

Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

Geneva, 26-30 August 2019

Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria

Agenda Item 5: General Debate

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your able stewardship.

A crucial function of the ATT's annual CSPs is bringing together the different stakeholders so that – during the plenary discussions, side-events and bilateral meetings – they can discuss past and upcoming projects, plan future work, and promote good practices in the planning and implementing of activities.

The Republic of Bulgaria associates itself with the statement (to be) made by the European Union. Allow me, however, to stress on several considerations in our national capacity.

First of all, five years after the ATT's entering into force, universalization continues to be a crucial challenge since most of the biggest arms exporters and importers fail to join the Treaty. However, the number of states joining the Treaty continues growing which is definitely a positive sign, although the overall process is at a slower pace compared to previous years. By stressing the latter, allow me to warmly welcome our new colleagues from Surinam, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Lebanon, Palau, Botswana and last but not least Canada as the 104th ATT member state. I think we are on the right track.

The decreasing number of states parties making submissions to the Treaty's two reporting instruments, on Treaty's implementation and arms transfers, we recognise as another worrying trend. At the same time, many countries fail to pay their assessed contributions on time. This provides for a growing financial gap between the Treaty's running costs and the funds actually needed. If this financial situation continues to persist, it will undermine the credibility of the ATT. It will also question the ability of the ATT Secretariat to effectively carry out its work.

It remains crucial for our Treaty to be implemented in the most effective way possible. We would like to call on all member states to keep strictly to their obligations stemming from the Treaty.

One of the spheres we should specially focus on is the International assistance for implementation, because it is something that unites all interested parties. Providing training for licensing and customs

officials, assisting with drafting national legislation, and the provision of technical equipment – like software or computers – for record-keeping brings us closer to the achievement of the ATT's goals. It is an area of crucial importance, where the EU contributes on a large scale.

Mr. President,

We also congratulate you for your choice of the gender issue to be the leading theme of the Latvian presidency of CSP5. We believe that the issue of how far and in what way women and children are affected and bear the impact of conventional armed conflicts due to illicit conventional arms trade is of eternal value and has to be always a guiding element when implementing in practice the provisions of our Arms Trade Treaty related to the prevention of diversion.

We hope that CSP5 will allow for a substantive discussion on all urgent matters of the Treaty. The more experience we share regarding our mistakes, good practices and proven patterns, the more we will get closer to an unified understanding on the Treaty requirements and respective implementation. Thus we hope, the Conference will achieve a successful outcome.

I thank you, Mr. President!