

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU STRATEGY TO COMBAT THE ILLICIT ACCUMULATION AND TRAFFICKING OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND THEIR AMMUNITION — ACTIONS IN 2015

(2017/C 115/01)

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Introduction

This progress report on the implementation of the EU Strategy to Combat Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their Ammunition covers EU actions in support of the implementation of the action plan contained in the Strategy carried out over the year 2015. The report was prepared by the EEAS Division for Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Export Control in cooperation with other relevant EEAS and European Commission services.

During the reporting period, the EU continued to support the implementation of a wide range of projects to combat the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of SALW and their ammunition. The EU also continued to promote a great number of issues related to SALW and their ammunition in all multilateral fora as well as in its political dialogues with third countries in the context of relevant international instruments, such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI) and the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UN Firearms Protocol). The prevention of the illicit trade in arms is also one of the key objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which entered into force on 24 December 2014, and which complements and reinforces the PoA.

The report follows the structure of the Action Plan of the EU SALW Strategy. The language from the Action plan is put in *italics* and in a frame.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN CONTAINED IN THE EU SALW STRATEGY

Action Plan:

1) Effective multilateralism to develop universal, regional and national mechanisms to counter the supply and destabilising spread of SALW and their ammunition

International

Promote implementation of the UN Programme of Action (POA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Action 1: EU participation to the second Meeting of Governmental Experts of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA MGE2, 1-5 June 2015 in New York).

The EU participated actively in the second Meeting of Governmental Experts of the PoA. In its Statement, the EU highlighted the role of new developments in SALW technology and design to enhance weapon marking, record-keeping and tracing, and expressed readiness to support projects to concretely explore the potential use of new technologies to secure SALW. The EU also welcomed increased efforts by the international community to more effectively monitor the implementation of arms embargoes and to further improve its diagnostic capacity in the field of combating illicit trade in and diversion of SALW. In this regard, the EU welcomed UN Security Council Resolution 2220 (2015) on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted on 22 May 2015. Moreover, the EU welcomed increased information exchange and investigative cooperation between law enforcement agencies in relation to the international movement of illicit firearms and the increased efforts on tracking illicit SALW and ammunition in conflict-affected regions, mentioning the iARMS and iTrace-databases (cfr. infra).

Action Plan: support the adoption of a legally binding international instrument on the tracing and marking of SALW and ammunition.

Action 2: iARMS — support for the creation and management of a database for tracking and tracing lost, stolen, trafficked and smuggled firearms (iARMS)

In the framework of the EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) long-term component, the EU continued to provide financial assistance to INTERPOL for the development and roll out of a database for tracking and tracing lost, stolen, trafficked and smuggled firearms (iARMS) via the Interpol I-24/7 system, in order to facilitate regional and trans-

regional information exchange and investigative cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Since December 2014, the project is running its third phase, due to end in December 2016, with the objective of consolidating the achievements of the first two phases, to foster the global usage of iARMS and to exploit synergies with related systems, in the EU and elsewhere. As of August 2015, 144 INTERPOL member countries have created accounts for law enforcement officials and have registered a total of 1 619 user accounts. 763 537 Records of lost stolen, trafficked or smuggled firearms have been uploaded into the database. Law enforcement officials have carried out 6 697 searches and have submitted 4 296 trace requests through the iARMS system. The searches returned 50 hits of which 5 are confirmed and 45 are under investigation in the autumn of 2015. 872 Trace requests were answered. INTERPOL has used the data from the iARMS system to analyse known trafficking routes in and out of Panama.

The database efficiency depends on content accuracy and regular utilisation of skilled users. In order to improve the quality of the content and systematic use, the project carried out iARMS user training designed to enable users to perform specific actions within the database, related to record creation, update, search, reporting and trace request management and provides various help desk functions. Seven training sessions have been conducted, of which five were regional trainings (in Cameroon for West Africa, in El Salvador for Latin America, in Zimbabwe for Southern Africa, and two in Lyon for Europe) and two were national workshops (Portugal and France).

Action Plan: strengthen and support the machinery for sanctions and sanctions monitoring.

Action 3: iTrace — global reporting mechanism on illicit small arms and light weapons and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition to reduce the risk of their illicit trade (Council Decision 2013/698/CFSP⁽¹⁾ and Council Decision 2015/1908/CFSP⁽²⁾)

Since 2013 the EU supports **iTrace**, which is a global reporting mechanism on illicit SALW and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition, implemented by Conflict Armament Research (CAR). The system 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. CAR works closely with and provides technical assistance to governments, UN sanction monitoring groups and Peace Support Operations. The information on patterns of trafficking and diversion exposed by iTrace serve to increase the effectiveness of arms control measures, such as export control and stockpile management. The objective of the initiative is to identify and stop diversion. iTrace also seeks to help monitor ATT implementation, provide comprehensive information in support of ATT implementation reviews and strengthen the capacity of national governments to anticipate the impact of arms export licensing decisions.

In 2015, CAR has conducted iTrace field investigations in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Iraq, Jamaica, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Uganda. In total, CAR investigation teams have documented more than 1 30 000 items (weapons, ammunition, packaging, vehicles, and related materiel). CAR continually verifies and uploads this information onto the iTrace system.

