



**EU General Statement**  
**Arms Trade Treaty**  
**Ninth Conference of State Parties**  
**Geneva, 21-25 August 2023**

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

[Alignment clause]

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty, as a key international instrument that aims to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms and to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade and prevent diversion. In doing so, the ATT contributes to international and regional peace, security, and stability and reduces human suffering. It complements other international instruments, such as the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the International Tracing Instrument, and contributes broadly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Target 16.4 on reducing illicit arms flows and Target 5.2 on eliminating gender based violence. The EU also appreciates the role of the ATT in implementing the UN Secretary General's New Agenda for Peace as it pertains to addressing diversion, proliferation and misuse of SALW.

The EU welcomes the Republic of Korea's CSP9 thematic focus and President's working paper on The Role of Industry in Responsible International Transfers of Conventional Arms.

With over 31.800 licenses issued in 2021 for a license value of almost €179 billion, the EU remains an important exporter of military equipment and technology. Decisions on issuing export licenses for military equipment are a national competence, and compliance with the ATT remains one of eight criteria of EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP. EU Member States, following case-by-case risk assessments including a thorough examination into respect

for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the country of final destination, denied over 200 licenses in 2021. Military equipment must be used in accordance with International Law, including International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, and traded in a responsible manner.

Madam President,

In this context, we cannot stay silent about tragic developments in Eastern Europe. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of UN Charter, continues to cause immense destruction, and casualties, and the suffering of great number of people, including conflict-related sexual violence, and the forced transfer of population, including children, to areas under Russian control and deportations to the Russian Federation. The EU takes this opportunity to draw attention of States Parties to Article 6 para 3 of the Arms Trade Treaty, prohibiting transfer of conventional arms if such arms would be used to commit genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes. In this light, the EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's use of various types of conventional weapons against civilians in its war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as numerous war crimes and human rights violations and notes that, given the many breaches by Russia of the Geneva Conventions, arms transfers to Russia would not be permitted under the ATT. The EU has an arms embargo in place against Russia, following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. We call on all States Parties to refrain from any transfers to Russia, including of parts and components, in line with Article 6 para 3 of the ATT.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine also constitutes a case where legitimate arms transfers significantly contribute to the protection of values enshrined in the UN Charter. Ukraine, in execution of its inherent right to self-defence, is supported by military assistance from a number of ATT States Parties, including conventional arms transfers from some EU Member States under European Peace Facility. EU Member States have assessed that such transfers remain fully in line with their obligations under the ATT, implemented through the EU Common Position 2008/944, as well as with the Wassenaar Arrangement Initial Elements. The EU reiterates its support for a just peace in Ukraine in line with the UN Charter and for President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula. The European Union will continue to work with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan.

Let me conclude by underlining the EU's full support for the Korean Presidency of this Conference, and our commitment to working together towards its successful outcome. The EU's position on specific issues within the CSP programme of work will be presented in thematic statements.

Thank you, Madam President.