



European Union

Arms Trade Treaty

Eighth Conference of States Parties

Geneva, 22-26 August 2022

EU General Statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Albania* and Republic of Moldova, the potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina* and Georgia and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The ATT is a key international instrument that aims to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms and to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion. In doing so, the ATT 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 EU wishes to express its full support for the German Presidency of this Conference, and stands ready to work together towards a successful outcome. The focus on post-shipment controls is positive, and will be relevant to exporting and importing States Parties alike. The

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

EU also gladly assisted in the outreach carried out by the Presidency to signatories and States not Parties, in order to promote universalisation.

This Conference will see the first meeting of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF), which will be chaired by Mexico. The EU warmly welcomes this important development, and expresses its full support to the Chair, Mr. ALBA FERNÁNDEZ. We call on all States Parties and Signatories participating in the DIEF to make full use of this opportunity to exchange information on concrete cases of diversion and discuss good practices. The EU believes the DIEF can play an important role in countering illicit arms trafficking, as long as States share information in a constructive and, where needed, confidential manner.

The EU is deeply concerned about the worsening financial situation of the ATT. Once again, in 2021 the portion of the total unpaid contributions that has a collection risk has increased, according to the Report of the Auditor. It is of crucial importance that the effective functioning of the Treaty and its institutions is preserved, and that the accumulation of arrears does not put ATT activities at risk. Once again, we urge all States to pay their contributions in full and on time. The Financial Rules of the Treaty must be respected by all States Parties, signatories, and observers. The EU insists on ensuring the necessary arrangements for States in arrears to settle their financial obligations at the shortest possible notice. This will lead to increased financial, and subsequently institutional, stability of the Treaty.

The EU framework governing arms exports revolves around the EU Common Position on arms exports, adopted in 2008 and subsequently revised since then, and which complements the obligations under the ATT. EU and Member States are currently reviewing the EU Common Position on arms exports, a process that will finalise in 2024. Several third countries have aligned themselves with the EU Common Position, or have adopted similar principles. The EU's continuing outreach and assistance activities are helping to build capacities for effective national implementation of norms leading to a responsible arms trade worldwide. Our activities also aim to attract new States to become party to the ATT.

In the current unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression by Russia in Ukraine, given the many grave breaches by Russia of the Geneva Conventions, including attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians, arms transfers to Russia would not be permitted under the ATT. We call on all States Parties to refrain from any transfers to Russia. The EU has an arms

embargo in place against Russia, following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, which has been further tightened since 8 April 2022.

The Treaties continued success will require the concerted efforts of States Parties, Signatories, observers, international organisations, industry, and civil society representatives working together in the spirit of openness and transparency.

Thank you, Mr. President.