In addition also in 2015 CAR presented iTrace at a wide range of international events in different regions of the world, including:

- the SEESAC arms export licensing conference in Tirana, Albania;
- to UNSOM, Somalia;
- to UNMAS in Bamako, Mali;
- the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Agency (JIEDDA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Washington DC;
- the Stimson Center for Global Security, Washington DC;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 320, 30.11.2013, p. 34.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 278, 23.10.2015, p. 15.

- the EU Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUMAM RCA), Bangui;
- the EU Delegation in Beirut;
- and in two presentations to the Second Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Programme of Action.

CAR has also strengthened information sharing with UN Sanctions Monitoring Groups, providing direct assistance to six. These Groups have referenced iTrace project outputs in four recent reports to the Security Council: Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities (S/2014/815), the DRC Group of Experts (S/2015/19), the Sudan Panel of Experts (S/2015/31), and the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire (S/2015/252).

Finally, CAR's *Dispatches from the Field* series has been widely reported in the international news media. This includes two Dispatches released during the reporting period: *Islamic State weapons in Kobane*, which details weapons captured from Islamic State forces and documented by a CAR investigation team at 48 locations in and around Kobane; and *Weapons and Ammunition Airdropped to SPLA-iO Forces in South Sudan*, which provides evidence of weapon supplies by Sudan to South Sudanese rebel forces.

The EU guaranteed its support to the second phase of the iTrace project through a new Council Decision (2015/1908/CFSP) adopted on 22 October 2015.

Action Plan: support the strengthening of export controls and the promotion of the criteria of the Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

The control on the export, import, transit and trans-shipment of arms is crucial in preventing diversion of SALW and their use for crime or terrorism; the UN PoA is explicit in this regard. Therefore the EU is supporting States, at their request, to strengthen their arms transfer control systems. The projects' activities take place across the globe and include assistance for drafting of legislation, training and sharing of best practices among export control professionals. The implementer is the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA), assisted by export control officers from other EU Member States. The international norm for arms export control that is used for the outreach is the Arms Trade Treaty. Recipient countries in the EU neighbourhood can also request assistance to get acquainted with the EU's export control system for military goods in Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP ⁽³⁾.

Action 4: EU activities in support of the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, in the framework of the European Security Strategy (Council Decision 2013/768/CFSP ⁽⁴⁾).

To contribute to the implementation and universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty, the EU Council adopted in 2013 an ambitious support programme for non-EU countries. This programme assists a number of non-EU countries upon their request in strengthening their arms transfer systems in line with the requirements of the Arms Trade Treaty. The project is implemented by the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA).

In 2015, ATT assistance visits took place in Jamaica (January), Peru (May), Senegal (February), Burkina Faso (July), Ghana (July), Philippines (January) and Georgia (September). In all these countries the first needs assessment visit took place in order to identify the priority areas for specific cooperation. The EU support teams met with the main national stakeholders involved in the ATT implementation and, in some of the countries, the priority areas retained have been already set out and addressed in an assistance roadmap that will guide the cooperation with the EU over the longer term.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 341, 18.12.2013, p. 56.

Besides the assistance visits, four regional seminars have been arranged as part of the EU activities in support of the implementation of the ATT:

- for ECOWAS members and five neighbouring countries (Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea) in Dakar on 5-6 May 2015;
- for the Member States of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) (except for Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) in Manila on 10-11 May 2015;
- for the African countries (except Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea) in Pretoria on 23-24 September 2015;
- In Togo, in the framework of *ad hoc* countries activities, a *Séminaire de Sensibilisation des Parlementaires sur le Traité sur le Commerce des Armes* took place on 15-16 October 2015.

The inclusion of SALW in the ATT's scope is paramount and more stringent controls on legal international transfers of SALW through, for instance, more robust end-user controls and assurances as well as through diversion mitigation measures can further reduce the risk of SALW being diverted to the illegal market. Thus, the ATT will also complement and reinforce other relevant UN instruments such as the PoA and the UN Firearms Protocol.

Action 5: Promotion of effective arms export controls by means of the promotion, among third countries, of the principles and criteria of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP (Council Decision 2012/711/CFSP⁽⁵⁾ and 2015/2309/CFSP⁽⁶⁾)

The implementation of Council Decision 2012/711/CFSP on support for Union activities in order to promote, among countries in the EU neighbourhood, the control of arms exports and the principles and criteria of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP was completed in December 2014. Arms export control outreach activities have been carried out by the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA). This action was a follow-up of Joint Action 2009/2012/CFSP. A new Council Decision (2015/2309/CFSP) in support of effective arms export control has been adopted on 10 December 2015 and the Council entrusted BAFA with its technical implementation.

The purpose of the Decision is to promote effective controls on arms exports by non-EU countries in accordance not only with the principles set out in Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, but also in the Arms Trade Treaty, and to support these countries' efforts at domestic and regional levels in order to render trade in conventional weapons more responsible and transparent. The beneficiary countries of these actions include the South Eastern European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia); North African Mediterranean countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) and Eastern European and Caucasian countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

Action Plan: promote ratification of the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms

Action 6: Countering transnational illicit arms trafficking through the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its Firearms Protocol.

