



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 695 Vienna, 17 October 2012

EU Statement in response to the presentation by the ISACS Coordinator Dr Patrick McCarthy

The European Union (EU) warmly welcomes Dr Patrick McCarthy from the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thanks him for his presentation.

We congratulate Dr McCarthy and his team for the completion of the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) project, after four years of work involving the 23 UN agencies regrouped under the CASA framework as well as numerous state contributors. We are convinced the ISACS will provide a very useful practical tool in combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Our discussion today in the FSC takes place in the aftermath of the OSCE Meeting to Review the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW (22-23 May 2012, Vienna) and the Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) (27 August -7 September 2012, New York), where the ISACS were presented officially to the international community.

The UN Review Conference provided the opportunity to reaffirm our commitments and was a catalyst for greater efforts to combat the spread of SALW. Tangible and concrete activities are now necessary to deliver these commitments. In this respect ISACS is an important tool in providing global standards that assist States, relevant regional and international organizations, including the EU, in meeting the norms and commitments set forth in the UN PoA, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol. They will provide for benchmarks regarding safe and secure handling of small arms and their ammunition and will contribute to common standards in the programming and policy making on small arms across the UN system.

Within the framework of EU SALW Strategy, the EU supports the development of international standards and the enhancement of coordination in addressing the threats posed by illicit trade and excessive accumulation of SALW and their ammunition.

The EU's assistance programs on SALW cover, inter alia, assistance in drafting national legislation on control of arms exports, training of Institutions, customs departments and other agencies in order to improve border controls, stockpiles management, including collection and destruction of surplus SALW and promoting the need to deal with SALW and their ammunition as an integral part of crisis management missions.

The OSCE as a regional security organization is at the forefront of regional cooperation on SALW. All OSCE participating States have committed themselves to the implementation of the 2000 OSCE Document on SALW and its supplementary decisions. Much has been done but, we are still far from achieving full implementation. It is also important to note that the OSCE, as a regional arrangement under the UN Charter, has a substantial role to play in delivering against the UN PoA.

The EU encourages the OSCE to use the ISACS in implementing the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW and revise its Best Practice Guides, as well as to contribute to their further evolution by drawing upon its extensive regional experience on both a practical and policy level. The alignment of the OSCE electronic template for end users certificates with ISACS is an example of how the OSCE can use ISACS as it further develops its regional framework.

The EU reiterates the importance of the OSCE work in raising awareness of and assisting participating States in the development of relevant legislation and the implementation of their commitments. The EU supports these efforts and is considering further measures, including the allocation of resources for projects, to reduce the risk of illicit trade and excessive accumulation of SALW and their ammunition in the OSCE area.

The acceding country CROATIA^{*}, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND^{**} and SERBIA, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, ARMENIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

^{*} Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.