



European Union

Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

Geneva, 11-15 September 2017

General Statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your Presidency and on the transparent and well-structured preparations for the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. It is a pleasure to see an EU Member State steering this important meeting. The EU wishes to commend you, Ambassador, for your tireless efforts to promote the universalisation and implementation of the Treaty.

The EU and its Member States firmly support the Arms Trade Treaty. It is a robust, balanced and effective international instrument that has the capacity to make the trade in arms more responsible and transparent. It 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 in conventional arms and ammunition and preventing their diversion, thus contributing to international and regional peace, security, and stability and reducing human suffering. Significantly reducing illicit arms flows is also one of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the EU supports.

Furthermore, the Arms Trade Treaty is the first ever legally binding regime that recognises the link between gender based violence and the international arms trade. This has set a precedent and will help strengthen international norms against actions which could be used to perpetuate acts of gender based violence.

The ATT has contributed to our efforts to create a global level playing field, yet a considerable number of the major arms exporters and importers are not yet party to the Treaty. The EU remains committed to promoting universalisation and encourages all States that have not yet done so to take the necessary steps to become party to the Treaty. We are pleased that since the Second Conference, the number of States Parties has risen to 92. We welcome the latest ratifications by Benin, Cabo Verde, Honduras, Madagascar and the Republic of Korea and encourage all signatory States to follow suit. We believe that the Treaty is significantly strengthened by every additional State that adheres to the ATT and implements its provisions.

All 28 EU Member States are party to the ATT and are bound by its obligations. The EU Common Position of 2008 defines common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment of the 28 EU Member States. It has significantly contributed to the convergence of national arms export control policies, while the licencing decisions remain ultimately a matter of national competence.

We remain committed to translating the Arms Trade Treaty into concrete and measurable action on the ground. The EU's outreach programmes have tangibly contributed to the efforts of many countries to strengthen export controls in all aspects and successfully implement their ATT obligations. A new EU Outreach Programme, worth just over 7 million EUR, agreed earlier this year, will provide assistance to an increasing number of countries across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, in partnership with civil society, NGOs and regional organisations.

The work carried out over the past year has helped to set up a solid basis for a functioning and operational Treaty. In this regard, the EU would like to recall that timely and full payments of financial contributions are an important part of States Parties' obligations, and essential for the proper functioning of the Treaty. We look forward to having substantive discussions and agreeing on outcomes that would consolidate and facilitate our joint efforts to promote universalisation, transparency and reporting, and effective implementation of the Treaty. Cooperation among States, with civil society and industry stakeholders, as well as with regional and international organisations, remains essential to achieve our goals.

Thank you, Mr. President

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