



European Union
Arms Trade Treaty
Sixth Conference of States Parties
Geneva, 17-21 August 2020
EU Statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

We would like to congratulate Argentina on its Presidency of the Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and commend you, Ambassador, for your substantial efforts enabling us to continue work and to take decisions on modalities and preparations for the Seventh Conference of States Parties in 2021 despite the difficulties and challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has created over the past months.

The Arms Trade Treaty serves the global interest to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, and preventing and eradicating the illicit trade and preventing diversion of these arms. The Treaty came to fruition thanks to the joint efforts of States, international organisations, industry and civil society representatives working together in the spirit of openness and transparency. It is crucial that even in the current exceptional circumstances we enable all stakeholders to fully engage in and contribute to the ATT process and retain and safeguard the inclusive and transparent character of the ATT, when preparing key decisions with a view to the implementation and universalisation of the Treaty.

The EU reaffirms its full support to fostering responsible policies with regard to the regulation of the arms trade, and to preventing and countering the proliferation of illicit arms and ammunition. The EU continues to actively implement its outreach and assistance activities in a number of partner countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, thus helping to build capacities for effective national implementation worldwide and attracting new States to adhere to the ATT.

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

We remain convinced that universal adherence to the ATT will result in a more responsible global arms trade and contribute to peace, security and stability, reduce human suffering and promote cooperation, transparency and increased confidence. Broader adherence to the ATT will also create better conditions for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Target 16.4. on significantly reducing illicit arms flows, and Target 5.2 on eliminating gender-based violence.

We are encouraged by the latest ratifications and accessions and warmly welcome Afghanistan, China, the Maldives, Namibia, Niue, and Sao Tome and Principe to the ATT, bringing the total number of States Parties to 110. The EU encourages all Signatory States to advance their ratification processes and calls on all remaining States that have not yet joined the ATT, especially the major arms exporters, importers and transit States, to do so without further delay.

We support your decision to put transparency and information exchange on diversion at the centre of the Argentinian Presidency. Open and transparent discussions about the implementation of the key Treaty provisions are vital. Transparency is a key element contributing to confidence-building and to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Treaty. In this regard, we support the establishment of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum providing a platform for States Parties and Signatory States to deal with concrete diversion matters through international cooperation, and look forward to its meetings.

We regret the downward trend in the rate of reporting and we call on all States Parties to fulfil their reporting obligations under the Treaty. We also note with concern the increased number of confidential reports and encourage States Parties to make their reports publicly available.

The EU remains deeply concerned over the financial situation of the Treaty and regrets the many outstanding contributions which put the ATT institutions and activities at risk. Once again, we urge all States to pay their contributions in full and on time and to settle their arrears without further delay. We reaffirm our support for your efforts, Mr. President, to enforce in full the implementation of the ATT Financial Rules. The EU welcomes the work on the proposed procedure that seeks to establish the necessary arrangements for States in arrears to settle their financial obligations. This should lead to increased financial, and subsequently institutional, stability of the Treaty.

Although it was not possible this year to convene all preparatory meetings due to Covid-19, the Working Groups Chairs and the Subgroups Facilitators nevertheless demonstrated remarkable commitment in drafting and finalizing comprehensive multi-year work plans and a relevant mandate. We appreciate their work and would also like to thank the Chair of the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) and all donors for their contributions that will assist States Parties in their efforts to implement the Treaty. We hope that next year the ATT community will be again in the position to meet in a fully-fledged CSP and have fruitful discussions and dialogue with a view to ensuring transparent decision-making.

Thank you, Mr. President