



## EUROPEAN UNION

### Joint FSC – PC Meeting Nr 59 Vienna, 1 July 2015

#### **EU Statement on Regional Dynamics of Arms Trafficking through the Prism of Border Security in the Mediterranean Region**

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The European Union (EU) and its Member States warmly welcome today's speakers and thank them for the interesting and thought provoking presentations on addressing the threats stemming from arms trafficking in the Mediterranean region through the prism of border security. We are also grateful to the Montenegrin and Serbian Chairmanships for organising this Joint FSC-PC meeting.

With the full implementation of the Lisbon Treaty EU activities and cooperation are being further reinforced to respond to new challenges, namely in our immediate neighbourhood. At the same time, taking into account the rapidly evolving international security environment, the EU is embarking on a process of strategic reflection on how to better address the new security threats and challenges.

As is well known, we have been actively cooperating for a long time with partner countries and international organisations to address transnational threats such as arms trafficking in a coherent and comprehensive manner. In particular, the EU has signed the UN Firearms Protocol in order to strengthen international cooperation, in particular with the countries in the Mediterranean region.

In practical terms, the European Union supports by financial means the Interpol iARMS project on illicit firearms registering and tracing. Firearms are also a priority in the EU Policy Cycle against Organised and Serious Crime which coordinates the operational cooperation of the Member States together with Europol and also a number of other countries. Additionally, we are involved in international efforts to trace weapons originating from conflict areas outside the EU, notably in Africa, through a common project with Conflict Armament Research.

It is important to reiterate on this occasion the EU's continued support for strengthened implementation of OSCE commitments in the area of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA) and conventional weapons, especially having in mind that the risks stemming from illicit trafficking of SALW and ammunition have reached a new dimension, particularly due to events such as those experienced in North Africa and the Middle East.

That is why the European Union continues allocating substantial resources, within its Strategy on SALW, to support concrete activities aimed at enhancing SALW control

in the OSCE area, and where we welcome and promote international cooperation with the UN, the OSCE and other main actors. Against this background, we see merit in further developing cooperation with our Mediterranean partners to combat illicit trafficking and destabilising accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition. Moreover, this enhanced effort is in line with UNSCR 2220 (2015).

We are also committed to supporting OSCE activities in the area of border management, where the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe offers a range of general and specialised courses that are open to officials from the Mediterranean Partner countries. We encourage them to take advantage of the OSCE's expertise.

In conclusion, we would like to remind that the European Union is committed to pursuing and strengthening cooperation with our Mediterranean neighbours, including through the OSCE. In this context, we support the adoption of the FSC draft Decision on enabling the provision of assistance to OSCE Partners for Cooperation using procedures outlined in the OSCE Document on SALW and SCA.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND\*\* and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

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\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

\*\* Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.