Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the UN General Assembly

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

“I welcome today’s decision by the UN General Assembly to adopt the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and request the UN Secretary General to open it for signature. This decision brings a seven-year long negotiating process to a successful end and makes the ATT a reality. The treaty adopted by the General Assembly is a balanced and robust text, the result of comprehensive and inclusive negotiations, where all UN Member States’ views have been expressed and reflected. The international community can claim full ownership of this treaty, which will make trade in conventional arms more responsible and transparent, thus reducing human suffering, and tangibly contributing to international peace, security and stability.

The EU has always argued that in order to make a real difference to people affected by the irresponsible and illicit use of conventional arms, the international community needed a treaty that is strong and robust. The Treaty adopted by the General Assembly today, meets these requirements. The ATT that UN Member States have negotiated and adopted is one that contains strong parameters on international humanitarian and human rights law and will apply to a wide range of arms, including ammunition. These were clear priorities for the EU and for a significant number of other UN Member States, which are reflected in the ATT adopted today.

The EU will continue to actively support the swift entry into force and effective implementation of the ATT by all UN Member States. I encourage all UN Member States to sign and ratify this treaty as soon as it will be open for signature on 3 June 2013.”