

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations conference to review progress made  
in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and  
Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

## **Contribution to Cluster IV**

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**on behalf of the European Union**

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*(check against delivery)*

## **International Cooperation and Assistance**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former , the Countries of the Stabilisation and Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

A great value of the Programme of Action (PoA) lies to a considerable extent in the promising possibilities for assistance and cooperation. Some progress has been made in that regard, including cooperation on PoA reporting, assistance on DDR, and the organisation of regional seminars. However, there is no coordination of these ad hoc arrangements and many opportunities to get serious with implementation through improved assistance and cooperation have until now not been taken up.

The European Union calls on Participating States to help those countries that are seriously affected by armed violence to build up their capacity to control small arms. Assistance is most effective when it is conducted within development partnerships and aligned with broader development goals. The EU is providing equipment and assistance in drafting national legislation on export controls and trains institutions in States of need. The EU is also participating in the efforts to reduce surplus stocks of SALW in particular through cooperation with the organisations (e.g. NATO, OSCE) whose help has been requested by the States concerned. Since 2003, the EU has provided substantial funding. The EU welcomes the OECD Development Assistance Committee's decision of March 2005 to classify small arms reduction measures as official development assistance. This decision creates new opportunities for the integration of small arms reduction measures into poverty reduction frameworks.

A practical dialogue on experiences, needs and requirements for sustained cooperation and assistance is important. In this regard, the EU welcomes the work undertaken in New York by the Group of Interested States and would welcome a further broadening of interesting cooperation and assistance within the PoA. The Review Conference should focus on ways to implement the generic commitments the PoA (para III.2) outlined in 2001. The setting up of a sponsorship programme by States in a position to do so could enable affected States to be represented at these meetings.

The EU warmly welcomes the statement made by the Under Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs concerning work within the United Nations to support implementation of the PoA, in particular to maximize the capacity of the United Nations to provide coordinated assistance