

STATEMENT

by Mr. Momir Brajić assistant minister a.i.- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP9) 21–25 August 2023.

Mr. President,

Bosnia and Herzegovina supports regulated and transparent trade of conventional arms, and welcomes the progress made with the Arms Trade Treaty as the first legally binding treaty to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons. By ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Bosnia and Herzegovina has confirmed its commitment to the strengthening of global and regional peace, security and stability. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina established national control mechanism and harmonized domestic legislation with the provisions of the ATT. Bosnia and Herzegovina has advocated the universalization of the ATT and its effective implementation.

As you know, Bosnia and Herzegovina, like other SEE countries, is facing many challenges related to arms control. One of the main challenges for our society and institutions is illegal arms in possession of individuals as well as surplus weapons and ammunition in possession of the Armed Forces. However, all these challenges have been already identified and presented adequately in the Road Map for the Western Balkans as well as supporting Action Plans.

According to the Action Plan, the arms control policies and practices in the Western Balkans should be evidence-based and intelligence-led, the illicit flows of firearms, ammunition and explosives into, within and beyond the Western Balkans should be significantly reduced, the supply-demand and misuses of firearms should also be reduced through increased awareness, education, outreach and advocacy and the estimated number of firearms in illicit possession should substantially decrease in the Western Balkans.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize, once again, the full commitment of all institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to undertake necessary measures and activities to improve all aspects of arms control based on principles of efficiency, transparency but also measurability.

In accordance with accepted international obligations and relevant documents of the UN, EU, and OSCE, institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been carrying out activities for many years aimed at reducing quantity of arms in society, adoption of a legislation in this area, resolving problem of surplus weapons storage and destruction as well as improving cooperation with international organizations at regional and global level and non-governmental

sector. Bosnia and Herzegovina has established a **legal framework**, which is mostly in line with the prescribed international standards. **On its path towards** membership in the **EU, Bosnia and Herzegovina** continues to harmonize national legislation with EU instruments and standards.

Significant results have already been achieved, our Law on Control of Foreign Trade in Weapons and Military Equipment is harmonized with the highest international standards and EU recommendations. We follow the EU Common Position in our daily work and use the EU Military List as well as the EU List of dual-use items.

In order to fulfill our obligations, we adopted the Law on Marking of Firearms and started to mark all newly imported weapons.

Recently, a manual for licensing officers was also prepared, as well as a manual for manufacturers and arms dealers. Special attention is paid to cooperation with industry, in our experience, seminars and round tables on arms export control are a very effective method to disseminate knowledge of the law and appropriate procedures.

It is worth mentioning that we include different aspects of arms control such as: illicit trafficking in arms and military equipment; illicit trade or illicit manufacturing in the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are deeply aware of our ongoing commitment to improve arms export control capacities including risk assessment, licensing, delivery and delivery confirmation.

Our experience so far shows that it is necessary to ensure the transparency of arms exports, but also to increase the level of awareness of firearms and ammunition manufacturers about the risks of diversion to illegal flows.

In the line with priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy, existing strategies and action plans in the field of the fight against illicit arms trafficking, support a systematic approach to the trust-building process and improvement of cooperation with other Western Balkan countries. Thanks to the support of international stakeholders, we succeeded to improve regional cooperation, lift the level of equipment and staff training of the competent institutions and enhance information exchange.

Thank you for your attention!