

---

BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES  
TO CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON  
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

---

Statement by H.E. Ambassador John Freeman  
Head of the UK Delegation to the Biennial Meeting of States  
on behalf of the European Union

THEMATIC DEBATE INTERVENTION

Weapons Collection and Destruction, Stockpile Management  
And Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of former combatants

NEW YORK  
13-15 July 2005

## **Weapons Collection and Stockpile Management**

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.
2. Enhancing Weapons Management is an important means to block one of the most damaging channels for acquiring illicit weapons and ammunition. Weapons management encompasses a wide range of issues including stockpile management, marking and record-keeping of weapons and ammunition, identification of surplus weapons, disposal of weapons and the fight against corruption.
3. The EU has funded a broad range of weapons management projects around the world and remains committed to assist capacity and knowledge building where it is most needed. As well as financial support the EU has contributed time and experience and has demonstrated transparency in the field of physical stockpile and security management. For example, EU states have provided expert advice and training, given presentations, visited sites, written recommendation reports and have invited states to see internal stockpile and security arrangements. EU Member States also contributed to new OSCE agreements on ammunition stockpile management.
4. The EU recognises the need for a systematic exchange of information among donor and recipient countries on small arms and light weapons assistance, including lessons learned and options for future cooperation. In accordance with this aim several EU states have participated in workshops aimed at consolidating progress, exchanging information and examining areas for improvement.
5. The EU is committed to the destruction of destabilising accumulations of arms and to improving stockpile management practices, as these issues play a crucial role in the work towards preventing illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons.

## **Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants**

6. The Programme of Action recognised that the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants is a vital component of post-conflict peace processes. Unless small arms and light weapons collected through DDR programmes are safely stored and destroyed, they may be used to re-ignite conflict or facilitate criminal activity. The EU recognises the importance of DDR and has supported programmes in Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Cote d'Ivoire. The EU welcomes recent efforts to develop a unified approach in this area, particularly the UN's work on international DDR standards, as well as the Stockholm Initiative to develop predictable planning frameworks.