



European Union

Arms Trade Treaty

Fifth Conference of States Parties

Geneva, 26-30 August 2019

EU General Statement

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The EU fully supports your efforts, Mr. President, to achieve a successful outcome to this Conference that promotes universal adherence to this important Treaty and strengthens its implementation. We recall that all EU Member States have joined the ATT and are pursuing its objectives, since its inception. The EU framework governing arms exports revolves around the EU Common Position on arms exports, adopted in 2008. Several third countries have aligned themselves with the EU Common Position, or have adopted similar principles, and the EU's outreach and assistance activities are helping to build capacities for effective national implementation worldwide and attracting new States to adhere to the ATT.

We are encouraged by the increasing international recognition and support for the Arms Trade Treaty, as manifested in the annual UN General Assembly Resolutions and the widening participation of States, international organisations, industry and civil society representatives in this Conference of States Parties. In times of increasing tensions globally, the ATT can contribute as a means to foster responsible policies in the arms trade, and to prevent and counter the illicit proliferation of arms and ammunition. It can also contribute to increasing transparency in the arms trade, thus functioning as a confidence-building measure in and of itself. We welcome the fact that seven new States joined the Treaty since last year bringing the number of States Parties to 104. Remarkable progress has been made, but not entirely

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

without setbacks. The EU and its Member States regret the announcement of the United States with regard to the ATT.

The EU continues to call on all States to join the ATT without delay, and to implement its provisions. We call on Signatory States to fulfil their initial commitment by concluding the ratification process. We remain convinced that universal adherence to the international rules enshrined in the ATT would make the trade in conventional arms more responsible and transparent and in this regard it remains essential to convince the major arms exporters and importers to join. The EU is encouraged by responses received during bilateral outreach to non-State Parties, and looks forward to welcoming an increasing number of States to the ATT family.

Poorly or unregulated arms trade and illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition fuels armed conflicts, terrorism and organised crime in many parts of the world. The ATT serves the global interest to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, and preventing and eradicating the illicit trade and preventing diversion, thus contributing to global and regional peace, security, and stability and reducing human suffering. Its objectives are complementary to 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. Implementation of the ATT can also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Target 16.4 on significantly reducing illicit arms flows, and Target 5.2 on eliminating gender-based violence. We wholeheartedly support your decision, Mr. President, to put gender-based violence at the centre of this year's Conference.

In less than five years, the ATT community has established the necessary institutional structures and is moving towards more profound substantive exchanges that should facilitate effective Treaty implementation. The EU supports the continuation of further voluntary sharing of information, experiences and good practices on various aspects related to the establishment and functioning of national arms export control systems, risk assessment, transit and transshipment, prevention of diversion, the implementation of UN arms embargoes, as well as reporting obligations. We would like to thank the Working Groups Chairs and the Subgroups Facilitators for their excellent work which has resulted in useful voluntary guidance documents and multi-year work plans. We would also like to thank the Chairman of the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), and we welcome the new contributions that will assist States Parties in their efforts to implement the Treaty.

The financial situation of the Treaty is a matter of grave concern to the EU. The stated commitment to multilateralism by some States Parties lacks credibility if they continue their non-compliance with the financial obligations. This is deeply disappointing. Once again, we urge all States to pay their contributions in full and on time and to settle their arrears without further delay. We support your efforts, Mr. President, to ensure the financial stability of the Treaty, which is essential for its effective functioning and its institutions.

Thank you, Mr. President