Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

2. Ever since the adoption of the UN Programme of Actions in 2001, and even before, the European Union has been investing considerably in SALW-control cooperation and assistance to third countries.

3. The majority of assistance projects supported by the EU can be considered as classic SALW-control projects, with a focus on voluntary civilian disarmament campaigns, collection and destruction of surplus SALW and ammunition, physical security and stockpile management for SALW and ammunition, and capacity building for marking, record keeping and tracing. The dedicated projects’ activities are led by an integrated approach where physical measures are combined with support for legislation, awareness raising and promotion of international standards such as the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG).

4. Most of these projects have a regional scope and are implemented with the help of regional organizations. In Africa, the EU has worked together with the African Union, ECOWAS, UNREC, and RECSA. In Europe, the EU works with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearing House for the Control on SALW (SEESAC) that is part of UNDP, including support to the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to arms control in the Western Balkans by 2024. The roadmap model for regional coordinated approaches has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended. In Latin America, the EU works with the Organization of American States and UNLIREC. The EU
also supports combating the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States.

5. Other EU projects enable capacity building for arms export control, which is crucial in preventing SALW from falling into the wrong hands. The EU supports States, at their request, to strengthen their arms transfer control systems with a view to implementing the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The activities under the project take place across the globe and include assistance for drafting legislation, training and sharing of best practices among export control professionals. Implementers are the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) and the organisation Expertise France, assisted by export control officers from other EU Member States. In addition, the EU through the ATT implementation support program has provided technical assistance to a good number of beneficiary countries in Latin America, in Africa, in Central and South East Asia, in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, aiming at strengthening their national systems, in line with the requirements of the Treaty.

6. Since 2011, the EU has been supporting INTERPOL’s Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System. As you know iARMS is an electronic platform that facilitates information exchange and investigative cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

7. Since 2013, the EU has also been supporting iTrace, a global reporting mechanism on illicit SALW and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition in conflict affected areas implemented by Conflict Armament Research. This project aims to track and trace illicit SALW and ammunition by means of in-field research in conflict-affected regions, where local law enforcement agencies often lack the capacity to trace. The patterns of trafficking and diversion exposed by iTrace serve to increase the effectiveness of arms control measures such as export control and stockpile management.

8. For the EU supporting and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the core of our policies, whether at home or abroad. In line with its EU SALW adopted in 2018, the EU systematically applies gender mainstreaming in the design of new projects relating to the fight against gun violence and SALW control in general.

9. From its inception, the UN PoA recognised stockpile management as one of the key responsibilities of states in their efforts to prevent the diversion of SALW. The EU has been a leading supporter of international efforts to develop a voluntary, internationally recognised system for the validation of arms and ammunition management according to open international standards.

10. The EU supports Africa-China-Europe dialogue and cooperation and contributes to preventing and combating the diversion of arms and ammunition in Africa. The direct beneficiaries of the projects are policy community actors in Africa, China and in Europe, including non-governmental organisations, think tanks, industry representatives, government officials in charge of conventional arms control, and parliamentarians. The indirect beneficiaries are the population, communities, groups and individuals in Africa who are adversely affected by the proliferation of illicit arms and ammunition in the continent.
11. The EU also supports the implementation of the Firearms Protocol in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The project's activities are focussed on supporting the drafting of legislation and capacity building for law enforcement, including training for investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking. In the context of this project, UNODC published its Firearms Study that describes trafficking and diversion cases across the globe.

12. EU SALW-control assistance also supports peer-to-peer exchange. The EU is facilitating cooperation between Member States' law enforcement agencies and their counterparts in the neighbourhood. The EU has set up a network of law enforcement personnel from Member States that focus on the fight against firearms trafficking by organised crime. This network, called EMPACT Firearms, meets regularly to exchange information and experiences and develops activities in order to achieve pre-set goals. EMPACT-firesarms is engaging in peer-to-peer activities and capacity building in the context EU-outreach to countries in the neighbourhood.

13. In order to increase efficiency and sustainability of assistance efforts the BMS8 outcome document should call for improved coordination among relevant regional organisations, donors and implementing agencies in full ownership of the governments of recipient States and steered by national action plans and strategies.

14. Finally, in order to increase transparency on cooperation and assistance in the field of SALW control, the EU would welcome a global repository, agreed among donors, where information about SALW control assistance is shared and registered.

Thank you Mr. Chair.