



Opening Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

**Ms. Mara Marinaki
Managing Director Global and Multilateral issues
European External Action Service**

at the

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United Nations

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr Chairman,

1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

Mr Chairman

2. Let me express my deepest satisfaction to see you at the Chair of the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. The work of our delegations has been guided by you since the outset of the ATT process. Over the past years, you have given consistent proof of exceptional skills in keeping the process moving forward and ensuring that all views expressed by UN Member States are taken into account. The inclusiveness and impartiality of your working methods and your draft paper of July 2011 offer us the best basis for the negotiations we are about to start.
3. The European Union has been among the staunchest supporters of the negotiations of an Arms Trade Treaty. We are deeply convinced that the ATT has the potential to contribute to the improvement of living and security conditions of hundreds of thousands of people around the world by ensuring that arms are traded in the most responsible way. We look forward to contributing to the success of this negotiating Conference, which should elaborate a treaty that will have a real impact on the global arms trade.
4. The Treaty we want to agree upon is one that sets the highest common standards for the regulation of the international trade in arms, and that enjoys the support of all the relevant stakeholders. Last February, we have successfully concluded the preparatory process to the UN Conference. The deliberations of the Preparatory Committee have been characterized by a positive spirit of engagement and compromise. Recognizing that we are now moving to a negotiating mode, we encourage all delegations to be guided by that same spirit. Compromises and flexibility will certainly be needed. But, in defending our respective positions, we should not lose sight of the ultimate objective we have set for this Conference: this legally binding instrument should be strong, robust and effective.

Mr Chairman,

5. In the weeks to come we will certainly have several occasions to comment on the specific elements of the Treaty. However, let me use this opportunity to reaffirm some basic points the EU is particularly attached to.
6. For an ATT to be universal, it should be relevant to all UN Member States. In our view this is a consideration that we should keep in mind when defining the different elements of the Treaty. Therefore, when deciding on the scope of the treaty, we should look at what types of military systems and transfers need to be regulated. The European Union

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

continues to advocate an ATT that will include in its scope all military conventional arms and systems, including small arms and light weapons, munitions, related technology, and parts and components. Transfers of all these items may adversely affect international security and peace if not properly regulated and this is why we want an ATT to include them in its scope. Similarly, the ATT should require controls on transfers and brokering of conventional arms covered by the scope of the Treaty. Different control provisions should be foreseen for different types of transfers.

7. The parameters of the future Treaty will be key to its credibility and relevance. The Treaty should set common criteria against which arms exports and brokering should be assessed. Such criteria should be clear, strong, and comprehensive in order to take into account all possible risks of unauthorized and improper use of arms. The European Union is firmly convinced that in cases where arms transfers violate international obligations or there is clear risk that arms are used for serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, such arms transfers must be denied.
8. We also believe that among the factors to be taken into account in the risk assessment conducted by States Parties at national level, the following ones should be considered:
 - the possible impact of arms transfer on regional stability, on existing or potential inter and intra-state conflict;
 - the risk of diversion of an arms transfer, and
 - the possible impact of an arms transfer on the socio-economic development of a recipient country.

Mr Chairman,

9. The European Union and its Member States have consistently maintained that the implementation of transfer controls in accordance with an Arms Trade Treaty should be an individual responsibility of Parties to the ATT. States Parties shall establish a legal and administrative system that would ensure they could exercise control, as required by the Treaty, over transfers of items covered by the scope of an ATT. States Parties should also ensure that infractions of their national control systems are effectively prohibited and associated with sanctions as appropriate. States Parties should also be responsible for the national decisions taken in application of the Treaty.
10. We should also take into account the specific responsibilities that some regional organizations have acquired or could acquire in regulating arms transfers in several regions of the world. Consequently, we consider that the future Treaty should also be open for signature to relevant regional and international organizations, in accordance with practice followed for similar international instruments, such as the UN Firearms Protocol.
11. As well as introducing the highest common standards to regulate the international trade in arms, an ATT should also make that trade more transparent and accountable. To achieve this objective, the Treaty should contain a robust transparency mechanism, with elements of public reporting. We consider that such a mechanism should be based on obligatory reporting by all States Parties on measures taken to implement the Treaty, as well as on assessed transfers, at an appropriate level of detail.

12. Finally, let me stress that the EU attaches great importance to international cooperation to ensure the full implementation of the ATT. Our serious commitment to support third countries in their future implementation of the Treaty has already been demonstrated by the efforts the EU has undertaken to support capacity-building in the field of conventional arms transfer controls among third countries. We would like to confirm today the EU's readiness to continue to contribute, as appropriate, to UN Member States' efforts to implement the Arms Trade Treaty, once it enters into force.

Mr Chairman,

13. Let me conclude by wishing you and all colleagues in the room a very successful, and fruitful month of negotiations, and by reassuring you of the full engagement that will continue to guide the actions of the European Union at this Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.