



EU Statement on Gender and Gender Based Violence

Arms Trade Treaty

Fifth Conference of States Parties

Geneva, 26-30 August 2019

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 and its Member States welcome your decision to focus on gender and gender-based violence during Latvia's Presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As recalled by the distinguished panelists, the ATT is the first arms-regulation treaty to recognise the link between conventional arms transfers and gender-based violence and its effective implementation can contribute to eliminating violence against women and girls, as set out in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.2. We recall that the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament refers to the role that arms control policies can play in this area.

We encourage ATT States Parties to positively consider your proposals which aim at improving gender equality in participation and representation, increasing our understanding of the gendered impact of armed violence and conflict, and ensuring that States Parties assess the risk of gender-based violence before authorising the export of conventional arms, in accordance with Article 7.4 of the Treaty.

The promotion of gender equality, awareness of gender issues, empowerment of women and prevention of gender-based violence is an important cross-cutting priority for the EU. We will continue to promote the full implementation of Resolution 1325 and support all other relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council aimed at advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

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

Last December, the Council of the EU adopted a new EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security, with the aim to embed gender equality and women's empowerment in all EU external action. Last month, an EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security was endorsed to implement the Strategic Approach in the years 2019-2024. It was decided, inter alia, that the EU would work towards increasing understanding of gender-specific impacts of the illicit arms trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW), with a view to improving national policies and programmes. The EU will also promote access to justice for survivors and full accountability for perpetrators of all gender-based conflict-related crimes against women and girls, as well as men and boys, by activating the legal procedures at the national, regional and international levels, notably also through the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court.

The new EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, adopted by the Council of the EU in November 2018, underlines that the EU will systematically mainstream gender considerations in the fight against gun violence and SALW control. In this regard, a new EU Council Decision was adopted last December in support of gender mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse. This Council Decision, worth EUR 4.4 million, provides support for the development of a training manual, operationalisation of the Modular Small-arms-control Compendium (MOSAIC) and training of UN staff and national officials in 18 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, Asia and the Pacific on gender mainstreaming and small arms control. The technical implementation of these projects has been entrusted to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) that will cooperate closely with other relevant actors, notably the Small Arms Survey and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNDP SEESAC).

With regard to representation and participation, the EU believes that the active and equal participation and leadership of women in all decision-making and action, at all levels is crucial for achieving peace, security and sustainable development. Our work within the ATT would benefit from gender diversity and equal and active participation of women. We fully support your proposals to track progress as one measure towards achieving better gender balance.

We encourage the mainstreaming of gender issues in national policies and programmes and more systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and support the recommendations on assessing the gendered impact of armed violence in the context of the ATT. We support the use of a wide range of data within national risk assessments, so far as this supports effective implementation of the ATT. We recall that the Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on illicit SALW in 2018 encouraged all UN Member States to collect gender-disaggregated data. Such efforts can also help to measure progress towards achieving SDG target 5.2 on eliminating violence against women and girls.

We believe that ATT States Parties should above all focus on the prevention of serious acts of gender-based violence through enhanced implementation of the existing robust treaty provisions which require that the exporting State Party, in its assessment before authorizing the export of conventional arms, shall take into account the risk of the conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children. We would like to emphasize the importance of all States Parties conducting such risk assessments. We support the Presidency's recommendation to exchange information on national practices and tools and prepare appropriate voluntary guidance to facilitate the implementation of Article 7.4 of the ATT.

Thank you, Mr. President