This programme was supported through the long-term component of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), which addresses global and trans-regional threats and was formerly known as Instrument for Stability (IFS). It was implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), starting in March 2011 and concluding in July 2015, with the aim to prevent and counter the trans-national illicit trade in firearms by promoting the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol. The programme targeted 8 countries in West Africa and 7 in South America and

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 321, 20.11.2012, p. 62.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 326, 11.12.2015, p. 56.

the Caribbean and provided tailored legislative support to project countries to assist them in amending or adopting new domestic legislation for the implementation of the Firearms Protocol's provisions.

The project provided legislative assistance to 5 countries in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo, and 5 countries in South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay, in reviewing and drafting national laws, and in some of them (Benin, Mauritania, Togo and Senegal) in finalising the drafting process and submitting the bill to the competent authorities, for subsequent legislative adoption. In Argentina the legislative assistance focused on inclusion of the illicit trafficking offence in the new draft penal code.

In the area of capacity-building, law enforcement officers from West Africa (Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Benin and Togo) and South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Paraguay) were trained on investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking. The courses provided criminal justice practitioners with a well-founded background in the core skills required to investigate trafficking in firearms and other firearms related offences.

In addition, the project has consistently sought engagement with national and regional civil society bodies and parliamentarians in order to raise awareness on SALW issues and enhance civil society participation and oversight in the implementation of firearms strategies. Engagement with civil society organisations continued both through involving them in legislative assistance activities, but also through holding special training modules for NGOs. UNODC also continued the collection and analysis of data on seized firearms, their parts and components, and ammunition for the purpose of conducting a study on firearms trafficking that was initiated at the end of 2013. The study's goal is to increase the understanding of the problem of firearms trafficking, reveal possible routes in the illicit trade of firearms, and identify new or emerging trends in firearms trafficking, as well as determine the inter-connectedness and transnational nature of such a phenomenon. The resulting 'Study on the transnational nature of and routes and modus operandi used in trafficking in firearms' was published at the end of 2015 ⁽⁷⁾.

1) *Effective multilateralism to develop universal, regional and national mechanisms to counter the supply and destabilising spread of SALW and their ammunition*

Action Plan: Regional

Specific EU project assistance to Third Countries and Regional Organisations

(a) Western Balkans

Action 7: SEESAC (South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of SALW) disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe (Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP ⁽⁸⁾)

The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) works to strengthen the capacities of national and regional stakeholders to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and thus contribute to enhanced stability, security and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe. SEESAC functions under the mandate given to it by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP was already the third in support of SALW-control actions by SEESAC after the Joint Actions 2002/842/CFSP ⁽⁹⁾ and Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP ⁽¹⁰⁾. SEESAC is implementing the activities stipulated in the current Council Decision in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo ⁽¹¹⁾, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia.

⁽⁷⁾ UNODC Study in Firearms 2015.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ L 332, 11.12.2013, p. 19.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ L 289, 26.10.2002, p. 1.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ L 80, 26.3.2010, p. 48.

⁽¹¹⁾ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)

In 2015, SEESAC successfully completed the installation process (started in 2014) of 19 security doors in four storage locations of the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After an assessment mission and site visit to Moldova, it was agreed with the Ministry of Defence to start the security upgrade for two ammunition/SALW storages in Chisinau and Bulboaca. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the project is continuing the upgrade of security conditions at two storages: Orman and Erebin. In March 2015, a five-day Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) course was successfully organized in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: the activity was important not only for increasing the PSSM knowledge amongst the staff in charge of stockpile security but also for reinforcing the project's investment in the storage security infrastructure upgrades. In addition, SEESAC started planning the PSSM Regional training aiming to enhance the capacities of personnel, tasked with SALW/ammunition stockpile management.

Destruction of surplus SALW and their ammunition

In the first part of 2015, SEESAC received final confirmation from the Ministry of Defence of Albania that 5 400 weapons would be destroyed through the project. In addition, 2 656 pieces of small arms and light weapons, and 2 048 parts and components were destroyed with SEESAC support in Montenegro and Kosovo in two separate destruction events to mark the 9 July, the International Gun Destruction Day. Activity progress under this component has slowed down though in Moldova, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia due to political instability and/or personnel changes.

Improvement of the marking and tracing of SALW

Marking and tracing capabilities were enhanced throughout the region. In Albania, 56 computers, 56 UPSs, 28 printers and 9 scanners were distributed in 6 Police Directorates and 27 police stations throughout the country, while 72 users were trained on the weapons electronic registry software. The monitoring visits carried out by SEESAC in 49 Albanian police stations showed that the new electronic weapons registry is operative and has significantly improved record-keeping of weapons by the Police. Furthermore, 166 police officers were trained on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for SALW Tracing in eight workshops, organised throughout Kosovo.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a delegation of experts of the Ministry of Interior was supported to see in practice the application of the Firearms e-Register at the Austrian Ministry of Interior and address their technical and legislative concerns. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the completed set of the requested equipment were delivered and is currently in use.

