

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 I

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on behalf of the European Union

Topic: Gender and Age

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(check against delivery)

Cluster I: Human/Humanitarian, socio-economic and other dimensions

Gender and age

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 Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and 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.

The EU attaches great importance to the Review Conference paying due attention to gender and age in the context of SALW. Applying a gender perspective to the small arms issue means understanding the different ways that men, women, boys and girls engage in armed violence, are affected by it, and respond to it. This is key to developing effective solutions to the problem.

A gender and age focussed approach means mainstreaming the perspective into existing agreements and processes, not introducing a new topic. In the field of small arms and light weapons, the EU considers it vital that Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security is better implemented. This could include fostering that DDR programmes give particular attention to para.13 encouraging those involved to "consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants". Furthermore, direct attention needs to be paid to young men as a group particularly vulnerable to gun violence. And law officials could be trained to better understand the small arms issues related to the prevention of gender-based violence.

Lastly, States could develop mechanisms to ensure that women are involved in decision-making and other activities that inform security policies, such as changes to national regulations and DDR. The EU believes that there should be further discussion on gender and age aspects at the Review Conference and be reflected in its outcome.