

# **Arms Trade Treaty**

**Eighth Conference of States Parties 22 – 26 August 2022**

## **Statement by Austria/General Debate**

**Chair**, thank you for giving me the floor. We wish you and your team all the best for your chairpersonship. Many thanks also to the Head of the Secretariat and his team as well as all the facilitators for their excellent work in preparing this meeting.

### **Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen**

Many of you may know the story of Rip van Winkle – a gentleman who falls asleep and wakes up 20 years later to a different world.

Covid 19 was certainly not akin to a slumber as many hours at the kitchen table spent in videoconferences including the occasional interrupted connection or frozen screen can attest to – this situation was true for us lucky ones that do not need to go out daily to find their subsistence.

When we look at the world a mere 2 years after the outbreak of the pandemic we have to state that our planet unfortunately has not become a better place, quite the contrary holds true. The atrocious armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen are still going on, terrorism and armed violence in many parts of the world remain a challenge to the international community, on 24<sup>th</sup> January Ukraine was illegally attacked by Russia and further conflagrations are visible on the horizon. We mourn all the victims of all these conflicts, we call on all States to exercise utmost restraint and we are convinced that the ATT in the eight year of its existence has and will continue to play an important role in contributing to international peace, security and stability as well as in reducing human suffering as stated in Art. 1 of the Treaty.

In this context and in addition to the statements delivered by the European Union throughout this week on the various topics to which Austria is fully aligned we would like to highlight the following aspects of the Treaty:

1. From its inception the Treaty was a project that was supported by countries and civil society from all regions such as Latin America, Africa, Australasia, the Caribbean and Europe. With 111 States Parties to the Treaty ATT is on the way to become a universally recognised legal framework for the responsible trade in arms. Austria will continue to fully support efforts to universalise the ATT.
2. ATT recognises the inherent right of all States to self-defence. While Austria with its statute of neutrality does not provide arms to Ukraine, we fully acknowledge the right of Ukraine to acquire arms for self-defence against the illegal invasion by Russia.
3. Transparency is an important building block of the Treaty. It promotes mutual trust as will be the case – so we hope - with the discussion on post shipment controls. The financial viability of the Treaty has to be safeguarded even in times of economic stress – we hope we can find workable solutions in the coming days. Gender is an important aspect of our Treaty. Let us bear in mind that LGBTQ rights should be one part of the debate on gender issues.

Thank you for your attention.