Fostering of closer regional cooperation on SALW issues

In Serbia, contracting and installation of equipment for the National Forensic Centre (FNC) ballistics laboratory was successfully finalised while the 3rd Meeting of the South East Europe Fire Arms Experts (SEEFEN) was successfully organised in Belgrade, getting together senior firearms experts of Police Services, Customs Administrations, and Prosecutors' Offices. SEEFEN was highlighted as well in the UN Secretary-General's biennial report on SALW as an example of good practice in law enforcement and investigation cooperation focusing on information exchange. SEESAC strengthened as well the strategic partnerships with EUROPOL and INTERPOL. Finally, the first Joint Action Day between the SEEFEN and EU took place and represents an important beginning of closer cooperation between the SEE region, EUROPOL and EU Member States.

The Council Decision also provided SEESAC with the mandate to facilitate the creation of a regional firearms network. Accordingly, the 4th Regional Meeting of SALW Commissions was held in Budva, Montenegro. In May, SEESAC launched the South East Europe Arms Law Compendium, which aims to support harmonisation of arms control and export legislation in SEE. It is publicly available online in original languages and English. Furthermore, the project facilitated: (1) two exchange visits between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania counterparts from the Ministries of Defence and Albania and Kosovo counterparts from the Police services; (2) an expert exchange between officials from National SALW Commissions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro with Moldova's representatives from various line ministries. The meetings, which took place in Moldova, were an opportunity for Moldovan officials to gain new knowledge

and expertise on specific aspects of arms control as well as on the establishment of their SALW Commission. In addition, the development of the Gender Analysis of National Policy documents in the area of SALW Control in South Eastern Europe has been initiated.

Promoting collection and registration of SALW in illegal civilian possession in South East Europe

Over the course of 2015, SEESAC has been keeping supporting the implementation of SALW collection and awareness-raising campaigns in the Western Balkans. In 2015, SEESAC continued to provide expert and technical support to Montenegro and Serbia in their public weapons legalisation and collection/awareness raising campaigns. Some 1 004 pieces of firearms, 153 mines and explosive devices, 577 pieces of weapons, 14 963 bullets of different calibres have been returned by civilians in Montenegro since the beginning of the campaign. A total of 7 545 SALW and explosive devices were extracted from illegal flows in Serbia by the end of the campaign. In addition, 200 Police staff were trained in Serbia on the implementation of the new Law on Weapons and Ammunition while 13 journalists from major media outlets from South East Europe were trained on identification of SALW and Ammunition.

SEESAC applies a gender-sensitive approach to its SALW-control activities. In the Balkans privately owned fire arms (legal or illegal) contribute significantly to domestic violence: as tool for lethal violence against women in particular, but also as an enabler for non-armed domestic violence. SEESAC has been actively promoting equal opportunity for women in law enforcement agencies and the creation of female only police units to deal with domestic violence specifically. In awareness-raising about the dangers of guns at home and the promotion of responsible gun ownership ('PSSM at Home') SEESAC experienced that a gendered campaign directed to women, was far more successful in achieving the desired results. In order to promote the gender approach and convince stakeholders in arms control work SEESAC stresses the importance of research and data on how armed violence has a gendered impact and requires a gendered response in order to be successful.

Action 8: Explosive Ordnance and Remnants of War Destruction Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EXPLODE)

The implementation of a follow-up project under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) crisis response component, focusing on the security, safety and development perspectives for individuals and local communities affected by accidental explosions at ammunition storage sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina also continued in 2015. It was estimated that BiH had over 24 000 tonnes of military ammunition stockpiles, of which over 17 000 tonnes are chemically unstable and represent a high risk of uncontrolled explosion which could have possibly led to human casualties and may have had negative impacts for the region as well. The BiH Ministry of Defence does not possess sufficient capacities, capabilities and financial resources to ensure that appropriate standards are in place at the storage facilities and therefore relies on EU and international support to assist in expediting the clearance and destruction of unexploded ordnances and explosives remnants of war as well as ensuring better stockpile safety.

The interventions implemented under this project brought extensive progress towards reduction of ammunition stockpiles. Significant quantities of rocket systems were disposed of utilising capacities and services of the defence industry Pretis in the period between October and December 2015. As part of joint efforts of project EXPLODE and Pretis, 4 641 pieces of rocket system were disposed of in a safe and environmentally safe manner. By the end of its implementation, EXPLODE will have taken significant steps to dispose of surpluses of hazardous ammunition. White phosphorus (WP), complex rocket systems and anti-tank mines are set up for disposal by the end of August 2016. Under the auspices of the project and its activity devoted to capacity development, activities have reached out to over 100 participants during 2015 providing targeted expertise to the project partners in the area of stockpile management and aligning their practices with the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. Within the infrastructure upgrades component, the safety interventions were implemented at 68 facilities. The facilities were upgraded and aligned with international safety standards. Furthermore, military ammunition disposal facility TROM, Doboj was improved in terms of occupational safety, risks of unplanned explosion and from the perspective of general safety. EXPLODE was implemented in close coordination with the activities of SEESAC.

