

DIVERSION INFORMATION EXCHANGE FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Adopted: Sixth Conference of States Parties to the ATT
Updated: Tenth Conference of States Parties to the ATT

UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) CONCERNING THE DIVERSION INFORMATION EXCHANGE FORUM¹

Background and purpose

The Diversion Information Exchange Forum has its origin in the informal meeting among interested States Parties and signatory States to discuss concrete cases of suspected or detected diversion that they are dealing or have dealt with, that States Parties endorsed as the third tier of the three-tier approach to sharing information on diversion during the Fourth Conference of States Parties. The endorsement of the three-tier approach and the informal meeting followed discussions on this topic in the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR), as a mechanism to facilitate the information exchanges that are required or encouraged by the Treaty.

At an informal kick-off meeting during CSP5, a second informal meeting and subsequent remote consultations during the preparatory process towards CSP6, all held under the chairmanship of the WGTR co-chairs, States Parties discussed the potential future set-up of the Forum, its working methods and handling of information, and the potential information to be shared. These discussions led States Parties at CSP6 to establish the Diversion Information Exchange Forum as a sui generis body of the Conference for States Parties and signatory States, governed by its own Terms of Reference, that were also adopted at CSP6.

The purpose of the Forum is to allow States Parties and signatory States to share concrete and operational information about cases of suspected or detected diversion that they are dealing or have dealt with, so that they can actually prevent it from happening, address it properly when it already has occurred, or help other States preventing or addressing such cases. In that respect, it is meant as a complementary instrument to bilateral exchanges between States involved in a specific case and as a mechanism that facilitates States Parties in the implementation of paragraphs 3, 4 and particularly 5 of article 11 of the Treaty, encouraging State Parties to share relevant information with one another on effective measures to address diversion, and article 15 on international cooperation. The intended outcome of the Forum is to clarify specific cases and identify and discuss appropriate responses, for which sharing concrete and operational information is indispensable. In light of the potential sensitivity and confidentiality of such information, it was thought to be essential that exchanges in the Forum are informal and thus disconnected from regular WGETI and WGTR meetings (without ruling out discussions on general patterns and lessons learnt in the WGETI sub-group on diversion).

In line with the task given by States Parties at CSP9, the DIEF reviewed the usefulness of its meetings and its Terms of Reference during the CSP10 cycle. Overall, States Parties and signatory States acknowledged the continuing importance of the DIEF as a confidential body for operational exchanges about diversion and agreed that the set-up of the DIEF and its Terms of Reference are still fit for purpose. Following the CSP9 decisions concerning the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI), its reconfiguration, the discontinuance of the WGETI Sub-working Group on Article 11 and the review of the ATT Programme of Work, States Parties at CSP10 nevertheless decided to update Rule 4 of the Terms of Reference to reflect the discontinuance of the said Sub-working Group on Article 11.

¹ Adopted by the Sixth Conference of States Parties (CSP6) in August 2020 as document ATT/CSP6.DIEF/2020/CHAIR/632/Conf.DIEFTors (see Final Report, paragraph 40 (a) (ATT/CSP6/2020/SEC/635/Conf.FinRep.Rev1)). Updated version adopted by the Tenth Conference of States Parties (CSP10) in August 2024 as the Annex of document ATT/CSP10.DIEF/2024/CHAIR/802/Conf.Rep (see Final Report, paragraph 30 (c) (ATT/CSP10/2024/SEC/807/Conf.FinRep)).

Set-up of the “Diversion Information Exchange Forum”

1. The “Diversion Information Exchange Forum” (hereinafter: the Forum) is a *sui generis* body for informal voluntary exchanges between States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and signatory States concerning concrete cases of detected or suspected diversion and for sharing concrete, operational diversion-related information.
2. These Terms of Reference (hereinafter: ToR) govern the functioning of the Forum and the exchanges of information during its meetings as well as any intersessional exchanges and sharing of diversion-related information. The Rules of Procedure for the Conference of States Parties only apply to the Forum when explicitly stated in these ToR.
3. The Forum meets up to twice a year, during the sessions of preparatory meetings, and/or the Conference of States Parties, subject to a decision of the President of the Conference, in consultation with the Chair of the Forum and the Secretariat. For that purpose, the President of the Conference will, at appropriate times, issue a call to States Parties and signatory States to present cases of suspected or detected diversion and to share other diversion-related information in the Forum.
4. The Chair of the Forum shall be appointed by the President of the Conference for a period until the conclusion of the following CSP.
5. The work of the Forum will be supported by the Secretariat.

Participation

6. In line with the aforementioned CSP4 decision, meetings of the Forum are open for all States Parties and signatory States that are interested to discuss and share operational information on concrete diversion cases with other States Parties and signatory States. In that respect, all States Parties and signatory States can participate in all meetings and no objections can be raised.
7. Representation of States Parties and signatory States in meetings is governed by rules 6 to 8 of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of States Parties.

In line with the purpose of the Forum, representation by enforcement officers in its meetings is strongly encouraged.

8. States Parties and signatory States can propose to invite non-state experts with specific expertise in investigating, establishing, identifying and/or addressing cases of diversion to take part in a presentation on a concrete diversion case and the subsequent debate on that case. They shall submit their proposals, describing the purpose of the experts’ participation, at least 30 days in advance of a meeting by notifying the Secretariat. The Secretariat will then immediately distribute such proposal to all States Parties and institute a silence procedure for five days.

If a State Party objects to a proposal to invite a non-state expert, that State Party shall consult the proposing State and both States shall, by mutual consent, cooperate to pursue resolving the objection. If the objection is not resolved at least 20 days in advance of the meeting, the objection shall then be referred to the State Parties that participate in the meeting for a procedural decision.

