



## OSCE / FSC Briefing

# International Small Arms Control Standards: Implications for the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW

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### Introduction

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Esteemed Colleagues:

It is an honour for me to address the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation and I would like most sincerely to thank the current FSC Chair, Ambassador Dabik, for inviting me to do so. This is the third time, in as many years, that I appear before the FSC to update you on the United Nations initiative to develop and use International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). The importance that the United Nations places upon keeping the OSCE apprised of this initiative is a reflection of the leading role that the OSCE plays in developing and applying best practices on SALW control.

On August 29 of this year, during the Second Review Conference of the UN *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, the United Nations launched new International Small Arms Control Standards.

During my brief presentation this morning, I would like to

- explain the purpose of these standards;
- outline the role that the OSCE has played in developing them;
- describe the relationship between ISACS and the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW; and
- suggest ways in which these new international standards could assist the OSCE in revising your Plan of Action on SALW.

**Table 1 – UN CASA Partners**

<b>CTED</b>	United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
<b>DESA</b>	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>DPA</b>	Department of Political Affairs
<b>DPI</b>	Department of Public Information
<b>DPKO</b>	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OSAA</b>	Office of the Special Advisor on Africa
<b>OSAPG</b>	Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide
<b>OSRSG/CAAC</b>	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict
<b>OSRSG/VAC</b>	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UN-HABITAT</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNIDIR</b>	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
<b>UNMAS</b>	United Nation Mine Action Service
<b>UNODA</b>	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UN WOMEN</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## **Purpose of ISACS**

Over the past 4 years, the 23 United Nations entities that make up the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism (see Table 1) have collaborated with experts worldwide to develop a comprehensive set of International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). These standards provide practical guidance on putting in place and maintaining effective controls over the full life-cycle of SALW (see Table 2).

The development of these standards has been a truly collaborative effort involving partnerships with governments, UN Agencies, international organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO), Regional Organizations such as the OSCE, civil society organizations and the private sector (see Annex 1 for the current list of partners).

The International Small Arms Control Standards fit within the framework created by the three global instruments that UN Member States have negotiated related to SALW control, namely the UN Programme of Action against the illicit trade in SALW, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. What ISACS do, in essence, is to provide practical guidance on implementing the commitments contained in these global instruments.

It is worth emphasizing that the International Small Arms Control Standards do not create new international norms. They are based squarely on global commitments that States have already made. In addition to this, ISACS are completely voluntary in nature. The UN has made the standards freely available to any government or organization who wishes to use them on a new website – [www.smallarmsstandards.org](http://www.smallarmsstandards.org).

**Table 2 – International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS)**

<b>SERIES</b>	<b>MODULE</b>
<b>01 Introduction to ISACS</b>	01.10 Guide to the application of ISACS
	01.20 Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations
<b>02 Small arms and light weapons control in context</b>	02.10 Small arms and light weapons control in the context of preventing armed violence
	02.20 Small arms and light weapons control in the context of Security Sector Reform
	02.30 Small arms and light weapons control in the context of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
<b>03 Legislative and Regulatory</b>	03.10 National controls over the manufacture of small arms and light weapons
	03.20 National controls over the international transfer of small arms and light weapons
	03.21 National controls over the end-user and end-use of internationally transferred small arms and light weapons
	03.30 National controls over the access of civilians to small arms and light weapons
	03.40 National coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control
	03.50 International legal cooperation, criminal offences and investigations
<b>04 Design and Management</b>	04.10 Designing and implementing National Action Plans
	04.20 Designing and implementing community safety programming
	04.30 Raising awareness of the need for small arms and light weapons control
	04.40 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting
<b>05 Operational Support</b>	05.10 Conducting small arms and light weapons surveys
	05.20 Stockpile management: Weapons
	05.30 Marking and recordkeeping
	05.31 Tracing illicit small arms and light weapons
	05.40 Collection of illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons
	05.50 Destruction: Weapons
	05.60 Border controls and law enforcement cooperation
<b>06 Crosscutting Issues</b>	06.10 Women, gender and small arms and light weapons
	06.20 Children, adolescents, youth and small arms and light weapons

The standards are divided into six series and include guidance on necessary legislative and regulatory controls, the design and management of SALW control and operational support issues. During the Second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action in August of this year, CASA launched the operational support series of modules (Series 5). The remaining modules are in an advanced stage of development and will be launched, series by series, over the coming months.

