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Statement on behalf of the European Union

by

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at the

**Second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the
Arms Trade Treaty**

International cooperation and Assistance

New York

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

EU statement on international cooperation and assistance

Mr Chairman,

1. I am taking the floor on behalf of the European Union.
2. The European Union would like to express its views on the elements concerning international cooperation and assistance that an Arms Trade Treaty should contain.
3. The European Union takes the question of international cooperation and assistance seriously.
4. Our commitment in this field is already demonstrated by several projects that we have been implementing in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research over the past two years. Through a series of regional outreach and technical seminars, we have been promoting discussion and experience sharing on the ATT process and specific aspects of control systems on transfers of conventional arms. Our approach has been fully inclusive and all UN Member States are being involved in this exercise.
5. Against this background, we agree that an Arms Trade Treaty should include provisions on international cooperation and assistance that should foresee the possibility for States Parties to seek assistance to facilitate the national implementation of the Treaty.
6. The EU also agrees that an Arms Trade Treaty should include provisions encouraging States Parties, in a position to do so, to provide, upon request, assistance to other States Parties, including technical assistance, to ensure that their national systems and internal controls comply with the requirements of the treaty. Once the ATT enters into force, the EU will be ready to engage in cooperation with States Parties to facilitate the full implementation of the treaty.

7. The EU supports in principle the gist of your proposed paragraph 4. In our view, States Parties should also cooperate through the voluntary exchange of relevant information that could facilitate the assessment by national authorities of conventional arms transfers applications in accordance with the provisions of an ATT. This cooperation between States Parties should include voluntary mutual legal assistance in order to facilitate investigations on possible violations of the provisions of the Treaty, including in tracing diverted transfers of weapons.
8. Cooperation in terms of information exchange could also lead, at some point, to the establishment of a peer-review mechanism that should be agreed by the States Parties. Such a mechanism would aim, inter alia, at assessing the implementation of the treaty and identifying possible assistance needs.
9. The definition proposed in your paragraph 4 of the specific activities to be undertaken as part of the international cooperation and assistance is wide and comprehensive. It covers activities such as exchange of information, technical, legal as well as legislative assistance. We consider that all these cooperative activities should be conducted on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the EU would favour the deletion of the language included in your paragraph 3 that in our opinion is redundant.
10. If we were to envisage the establishment of a minimal international structure within the UN for reporting and record-keeping purposes. One could discuss the possibility of assigning to the same structure, a limited role in facilitating the matching of requests for and offers of assistance.
11. Finally Mr Chairman, let me elaborate on the EU's view vis-à-vis the issue of victim assistance. An Arms Trade Treaty is not meant to be an international disarmament instrument comparable to those that ban entire categories of weapons and include provisions on victim assistance. Whilst the EU agrees that an ATT should have a positive impact in reducing human suffering and armed violence, we do not consider appropriate to envisage specific provisions on victim assistance in the articles of the Treaty. The EU is concerned by the issue of human suffering and victim assistance and remains ready to engage in consultations in more appropriate UN fora.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.