Working methods

9. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, shall distribute an invitation to all States Parties and signatory States at least 50 days in advance of each meeting, specifying its date and venue, and shall make the necessary administrative arrangements for the meeting.

The invitation will always include a call to States Parties and signatory States to present cases of suspected or detected diversion and to share other diversion-related information during the meeting.

10. At least 30 days in advance of a meeting, the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will distribute a draft agenda for the meeting to all States Parties and signatory States, including relevant supporting documentation, if feasible.
11. States Parties and signatory States that intend to present a case of suspected or detected diversion or to share other diversion-related information during a meeting are encouraged to notify the Secretariat as soon as possible, even before the notification of the meeting. They shall announce their intention at the latest at the moment that the draft agenda for the meeting is adopted.
12. If a State Party or a signatory State intends to present information that may involve one or more other States Parties and signatory States, it shall notify those States Parties and signatory States of its intention at least 30 days in advance of the meeting, and request their response at least 15 days in advance of the meeting. The presenting State is required to include the response from those States Parties and signatory States in the presentation.

Unless it is legally required to do so in view of the nature of the information it intends to share, the presenting State does not need to obtain the consent of those States Parties and signatory States to be able to give the intended presentation. After the presentation, those States Parties and signatory States shall be accorded the right of reply by the Chair in accordance with rule 24 (2) of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of States Parties.

13. States that present or intend to present diversion-related information in a meeting of the Forum are encouraged to also share this information via the information exchange platform in the restricted area of the ATT website, where possible.

Unless it concerns national security information or sharing the information would hamper ongoing or pending enforcement proceedings, States Parties are encouraged, in accordance with their national laws and procedures, to share the types of information included in the non-exhaustive list in rule 19 via the information exchange platform.

Nature of the meetings and handling of information

14. Meetings of the Forum are confidential, including their agenda and all supporting documentation, unless decided otherwise by its participants.
15. Participants, including non-state experts invited under rule 8, must ensure the confidentiality of discussions and of all the information that is classified as such by its provider, unless decided otherwise, respectively by consensus among participants and the provider. Non-state experts will be explicitly informed of this obligation prior to the meeting by the State Party or signatory State that has invited them.

Any participant, the Chair of the Forum, or the ATT Secretariat may raise with any other participant, bilaterally, questions concerning any suspected unauthorized disclosure of confidential information that was shared during a Forum meeting or via the information exchange platform. In the event of any demonstrated instance of such unauthorized disclosure, the participant with which such concern is raised, will provide an explanation of the matter to the originating participant, and take appropriate remedial measures in accordance with its respective national laws and regulations.

16. Participants can share all the information that they obtained in meetings within their competent national authorities, notably their enforcement authorities, while maintaining confidentiality. Any operational use of this information, for example in the context of an export assessment or enforcement proceedings, will be discussed with the provider of the information.
17. In line with its confidential nature, no official minutes of the meeting will be drafted, nor an official report.

Types of information that States are encouraged to share and exchange

18. Taking into account article 11 (3) to (5), States Parties and signatory States are encouraged to share and exchange, on a voluntary basis and in accordance with their respective national laws and regulations, data concerning concrete cases in which they prevented or identified diversion that they consider useful for other States Parties and signatory States to: 1) assist in addressing the cases at hand; or 2) prevent or address similar cases in the future.

Useful data are, *inter alia*, the details of the diversion and its discovery, the timeliness of the discovery, the ways and methods that were used and, where appropriate and feasible, the details of the actors involved. This concerns both closed and ongoing investigations.

19. Generally, States Parties and signatory States are encouraged to share any diversion-related information that they deem relevant on, *inter alia*:
 - a) illicit arms transfer activities including corruption;
 - b) international arms trafficking routes;
 - c) illicit arms brokers;
 - d) sources of illicit supply;
 - e) methods of concealment;
 - f) common points of dispatch;
 - g) destinations used by organised groups engaged in diversion.
20. To complement the existing Database of National Points of Contact in the restricted area of the ATT website and to allow for the efficient and effective exchange of operational diversion-related information in the field, States Parties and signatory States may exchange up-to-date contact details of their relevant enforcement authorities through the Secretariat.

Output of Forum meetings

21. The intended outcome of any meeting is operational, i.e. exchanges of information and concrete arrangements between involved and interested States Parties and signatory States that will contribute to preventing or addressing the concrete cases of diversion under discussion, or similar cases in the future. These exchanges and concrete arrangements fall within the scope of the confidentiality rules set out in rules 14 to 17.

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22. If considered useful and feasible by participants on a case-by-case basis, the Chair will orally brief the WGETI or the Conference on any major trends and general lessons learnt that came out of a meeting of the Forum, and on general issues that could benefit from policy discussions within the WGETI. Giving the briefing and its outline shall be decided by consensus by the States Parties and signatory States that participated in that meeting.

In any case, such oral briefing may not contain any information that could allow attribution to a particular State Party or signatory State, unless that State has given its consent. Furthermore, a State that has presented a case during a meeting may object to any briefing that is based on its case, regardless of any possible attribution.

Languages and documents

23. As to language and documents, rules 46 to 49 of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of States Parties shall apply, with the exception of the provision in rule 48 that documents shall be made available to observers.

Budgetary Implications

24. Direct meetings costs, such as for technical support, documentation, and any translation and/or interpretation services, shall be covered by the resources allocated for the conduct of meetings in the budget of the Conference of States. Indirect meeting costs, such as travel and accommodation, shall be borne by participants except to the extent that sponsorship funding is available.