(b) OSCE region

Action 9: Activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of SALW in the region covered by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (Council Decision 2012/662/CFSP⁽¹²⁾)

Activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of SALW in the region covered by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also continued during the reporting period.

Stockpile Management

With regard to planned security upgrades of stockpile depots of conventional weapons and ammunition in Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE, after the regulatory framework for the implementation of activities in the country was adopted by the relevant national institutions, concluded the bidding process to select companies for the construction and security upgrades of one stockpile storage in Koi-Tash (started in August 2015), and the reconstruction of three existing storages (started in September 2015).

Destruction of surplus SALW

On destruction of surplus of SALW to prevent their diversion to the illegal trade, activities have been undertaken in Kyrgyzstan and Belarus. In Kyrgyzstan, after one year of review and consultation, the Government approved in August 2015 the decree on disposal of surplus weapons. This process was supported by the OSCE by conducting five round tables with all relevant agencies in possession of SALW in the country and by providing experts for the drafting of the decree. The implementation of the decree was subject to the development and adoption of two instructions by the Government (September-October 2015), followed by the actual destruction of the surplus weapons in Kyrgyzstan (November 2015).

In Belarus, where consultation with the Ministry of Defence resulted in the identification of ca 12 000 SALW as surplus, the OSCE will provide through UNDP Belarus equipment for the disposal of the surplus SALW. After several meetings, the OSCE and MoD reached an agreement on the necessary equipment and it was decided that the OSCE will provide the MoD Belarus with 3 air plasma cutting machines, 3 welding tables, 6 forklifts, 3 floor presses, 3 angle grinders, 6 circular saws, and safety equipment (safety glasses, hearing protection/noise reduction earmuffs, welding helmets, etc.). The procurement of the equipment will be carried out by UNDP Belarus. The project activities dedicated to physical security improvements of SALW storages were going on in two large stockpiles located in Homiel and Kolasava. Works on the installation of fire alarm and security systems at the Homiel site were almost completed and one of the SALW storages located in Kolasava was repaired. An international tender for works on capital repair of one of the SALW storages located in Kolasava was carried out.

Marking, record-keeping and tracing

In the area of introduction of SALW inventory software to improve stockpile management, record-keeping and tracing of weapons, based on the review of the application and feedback by experts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Moldova and Tajikistan, a new version of the software was finalised. The application was also translated into the Romanian and Tajik languages. The OSCE also organised training for the members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina armed forces on the use of the upgraded record-keeping application. The application was also presented to the Ministries of Defence of Georgia and Ukraine. Furthermore, 30 computers and 30 printers have been delivered to the Ministry of Defence of Moldova while on 13-17 July and on 19-23 October, members of the Moldovan armed forces have been trained on the use of the record-keeping application. On 25 September 2015, the IT Department of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia, after initial testing, submitted a list of questions inquiring about the functionalities of the software application and requested training on its use, provided in October 2015. Further trainings were provided to officials from the Ministry of Defence of Tajikistan in November 2015, and a 'train the trainers' event took place in Kyrgyzstan in November 2015.

⁽¹²⁾ OJ L 297, 26.10.2012, p. 29.

(c) **Africa**

Action 10: Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) activities to reduce the risk of the illicit trade in SALW and their ammunition in the Sahel region (Council Decision 2014/912/CFSP⁽¹³⁾).

The Council of the European Union adopted the decision 2014/912/CFSP, setting out a 36-month project to be co-financed by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and implemented by Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC). The project aims at contributing to security and stability in the Sahel region by providing assistance to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria to prevent the diversion of, and the illicit trafficking in, government-owned SALW and ammunition through improved PSSM. In particular, it aims to support target countries in the development of up-to-date legislation, administrative procedures and practical standard operating procedures as the foundation of enhanced PSSM, in line with international best practice standards, and will also directly support the implementation of stockpile management and security activities through rehabilitation of storage facilities, destruction of surplus, obsolete or illicit SALW and the piloting of new technologies. The implementation of these activities started in 2016.

Action 11: RECSA activities in support of the fight against the illicit accumulation of and trade in firearms and ammunition in Africa.

With funding from the long-term component of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the EU continued the implementation of a project to support the fight against the illicit accumulation of and trade in firearms and ammunition in Africa, through the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa (RECSA), located in Nairobi. This project contributed to the implementation of the Peace and Security component of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Following the project's first phase that ended in June 2013, and supported, inter alia, the institutional structures and legislative capacities in several countries in East Africa, the project entered in its second phase in July 2013, with the objective to enhance the capacities of African countries to efficiently implement and coordinate their efforts against the proliferation and trafficking of illicit SALW. The project has continued with a combination of institutional capacity-building activities coupled with a series of SALW effective management activities (arms marking, record keeping, stockpile management and destruction) and information generation. The project also envisaged a wide range of awareness raising activities as seminars and workshops providing information on all aspects of the Nairobi Protocol and other relevant international standards, regional and sub-regional instruments. RECSA also provided advice, as part of awareness raising visits, to target countries, about the policy and legal framework of the fight against SALW proliferation, and about the establishment and modus operandi of national SALW institutions such as the National Commissions on SALW and National Focal points. RECSA also supported the Republic of the Congo and Malawi in the development of national action plans on SALW. Furthermore, RECSA also provided Ghana, Mali, Somalia and Sudan of marking machines, as well as training on arms marking techniques and relevant software to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Rwanda, Seychelles and Togo.

