

**Ninth Conference on State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty**  
**Geneva, 21 – 25 August 2023**  
**Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria – General debate**

Madam President,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, let me congratulate you on your Presidency of the ATT and to thank you for all the work you did in preparation for this Conference. I assure you of Bulgaria's full support to your priorities and efforts during this Ninth Conference of States Parties (CSP9).

Bulgaria aligns itself with the EU statement and would like to make a few general comments in our national capacity.

Before I begin, I would like to congratulate Andorra and Gabon on joining the ATT. We are happy to see that the number of ATT State Parties continues to rise.

First of all, we would like to congratulate the Korean presidency for a very thoughtful choice of the topic for this year's discussions "*The Role of Industry in Responsible International Transfers of Conventional Arms.*" It correlates directly with the essential purpose of the ATT – preventing the diversion of arms and ammunitions from their final destination by putting an emphasis on the first line in the fight against diversion – the open cooperation with the industry.

Industry and private sector's engagement with the ATT activities will indeed provide guidance to support our common efforts to prevent the

diversion of arms, in fulfillment of Arts. 6, 7 and 11 of the ATT. All of this was clearly reflected in the fruitful and substantial discussion we just had.

The level of trust among states and other stakeholders is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of an export control cooperation. In addition, improving the common understanding and awareness about existing and emerging security threats and the challenges related to the particular threat of diversion of conventional arms is another important contributing factor to that end.

Deteriorated international security environment, growing number of crises and hostilities, migration driven by climate change and resources scarcity create an environment highly conducive for armed conflicts and related illegal arms trade. This is even more relevant on the background of Russia's illegal and unprovoked war against Ukraine, which will no doubt has far-reaching negative consequences for international arms trade, which we are already experiencing. We would like to reiterate our support to Ukraine in her efforts to find just peace.

Therefore, we believe that the full implementation and universalization of the ATT are more relevant than ever will no doubt contribute to the strengthening of the international security environment.

We support the inclusion of another session of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum/DIEF in CSP9 agenda. The DIEF is yet to reach its potential as an instrument for transparency and trust building among ATT

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States Parties by providing for a standing format for open sharing of best practices and lessons learned related to concrete cases of prevented diversion, the latter being the real added value of this active endeavour within the ATT process.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again that Bulgaria highly values the crucial role of the ATT as a legally binding international instrument, which establishes common standards for the regulation of international trade in conventional weapons, prevention of illegal trade, as well as diversion of conventional weapons. For almost 10 years, the Treaty has contributed to the strengthening of international and regional peace and stability and to the reducing of human suffering worldwide. Bulgaria remains dedicated to continue the work in this direction.

We hope for a fruitful and useful discussion to the benefit of all participants.

Thank you, Madam President.

*August 2023*