### **The Role of the OSCE in developing ISACS**

I would like now to outline the role that the OSCE has played – directly and indirectly – in helping to develop ISACS; and offer some reflections on how these new standards could support your revision of the OSCE’s Plan of Action on SALW.

The foundation upon which ISACS are built is formed by best practices, model regulations, model legislation and standard operating procedures that have been elaborated at regional and sub-regional levels. Prominent among these, of course, is the OSCE's own *Handbook of Best Practices on SALW*, which has been an invaluable foundation stone for the development of International Small Arms Control Standards.

In addition to this, the OSCE has also played a direct part in helping to develop, fine-tune and finalise ISACS. Since the beginning of the ISACS project, the Secretariat of the Conflict Prevention Centre has represented the OSCE on the ISACS Expert Reference Group, which is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on draft standards modules. The OSCE has also been represented at all ISACS workshops held to date.

During the course of developing ISACS, the UN has built up a strong working relationship with the OSCE Secretariat at the technical level around issues of SALW control. We look forward to further strengthening this relationship as we move forward with applying these new international standards.

### **Relationship between ISACS and the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on SALW**

The development of international standards on SALW control does not lessen the need for – nor the utility of – regional and sub-regional small arms control standards and guidelines. This is because regional standards and guidelines can be more closely attuned to the specific needs and capacities of States in a particular region. International standards, on the other hand, must strike a difficult balance between being effective in achieving their desired outcome while, at the same time, being achievable by all UN Member States.

To put it another way, regional standards and guidelines can be more or less directly applied by States in a region since they have been developed with a narrower, more focused set of problems, needs and capacities in mind. International standards, by contrast, usually cannot be applied directly to a specific national context since they are designed to provide a more general template from which specific national policies and actions can be derived.

Why then, you may well ask, do we need international standards if regional standards and guidelines are more attuned to the specific needs and capacities of States in a particular region? The short answer is: Convergence.

### **How ISACS can support the revision of the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW**

International standards provide a convenient means of fleshing out global norms and commitments that States have made; in other words, norms and commitments that cut across all regions of the world. International standards are very useful things to have, since they provide a global reference point that can orient regional best practice guidelines when they are being expanded or revised. In other words, international standards can support and promote convergence between different regional best practices.

A very good example of this is the creation by the OSCE Secretariat in 2011 of an electronic template for an End-User Certificate (EUC) for SALW. As a result of the close cooperation between the UN and the OSCE in the development of ISACS, the OSCE Secretariat

electronic template for EUCs was aligned with the developing international standard on end-user certification (ISACS 03.21). Given that EUCs constitute such an important element of the export control process, perhaps the Forum for Security Co-operation could consider raising the status of the EUC template to an OSCE best practice.

Having international standards as a global reference point is, therefore, a useful way to encourage regional standards and guidelines to converge when they are being updated and revised. This allows regional best practices to remain closely attuned with the specific needs and capacities of States in the region while, at the same time, increasing the cross-regional compatibility and coherence of strategies to address the illicit trade, uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of SALW.

In this way, the new International Small Arms Control Standards could support your current efforts to revise the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW; including, should you decide to do so, by providing a global reference point that could orient the revision or updating of the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW.

### **Next Steps**

It is the intention of the UN to maintain ISACS as living documents that will be improved with use and over time. To this end, we will create an ISACS Review Board and will invite the OSCE Secretariat to join. The Review Board will be charged with regularly revising the international standards to reflect changes in the global framework (e.g. a possible new Arms Trade Treaty), as well as developments in policy and technology.

We hope that we can continue to rely on the OSCE to assist us in improving the quality of the guidance that ISACS provide, and that we can continue to benefit from the extensive practical and policy expertise on SALW control that exists in OSCE Participating States and in its Secretariat.

Following the launch of ISACS this summer, the 23 UN agencies that oversaw the development of the standards are now focused on applying them in the support that they provide to UN Member States on putting in place effective controls over the full life-cycle of SALW. These standards will help to ensure that the United Nations as a whole consistently delivers the highest quality advice and guidance to its Member States on this issue.

We also hope that these new international standards will be of use to regional organizations such as the OSCE and that the OSCE will feel free to make use of the standards in orienting the revision of your Plan of Action on SALW and in your continuing important work in this area. From our side, the ISACS Inter-Agency Support Unit stands ready to provide any support that you might find useful in this regard.

