Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina* and Georgia, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as San Marino align themselves with this statement.

2. Allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Fourth Review Conference of the Programme of Action. The European Union welcomes the transparent and inclusive way you have steered preparations for this meeting and look forward to working with you towards a successful outcome.

Madam Chair,

3. The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorised use of small arms and light weapons continues to constitute a serious impediment for peace, growth, development, and security in the world. Ever since its adoption in 2001, the EU has actively promoted the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
The EU considers the UN PoA as the universal framework to counter the threat posed by illicit SALW and supports its full and effective implementation at national, regional, and global levels.

4. In order to further strengthen its action against the destabilising accumulation and spread of SALW and their ammunition, the European Union in November 2018 adopted its own strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

5. The EU will continue contributing actively and constructively to your efforts to achieve a meaningful and concrete consensus outcome at the Review Conference. In this regard allow me to recall the EU decision* to support a series of regional meetings in the run up to the Review Conference. We want to thank the implementer, UNODA, and contributors to these events for their efforts and we also want to thank you for your participation in these events.

6. The EU is currently preparing a common position for the Review Conference. Pending a formal decision by the EU Council, allow me to provisionally share the following objectives that the EU considers to pursue for the outcome of the Review Conference:

   a) Remark that illicit SALW and their ammunition continue to contribute to instability and armed violence, thwarting development and crisis management efforts, destabilising entire regions, fuelling organised crime and amplifying the impact of terrorist attacks.

   b) Considering the UN PoA as the universal framework to cope with the threat posed by illicit SALW and supporting its full and effective implementation at national, regional, and global levels.

   c) Promoting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG Targets 16.1 and 16.4 that are shared objectives with the UN PoA.

   d) Supporting an open-ended technical expert working group on the implementation of the UN PoA and its ITI with regard to new technologies in SALW.

   e) Recognising that the implementation of the PoA is supported by synergies with international instruments with similar objectives, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Firearms Protocol.

   f) Promoting an annex to the ITI to ensure its effectiveness and applicability in the light of new developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design, focusing on modular and polymer frame firearms as well as 3D-printing.

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* Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/1965 of 17 October 2022 in support of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.
g) Supporting an exchange of information, on a voluntary basis, between States on identified
diversion cases in order to expose and cut off arms trafficking channels, and in order to
improve the capacity for risk assessment in the context of arms export controls.

h) Advocating national implementation by means of dedicated interagency coordination
bodies, national action plans and strategies, national points of contact, and national
legislation.

i) Strengthening regional and sub-regional cooperation and coordination.

j) Monitoring relevant aspects of the SALW life cycle and their ammunition, including
manufacturing and marking, record-keeping, trade, transfer, safe and secure stockpiling and
disposal.

k) Ensuring States’ commitment to transparency by sharing National Points of Contact for the
UN PoA, submitting their biennial reports on the status of the UN PoA and the ITI
implementation, by including SALW in their reports for the UN Register of Conventional
Arms, and by promoting synergies on that matter with other related international instruments
such as the ATT.

l) Promoting effective arms export control and risk assessment prior to authorising a transfer.
The use of authenticated end-user agreements, as supported by the UN PoA, should be
encouraged.

m) Supporting the gender sensitive approach to SALW-control and acknowledging the
differentiated impacts of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys, and, with the aim
of improving their effectiveness, promoting a strong role of women in the implementation
of the UN PoA and gender mainstreaming in SALW control actions.

n) Addressing the issue of manufacture of SALW through craft production, by taking into
account recent developments and trends, including but not limited to by means of illicit
manufacturing, incl. 3-D printing, reactivation of deactivated firearms and the conversion of
blank firearms.

o) Building upon the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition
Management, adopted by UNGA resolution A/RES/78/47, in the implementation of safe
and secure management of ammunition over its whole life-cycle with a focus on
preventing diversion and unintended explosions.

p) Highlighting the role of the UN PoA in the fight against terrorism.

q) Addressing the growing importance of the Internet and online transactions, including the
intangible transfer of technology and design, with regard to the illicit trade in and
manufacture of SALW and their parts and components.
r) Supporting the call for increasing capacities to monitor and enforce arms embargoes, i.a. by supporting the work of UN panels that monitor arms embargoes.

s) Addressing illicit SALW in conflict-affected areas, i.a. by encouraging the involvement, within their mandate and where appropriate, of UN and regional peace support operations in the collecting, record-keeping, tracing and destruction of illicit SALW and their ammunition, and supporting national capacities to track and trace the origins of illicit SALW and ammunition. The EU also supports the cooperation between UN or regional peace support operations and the UN panels of Experts where applicable.

t) Increasing the measurability of the impact of cooperation and assistance, i.a. by the development of validation systems for international SALW and ammunition control standards.

u) Support for the important role played by regional organisations in implementing the PoA as well as for the involvement of researchers, civil society and industry in PoA related activities in general.

v) Welcoming the opportunities provided by new technologies in identifying diversion routes and patterns for SALW and their ammunition as well as contributing to criminal investigations on those diversion cases.

Thank you Madam Chair.