

Sixth Conference of the State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

17-21 August 2020, Geneva

General Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria

Distinguished Mr. President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues,

Taking into account the global pandemic situation, we highly value the effort of the Argentinian Presidency to come up with an approach allowing our Sixth Conference continuing work in a bearable and sensible manner and progressing on issues that enjoy consensus.

The Republic of Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement of the EU and shares the following considerations in its national capacity:

Preventing diversion of conventional arms is at the heart of our Treaty. It is a task of high complexity requiring, by design, deep and comprehensive analysis based on reliable information. No country is in position to fulfil this task alone, no matter the available information sources.

Deliberating openly on our experience, lessons learnt and conclusions will bring us to sharing practical knowledge, the latter being crucial for the efforts of governments towards preventing cases of diversion and promoting robust national systems for export control. Sharing information needs rules providing equal rights for all participants and avoiding any disclosure of possible detrimental effect to any ATT State Party, based on mutual respect for the sovereignty in national decision-making.

This understanding forms the basis for our principal support for the establishment of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum and for Decision 13 related to it. Formalising the dialogue on diversion and providing for regularity and review of the exchanges has the potential to provide for a tangible, work-related, positive impact on States Parties' policies towards a highly effective, national export control.

The ever-growing number of States Parties to the ATT is a positive sign for the growing understanding that, today's world interdependence is not a burden but a chance for united and productive efforts towards enhancing peace and stability for all. We gladly welcome this year's accession of the Maldives, Namibia, China, Sao Tome and Principe, Afghanistan and Niue.

Yet, contrary to this positive trend is the decreasing number of national reporting and continuing lack of payment of assessed contributions. If we really are to follow our commitments, we need to pay tribute to our Treaty obligations.

Finally, yet importantly, we continue considering ATT's universalization being of crucial value for its effective implementation since most of the biggest arms exporters and importers still fail to join our Treaty.

Last, but not least, Mr. President, we support the continuation of the contract of the current Head of the ATT Secretariat for a second term and would like to use this opportunity to thank Mr. Dladla and the ATT Secretariat for their devoted, tireless, always tentative and highly professional work.

Thank you for your attention.