the missions issues on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
14. The diversion of SALW remains a tremendous problem in many parts of the world and poor weapons security and management leading to leakages of SALW to the illicit market is another area of great concern to us. In this context, we believe that the international community still lacks [VITAL](#) monitoring and diagnostic capacity so that, in many cases, we do not have sufficient information to formulate effective policies against the diversion, illicit spread and trafficking of SALW. To provide such information, the EU is funding the "iTRACE" project. iTRACE is providing verified, on-the-ground data on illicit trade routes of diverted or trafficked conventional weapons and their ammunition. The project combines an extensive programme of field investigations in today's armed conflicts, especially in Africa and the Middle East, documenting identified illicit weapons in situ, with a global, public access weapons tracking database on individual diverted or trafficked weapons. It seeks to provide new insights into diversion patterns and illicit trafficking routes. It is thus also very relevant for the work of UNSC Sanctions Groups and a number of UN Missions and can make a contribution towards making the implementation of arms embargoes more effective.
15. iTRACE also specifically aims to support the implementation of the Arms [TRADE](#) Treaty by assisting national export control authorities in detecting the diversion of transferred conventional weapons and in assessing diversion risks when examining export licence applications.
16. We also wish to echo the Secretary-General's call that States should make full use of INTERPOL's Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System, called iARMS. iARMS provides a common global platform for facilitating information exchange and

investigative cooperation between law enforcement agencies in relation to the international movement of illicit firearms as well as licit firearms that have been involved in the commission of a crime. It is an integral part of the international strategy and operational framework to combat the illicit trade in SALW and funded by the EU. We welcome that iARMS is being used by law enforcement agencies in more and more states, and that it has **ALREADY** recorded its first operational success.

17. We are confident that the **SECURITY** Council will **CONTINUE** to pay special attention to SALW issues in its agenda and call on all States to do their utmost to contribute to the fight against this scourge. We will **CONTINUE** to play our part in this common endeavour.