EU joint reply to the UNODA request related to UNGA Resolution 72/46 on "Relationship between Disarmament and Development"

Disarmament and development are interrelated, notably regarding the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW). As already recognized in 2001 in the UN Programme of Action, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and causes a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels. Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly mentions the objective of significantly reducing, by 2030, illicit financial and arms flows. In its strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition adopted by the European Council on 16 December 2005 the EU responds to the threat posed by illicit SALW and their ammunition and underlines the need for consistent security and development policies.

In a concrete follow up to the EU’s Strategy against illicit SALW, the EU provides considerable assistance through a number of projects to various countries to strengthen the action against accumulation and spread of SALW. Since 2004 more than EUR 100 million has been contracted to SALW-control projects. The priorities include stockpile management, the destruction of surplus and confiscated SALW, capacity building for marking, record keeping and tracing of SALW and tracking the sources of illicit weapons and ammunition in conflict affected areas. The EU is also assisting countries to enhance their national arms transfer control systems to prevent weapons from falling into unauthorized hands. The EU also financially supports activities of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and more generally confidence-building and transparency measures on arms transfers, which can contribute to decreasing arms race. EU support to the Arms Trade Treaty can be mentioned in this regard.

Further to SALW, disarmament projects are also funded by the EU regarding anti-personnel landmines and chemical weapons. All EU Member States are parties to the respective conventions banning landmines and chemical weapons and requiring their destruction by States Parties. EU support is notably provided to a number of States Parties to complete such destruction.

Under various development-related financial instruments, the EU also funds projects relevant to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) within its larger post-conflict peace building efforts.