Action 12: support to the Libyan authorities in securing stockpiles in conventional weapons and ammunition (Council Decision 2013/320/CFSP⁽¹⁴⁾)

On 24 June 2013 the Council decided to provide up to EUR 5 million in EU support for assisting the Libyan authorities in their task of securing their massive volume of stockpiles in conventional weapons and ammunition. The EU intended to offer this support to help the responsible authorities in Libya stop the further uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons and ammunition, which continues to fuel insecurity in Libya, its neighbouring countries and the broader region. The project design acknowledged the complex political situation and resulting challenges in Libya as well as the necessity to

⁽¹³⁾ OJ L 360, 17.12.2014, p. 30.

⁽¹⁴⁾ OJ L 173, 26.6.2013, p. 54.

ensure national ownership and empowerment of local partners. The foreseen duration of the project was five years. Unfortunately, in view of the significantly deteriorated security situation in Libya since July 2014, Council Decision 2013/320/CFSP has been repealed by Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1521⁽¹⁵⁾ in September 2015.

Action 13: EU Support to ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate — Pilot Weapons Collection Programmes

Taking into account that West Africa is a priority region, due to the situation with regards to the spread of SALW from the Libya conflict, and the security situation in Nigeria, as well as recognising the urgent need for a comprehensive Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration across the Mano River and the Sahel Sahara regions in order to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) implement the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, a new project funded by the European Development Fund (EDF) commenced in the third quarter of 2014. The project aims at mopping up SALW and promoting development projects by empowering the people in the pilot communities located in selected regions of six ECOWAS Member States. This three-year action, that will run until 2017 with an EU financing of EUR 5,56 million, falls under the umbrella of the Programme 'EU Support to ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate' and is implemented by UNDP. The project will implement 'Pilot Weapons Collection Programmes' ('Disarmament and Community Development' or 'Weapons for Development') in two clusters covering six countries, namely Northern Niger, Mali; the Mano River Union (West of Cote d'Ivoire; Guinée Forestière; East of Liberia; North-East of Sierra Leone) that will complement other initiatives already being implemented within the European Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. The activities of the project include raising community awareness on the dangers associated with the illicit spread of small arms and armed violence; strengthening the capacity of security institutions and communities to enhance safety and above all encouraging voluntary weapons surrender/collection in return for community based development projects.

(d) Central America

Action 14: EU support to the Central American Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Programme (CASAC)

The EU continued the implementation of a project supporting the Central American Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Programme (CASAC). Under the long-term component of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, the project, which was previously implemented by UNDP, entered its second phase of support in September 2012 with the Security Commission of the Central American Integration System (SICA) as its implementing partner the *Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible*. The project design is based on widely accepted conclusions on the main drivers of violence in Central America, i.e. drug trafficking, youth violence and gangs, and the widespread availability of illicit firearms. Although addressing illicit SALW trafficking is the specific purpose of both CASAC programmes, the project also takes into account associated organised crime activities, such as narcotics, human and vehicle smuggling, as subjects to include in most of its training and research. In general terms the incidence of CASAC II is mostly notable in law enforcement aspects of SALW control, on the assumption that seizure of arms circulating in the region would result not only in the reduction of suffering, pain and trauma inflicted upon victims but also in a possible boost of economic growth. The contribution of the EU project to the CASAC initiative aims at establishing the foundation for a regional structure and long-term strategy to fight the illicit trafficking of arms in Central America, both at national and regional level. The project is implemented in Central America and neighbouring countries, with a particular focus on the eight SICA Member States (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic).

One year ahead of the project completion, CASAC II has overachieved its expected results in terms of: (i) enhanced operational regional cooperation against accumulation, possession and smuggling of SALW; (ii) National Units on gun control and criminal investigation strengthened in terms of their recording systems and control of SALW, to strengthen the

⁽¹⁵⁾ OJ L 239, 15.9.2015, p. 142.

exchange of information at the level of the region and monitoring SALW traffic through training, technology and equipment supplies; (iii) improved coordination, standardisation and implementation of international, regional and national instruments related to SALW. These objectives have been accomplished through the arrangement of several activities which targeted all SICA countries:

- National courses on dismantling of SALW illicit trafficking structures, organisations and networks within the Central America Security Strategy (ESCA); on identification of firearms and their parts in luggage and freight containers; on iArms Tracing, DNA and fingerprinting.
- National surveys on arms trafficking and Regional operations on SALW trafficking (ORCA — *Operativos Regionales para Control de Armas*). The third ORCA operation led to the arrest of 6 014 people and the confiscation of 13 003 weapons, 101 383 ammunition and 155 explosives.
- Draft of Firearms model laws and support to the operations of eight Interpol CNMs (National bureaux).