In concluding, I would like again to thank Ambassador Dabik for inviting me to address you today; and for your kind attention. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

# ISACS Expert Reference Group

## Governments

Australia • Canada • Colombia • Ecuador • Germany • Guatemala • Hungary • Iraq • Ireland • Jamaica • Kenya • Mexico • New Zealand • Norway • Papua New Guinea • Romania • Serbia • Switzerland • Trinidad and Tobago

## International, Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations

Central American Project on the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CASAC) • Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) • Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) • International Committee of Museums of Arms and Military History (ICOMAM) • International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) • International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) • Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana • League of Arab States • NATO Support Agency (NSPA) • Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) • Organization of American States (OAS) • Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons • Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECISA) • South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) • Wasenaar Arrangement on Export Control for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies • World Customs Organization

## Civil Society

Action on Armed Violence • Action Sécurité Éthique Républicaine (ASER), France • African Strategic and Peace Research Group (AFSTRAG) • Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) • British Shooting Sports Council • Burkina Faso Parliamentary Network on SALW • Canadian Coalition for Gun Control • Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) • Dan Church Aid • Danish Demining Group • Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) • Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) • Geneva Forum • Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRIP) • Halo Trust • Handicap International • Institute for Security Studies, South Africa (ISS) • International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) • International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH) • Mines Advisory Group (MAG) • Monterey Institute of International Studies • National Firearms Association of Canada • Nonviolence International • Oxfam • Pacific Forum for the Advancement of Women • People with Disabilities, Uganda • Project Ploughshares • Saferworld • Small Arms Survey • Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) • Umut Foundation, Turkey • University of Calgary, Canada • West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) • Women in Alternative Action, Cameroon

## Private Sector

Defense Small Arms Advisory Council (DSAAC) • EPES Mandala Consulting • Explosive Capabilities, Ltd. • MAB Consulting • National Association of Sporting Firearms and Ammunition Manufacturers, Italy (ANPAM) • Thierry Jacobs, Independent Technical Expert • Traceability Solutions

“Small arms in the wrong hands destroy lives and livelihoods, impede peace efforts, hinder humanitarian aid, facilitate the illicit trade in narcotics and obstruct investment and development.”

## Ban Ki-moon

General Assembly debate on *Disarmament and World Security*, 19 April 2010.

In collaboration with partners worldwide, the United Nations has elaborated International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) to streamline policymaking, programming and practice on small arms and light weapons control across the more than 20 UN entities that make up the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism.

ISACS will help to ensure that the United Nations as a whole consistently delivers, upon request, the highest quality advice and support to Member States on putting in place and maintaining effective controls over the full life-cycle of small arms and light weapons.

The standards fit within the framework created by existing global agreements and build upon best practices elaborated at regional and sub-regional levels.

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Australian Government  
AusAID



Government of Canada  
Gouvernement du Canada



Irish Aid

Department of Foreign Affairs  
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra



United Nations Office for  
Disarmament Affairs



Security Council  
COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE  
Executive Directorate

# International Small Arms Control Standards

Practical guidance on implementing global commitments to control small arms and light weapons

[www.smallarmsstandards.org](http://www.smallarmsstandards.org)



The gun sculpture (detail) - [www.gunsculpture.com](http://www.gunsculpture.com). Photo credits: ISACS

To consult the standards and for further information on the project, including how to become involved, visit the ISACS website:

[www.smallarmsstandards.org](http://www.smallarmsstandards.org)

ISACS Inter-Agency Support Unit  
[support@smallarmsstandards.org](mailto:support@smallarmsstandards.org)



United Nations  
**CASA**

Coordinating Action on Small Arms

## About CASA

CASA is the Small Arms coordination mechanism within the UN. Applying the wealth of expertise of its members, CASA is able to frame the small arms issue in all its aspects, making use of development, crime, terrorism, human rights, gender, youth, health and humanitarian insights. Collaborative initiatives under CASA include fact-finding missions, capacity-building projects, workshops and technical assistance to support Member States in the implementation of the Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument and the UN Firearms Protocol.



## About ISACS

CASA's initiative to develop International Small Arms Control Standards follows in the footsteps of the standards the UN has already developed in the areas of mine action (International Mine Action Standards) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (Integrated DDR Standards).

**The purpose of ISACS is to enhance the effectiveness of policymaking, programming and practice across the UN system by providing clear, comprehensive and practical guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of small arms and light weapons control.**

## International Small Arms Control Standards

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