



## **European Union Statement**

### **Open-Ended Working Group on conventional ammunition (established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/233)**

#### **Fourth substantive session**

**New York, 5–9 June 2023**

Mr. Chair,

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

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\*, Albania\*, the Republic of Moldova, and the potential candidate country Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The EU welcomes the transparent and inclusive way you have steered preparations for this meeting. As this is the last meeting, it is important to work towards a good substantive outcome document and a new Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.

Mr. Chair,

We are here to finally reach agreement on the document addressing the problems arising from unsecured and poorly managed conventional ammunition that continue to be of growing concern to the international community. Such grievances often result in serious humanitarian and socio-economic consequences. We must not miss this momentum to fulfil our historical duty, whereas diverted ammunition, ranging from small-caliber ammunition to the largest conventional ammunition, fuels crime, terrorism, armed violence, gender based violence and instability, undermining sustainable development, good governance, law and order, access to education, healthcare, justice and other civil rights.

In doing so, we should foster progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), together with SDG 5 (gender equality) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities). The EU considers the absence of a framework dedicated specifically to ammunition with the same level of commitment as a missing element of the UN Programme of Action on SALW. The EU has therefore decided to support the Agenda's Action 22: "Secure excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles".

The EU believes that addressing the topic of conventional ammunition at the international level in a comprehensive and independent manner is more than timely. We are convinced that the international community would benefit from the establishment of a comprehensive multilayer framework including a set of political commitments that supports the safe, secure and sustainable through-life ammunition management at global level with view to preventing both unplanned explosions and diversion. This global framework that the OEWG has been mandated to elaborate

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

should be underpinned by voluntary efforts at the regional or subregional level that could also take the form of additional measures including relevant legislation at national level. Moreover, the implementation of the framework should be supported by robust international cooperation and assistance and a focussed, lean, effective and sustainable follow-up mechanism at global level. Such a comprehensive framework on conventional ammunition is meant to complement already existing agreements on international and regional level, in particular the UN PoA on SALW.

Mr. Chair,

The EU has been assisting third countries to improve the safety and security of national SALW and ammunition stockpiles. The focus in this regard lies on supporting national institutions to develop, adapt or strengthen their legislative and administrative regulations that provide the basis for the legitimate supply of SALW and ammunition for defence and security forces. Furthermore, the EU and its Member States support capacity building and knowledge transfer for safe and secure through-life management of such stockpiles. The EU SALW Strategy adopted on 19 November 2018, observes that poor stockpile security is a key factor that allows arms and ammunition to be diverted from the licit to the illicit markets. The EU SALW Strategy also commits the EU to promote and implement standards and good practices for the management of SALW and their ammunition, like the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and the Modular Small-Arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC).

The EU and its Member States are top donors for small arms control assistance and capacity development in general, and for physical security and stockpile management in particular. Therefore, the EU on 18 November 2022 adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2275 in support of the development of an internationally recognised arms and ammunition management validation system (AAMVS). This project aims to enhance security and safety of SALW and ammunition stockpiles through the development of a system that would allow independent validation of compliance by States with open international standards, on a voluntary basis, displaying their ability to address and prevent diversion and accidental explosions. A validation system could be used to inform diversion risk assessments carried out by arms supplying States within the context of arms export control, such as those outlined under Arms Trade Treaty Article 11 and criterion 7 of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the revised draft for the substantive outcome document, which is a very good basis for our work this week and should enable us to reach consensus. While we are willing to exercise flexibility in the search for a compromise, we appeal to all delegations to do the same

We also appreciate the carefully drafted Annex with the rationales for all the 15 objectives, and consider them a valuable and indispensable part of the outcome document.

Finally, Mr. Chair, let us reassure you of our full support during the final stretch of our negotiations.

I thank you Mr. Chair.