Action 15: Supporting the implementation of security strategies in Central America in fighting and preventing crimes related to small arms and light weapons and armed violence

A regional project 'Supporting the implementation of security strategies in Central America in fighting and preventing crimes related to small arms and light weapons and armed violence' was also financially supported by the European Union from January 2012 to June 2015. The project targeted six Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panamá) with the goal to contribute to the implementation of the Central American Security Strategy (ESCA) in its component of fight against crime and prevention of armed violence related to the use of SALW. More specifically, the project aimed at: (i) supporting the definition of an action plan for the implementation of the CASS at national level; (ii) strengthening the national commissions for the control of SALW and the prevention of armed violence (the CNM — *Comisión Nacional Multidisciplinar*); (iii) promote the debate and exchange of experiences on border issues regarding the combat of illicit arms trafficking; (iv) establish monitoring mechanism for the civil society to watch over the commitments acquired by the States. The *Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible* (IEPADES) was designated as implementing partner of the project whose main beneficiaries are: the governments of the Central America countries, SICA, the civil society of Central American States organised in the Central American Network for Peacebuilding and Human Security (REDCEPAZ). The project was supported by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

Action Plan:

1) Effective multilateralism to develop universal, regional and national mechanisms to counter the supply and destabilising spread of SALW and their ammunition

In the framework of agreements/structured dialogues

Action 16: SALW in the framework of political dialogues with third countries and regional organisations and SALW clauses

SALW issues were included in the agenda of a number of the EU's regular **political dialogues with third countries** and cooperation with regional organisations. During the reporting period, the EEAS Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Mr Jacek Bylica, held political dialogue meetings on non-proliferation and disarmament with Brazil, Egypt, the League of Arab States, Japan, United States, Israel and South Korea. He also held a number of other bilateral consultations with various actors, including in the margins of events such as the 2015 NPT Review Conference in New York.

In line with the **Council Conclusions on the inclusion of a SALW element in agreements between the EU and third countries** adopted in December 2008, further negotiations on the inclusion of SALW elements in relevant agreements took place with Cuba, Japan and Malaysia and negotiation began with Armenia in December. Inter alia, the negotiations effectively contribute to awareness-raising on the EU's SALW policy, provide a forum for increasing mutual understanding

of relevant positions, and help set up future dialogues at political and experts level. These talks also identify possible areas for future cooperation and encourage partner countries to make concrete headway with regard to the effective implementation of relevant international instruments on SALW control.

Action Plan:**1) Effective multilateralism to develop universal, regional and national mechanisms to counter the supply and destabilising spread of SALW and their ammunition****Within the Union**

Action 17: European Commission initiatives against illegal firearms trafficking

In 2015 the Commission continued implementing the actions contained in the Communication 'Firearms and the Internal Security of the EU: Protecting Citizens and Disrupting Illegal Trafficking'⁽¹⁶⁾, which was adopted on 21 October 2013.

The implementation of the EU Action Plan on firearms for the period 2014-2017, which was adopted in December 2013 by the Council, is also ongoing. Europol has set up a focal point on firearms trafficking and developing in-depth analysis of the issue and the European Police College has implemented specific training courses on firearms.

In November 2015 the Paris terrorist attacks added a tremendous sense of urgency to work to implement the European Agenda on Security that it was adopted on 28 April 2015⁽¹⁷⁾. The Commission accelerated its delivery of actions related to the fight against terrorism and radicalisation, and in particular to address the problem of trafficking in, and use of, firearms and explosives. In the week following the Paris attacks the Commission adopted two key proposals for pieces of legislation: the review of the Firearms Directive 91/477/EEC (COM(2015) 750 final)⁽¹⁸⁾ and Commission Implementing Regulation on the deactivation of firearms (EU) 2015/2403⁽¹⁹⁾ of 15 December 2015.

On 2 December 2015 the Commission adopted an Action Plan to enhance the fight against the illegal trafficking in, and use of, weapons and explosives (COM(2015) 624 final)⁽²⁰⁾. This string of measures is built around four priorities and sets actions necessary to be incorporated in the activities developed so far to fill the gaps in all phases of law enforcement action: the assessment of new threats, best tailored operation actions, full use of information exchange tools and the international cooperation.

To enhance the security of explosives, it is an urgent priority to ensure the full implementation of Regulation (EU) No 98/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽²¹⁾ of 15 January 2013 on explosives precursors, which cuts access to dangerous chemicals and allows early police investigations on suspicious transactions and other incidents. To do this, it is important to enhance strong cooperation with Member States and the engagement with the supply chain of precursors. In addition, the Commission is planning to advance the review of the Regulation, originally intended for 2017, and consider further measures, to tighten the restrictions and controls on explosives precursors.

The impact of new technologies on the potential availability of firearms and explosives is also considered. The Commission will promote a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of new technological innovations in cooperation with the firearms industry and relevant national law enforcement agencies. This is the case of 3D printers, online sales or the risk of diversion of legal trade.

A specific chapter on external action and the enlargement process to address cooperation with and the threat of diversion from third countries are also included in the Action Plan. The Commission is considering enhancing operational activities with Western Balkans partners along the lines of the Action Plan on firearms which was adopted in 2014. The current

⁽¹⁶⁾ COM(2013) 716 final.

