



**Tenth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
(Geneva, 19-23 August 2024)
General statement**

Mister President,

Let me start by expressing the full support of my delegation to you, Ambassador RUSU, in fulfilling your duties as President of this Tenth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We also want to thank the Romanian presidency for its leadership throughout the preparatory process and thank the Secretariat as well for its important support to our activities. Like many in the room, we extend our condolences to the friends, family and colleagues of Stefan Ott, who tragically passed away recently.

Belgium aligns itself fully with the statement made by the Representative of the European Union and would like to add a couple of points of particular national interest.

Belgium welcomes the emphasis on the topic put forward by the Romanian presidency, inter-agency cooperation which constitutes an important input to foster the national implementation of the ATT. Inter-agency cooperation is indeed often a prerequisite to the domestication of the ATT but also a daily practice to collect information for exports assessment and to complete annual reports.

Mister President,

Once again, this conference is taking place while of a war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine is unfolding, unleashing a level of violence unseen on the European continent for decades. The actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine amount to a catalog of international crimes, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Our assessment that no State Party to the ATT could transfer arms and ammunition to the Russian Federation in application of the art 6 and 7 of the Treaty is still standing.

While the war is returning on the European continent, the developments in Gaza are extremely concerning, especially regarding the humanitarian situation. Belgium calls for an immediate cease fire, the unconditional liberation of hostages and a full and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza. Belgium also reminds all parties that they must fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, as well as the obligation to implement the orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Mister President,

As the ATT is the instrument of reference to establish the highest possible common standards regarding the international arms trade, we must preserve this forum and give it the necessary resources to function. Belgium is therefore concerned about the financial situation of the Treaty as shown by the Secretariat in late April this year. Although we witnessed real efforts from some State Parties, we call on States in arrears to enter a financial arrangement in order to pay their dues in full.

Belgium is also concerned by the low level of reporting year after year. Reporting is not only a legal obligation under the ATT, it is at the core of the ATT as it contributes to transparency and confidence-building, two important objectives of the Treaty. Belgium calls on all State Parties to fulfil their obligations on reporting, or, if facing challenges to do so, to take the opportunity of assistance provided by the Voluntary Trust Fund or the EU-financed Implementation Support Project.

The ATT has reached its 10th anniversary. Many saw this Treaty as an unattainable goal but here we are, 115 States Parties with the recent accession of Gambia and Malawi which we warmly welcome.

We have accomplished a lot in this journey. Let's continue our work together to fulfill its promises, a reduction of human suffering and a responsible international trade in conventional arms.

I thank you Mister President.