



EU Statement

Arms Trade Treaty

First Informal Preparatory Meetings for the Eighth Conference of States Parties (CSP8)

Geneva, 18 February 2022

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

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 countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

First of all, let me congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty and assure you of the EU's full support and active contribution to the preparations of the Eighth Conference of States Parties (CSP8) to be held in August 2022 in Geneva. We welcome your decision to organise this Preparatory Meeting in a hybrid setting. We express the hope that circumstances will allow remaining working group and preparatory meeting, as well as the Conference itself to be held fully in person.

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their strong support for the ATT that contributes to international and regional peace, security, and stability and reduces human suffering. It complements other international instruments, such as the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the International Tracing Instrument, and contributes broadly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Target 16.4 on reducing illicit arms flows and Target 5.2 on eliminating gender based violence.

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

With over 30.000 licenses issued for a value of almost € 167 billion the EU remains an important exporter of military equipment and technology. These exports are processed in accordance with international law, in particular Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law when applicable, and in a responsible manner. Decisions on issuing export licenses for military equipment are a national competence, following an assessment against the obligations under the ATT as well as the eight criteria of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP. This risk assessment includes a thorough assessment of respect for human rights in the country of final destination, as well as respect by that country of international humanitarian law. Over 200 licenses in 2020 were denied by Member States, following case-by-case assessments of license applications.

The EU continues to support outreach activities to third countries, helping those in setting up arms export control systems and promoting the universalisation, implementation and transparent reporting under the Arms Trade Treaty. The EU and its Member States fully support the objectives of the ATT and will continue to do their utmost to promote its universalisation and full and effective implementation. We have from the start supported the discussions in the three Working Groups on universalisation, effective Treaty implementation, and transparency and reporting. Welcome the joint efforts made to date in providing concrete guidance to States Parties for meeting their obligations under this important Treaty.

We thank Germany for its focus on efforts towards universalisation of the Treaty. Furthermore, we support your initiative to take a stock of all achievements and progress as well as shortcomings in the Treaty implementation. It is important to have a clear direction for our future work. The focus on on-site verification and post-shipment controls during your Presidency also resonate well with the Treaty principles and represent further efforts in confidence-building. The EU will fully support you to achieve concrete outcomes at the Eighth Conference of States Parties.

The promotion of gender equality, awareness of gender issues, empowerment of women and prevention of gender-based violence is an important cross-cutting priority for the EU. We will continue to promote the full implementation of Resolution 1325 and support all other relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council aimed at advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

The EU recalls that a solid financial foundation for the Arms Trade Treaty is indispensable for its institutional stability of the Treaty. We would therefore welcome an update on the financial arrangements agreed last year. We once again urge all States who have not yet done so to pay their dues in full and on time, and to settle their outstanding arrears without further delay.

Thank you, Mr. President