



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°927 Vienna, 9 October 2019

EU Statement on Small Arms and Light Weapons / Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their presentations. We commend the Czech FSC Chairmanship for including this major topic of SALW/SCA on the agenda of this Forum.

Mr. Chairman, the EU and its Member States attach great importance to enhancing peace and security in the OSCE area by reducing the threat posed by illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition. We remain committed to full implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW, and the UN Programme of Action, which provides both a valid and effective strategy to fight the illicit trade in SALW, and a global forum to share and develop further actions at national, regional, and international levels. The OSCE has a number of measures aimed at addressing illicit trafficking of SALW, including through air transport. The EU warmly welcomes the convening of a Group of Governmental Experts in early 2020 on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

We commend the work undertaken by the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition to review and update the OSCE Best Practice Guides on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. The Best Practice Guides serve all participating States as a practical means to encourage higher common standards in prevention, enforcement, and monitoring measures that would preclude diversion of weapons and ammunition to unauthorised end-users and into the illicit market.

Last year the EU adopted a new Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The purpose of this Strategy is to guide integrated, collective and coordinated European action to prevent and curb the illicit acquisition of small arms and their ammunition by terrorists, criminals and other unauthorised actors, and to promote accountability and responsibility with regard to the legal arms trade. The implementation of the Strategy is accompanied by assistance to third countries with a focus on regional cooperation.

The EU provides support to the OSCE in its efforts to secure arms and dual-use goods in the region. In Ukraine the OSCE and EU are supporting Ukrainian authorities with chemical safety and security. The Council is considering a Decision to support Ukrainian authorities in identifying and disrupting the trafficking of weapons, ammunition and explosives. With EU help the OSCE has been supporting arms stockpile security in the Republic of North Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus.

In South East Europe, the EU maintains its longstanding and wide ranging support to small arms control capacity building at both national and regional level through the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), including for the implementation of the Franco-German Regional Roadmap on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, which operates under the UN Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council.

The EU does not limit its activities in the area of SALW/SCA to its immediate neighborhood. We currently have projects in cooperation with the African Union and regional organisations in Africa, with the Organization of American States and the League of Arab States.

I would draw your attention in this context to the assistance the EU has been providing to improve physical security and stockpile management in existing conventional arms and ammunition depots in the Central African Republic and the Sahel region, and to collect and destroy arms and ammunition across West Africa. In July of this year the Council of the EU adopted a Decision in support of an Africa-China-EU civil society dialogue on preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition in Africa.

The EU and its Member States are major donors for mine action assistance and the removal of explosive remnants of war worldwide, covering all key aspects such as

mine clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and capacity building. In the past 5 years EU Institutions provided more than EUR 300 million to mine action activities in 24 mine contaminated countries.

Mr. Chairman, we thank you for the opportunity to exchange views on this important topic. Thank you for your attention.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.