⁽¹⁷⁾ COM(2015) 185 final.

⁽¹⁸⁾ COM(2015) 750 final.

⁽¹⁹⁾ OJ L 333, 19.12.2015, p. 62.

⁽²⁰⁾ COM(2015) 624 final.

⁽²¹⁾ OJ L 39, 9.2.2013, p. 1.

instability in the MENA region, especially the protracted conflicts in Libya and Syria, means that the illicit trafficking of firearms towards this region has drastically increased in recent years. The Commission has already started a dialogue to explore possible future cooperation with these countries because a sudden huge demand in fire-arms in the EU's immediate neighbourhood presents a significant long-term security threat to the EU that needs to be addressed urgently. A special consideration is also given to future dialogue with Sahel region and the League of Arab States and international organisations.

ANNEX
Overview of SALW-control actions by EU Institutions in 2015

Action	Beneficiaries Countries				Project reference	EU entity	Implementing agency	Committed amount (1)
	Africa	Asia	America	Europe				
Action 1: EU participation to MGE2 UN PoA						EEAS		
Action 2: iArms — support for the creation and management of a database for tracking and tracing lost, stolen, trafficked and smuggled firearms (iARMS)	Cameroon, Zimbabwe		El Salvador	France, Portugal	IFS/2014/350723	IcSP	Interpol	1 500 000
Action 3: iTrace — global reporting mechanism on illicit small arms and light weapons and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition to reduce the risk of their illicit trade	CAR, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda	Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nepal, Syria, United Arab Emirates	Colombia, Jamaica		Council Decision 2013/698/CFSP	Council	Conflict Armament Research	2 530 684
Action 4: EU activities in support of the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, in the framework of the European Security Strategy	Burkina Faso, Benin, ECOWAS members (*), Ghana, Senegal, Togo	Georgia, Philippines, UNRCPD members (**)	Costa Rica, Jamaica, Peru		Council Decision 2013/768/CFSP	Council	BAFA	5 200 000

(EUR)

Action	Beneficiaries Countries				Project reference	EU entity	Implementing agency	Committed amount (¹)
	Africa	Asia	America	Europe				
Action 5: promotion of effective arms export controls by means of the promotion of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP					Council Decision 2015/2309/CFSP	Council	BAFA	999 000
Action 6: countering transnational illicit arms trafficking through the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its Firearms Protocol	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mauritania, Togo, Senegal		Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay		IFS/2010/259204	IcSP	UNODC	2 300 000
Action 7: SEESAC (South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearing-house for the Control of SALW) disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe				Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo (²), Montenegro, Moldova, Serbia	Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP	Council	SEESAC via UNDP	5 127 650
Action 8: Explosive Ordnance and Remnants of War Destruction Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EXPLODE)				Bosnia and Herzegovina		IcSP	UNDP	4 604 830
Action 9: activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of SALW in the region covered by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan			Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine	Council Decision 2012/662/CFSP	Council	OSCE Secretariat + UNDP Belarus Office	1 680 000

(EUR)

Action	Beneficiaries Countries				Project reference	EU entity	Implementing agency	Committed amount (1)
	Africa	Asia	America	Europe				
Action 10: Physical Security and Stockpile Management activities to reduce risk of illicit trade in SALW and their ammunition in the Sahel region	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria				Council Decision 2014/912/CFSP	Council	UNODA through UNREC	3 561 257
Action 11: RECSA activities in support of the fight against the illicit accumulation of and trade in firearms and ammunition in Africa	Ghana, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Mali, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Togo				IFS/2012/307026	IcSP	RECSA	2 700 000
Action 12: support to the Libyan authorities in securing stockpiles in conventional weapons and ammunition (repealed due to security situation)	Libya				Council Decision 2013/320/CFSP	Council	GIZ	5 000 000
Action 13: EU Support to ECO-WAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate — Pilot Weapons Collection Programmes	Mali, Mano River Union (***), Niger				EDF/2014/345376	EDF	UNDP	5 560 000
Action 14: EU support to the Central American Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Programme (CASAC)		Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama			IFS/2012/288331	IcSP	CASAC	2 300 000

(EUR)

Action	Beneficiaries Countries				Project reference	EU entity	Implementing agency	Committed amount ⁽¹⁾
	Africa	Asia	America	Europe				
Action 15: supporting the implementation of security strategies in Central America in fighting and preventing crimes related to small arms and light weapons and armed violence		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama			IFS-RRM/2011/278911	IcSP	IEPADES	650 000
Action 16: SALW in the framework of political dialogues with third countries and regional organisations and SALW clauses	Armenia, Japan, Malaysia	Cuba				EEAS		
Action 17: European Commission initiatives against illegal firearms trafficking			Western Balkans			DG Home		

(*) Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea.

(**) United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific except Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

(***) West Ivory Coast, Forested Guinea, East of Liberia, North-East of Sierra Leone.

(1) Committed for the whole duration of the project, not only for 2015.

(2) References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).