



## **EU Statement on Treaty Universalisation**

### **Arms Trade Treaty**

#### **Fifth Conference of States Parties**

**Geneva, 26-30 August 2019**

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to you, Ambassador Karklins, for your leadership in making the Arms Trade Treaty more visible and widely known during the Latvian Presidency. We were impressed by the increased support for the UN General Assembly resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2018, with 151 States voting in favour, none against, and 30 abstaining.

We would also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Takamizawa of Japan, as well as other current and past Bureau Members, parliamentarians, civil society, researchers and industry representatives, who have spared no effort to promote the ATT. These collective efforts have contributed to reaching the milestone of more than 100 States Parties, only four years after the Treaty's entry into force.

We are convinced that universal adherence to the ATT would achieve our shared objectives: to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, and to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition and prevent their diversion. Achievement of these objectives can positively contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Target 16.4 on significantly reducing illicit arms flows, and Target 5.2. on eliminating gender-based

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

violence. The accession of seven new States over the past year will help to advance our shared objectives.

We warmly welcome Suriname, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Lebanon, Palau, Botswana and Canada as new States Parties and encourage those who are in the process of completing their respective ratification processes to follow suit. We are delighted that Namibia could soon become the 105<sup>th</sup> State Party.

Yet, despite these positive developments, a number of major arms exporters and importers remain outside the ATT. We must continue to prioritise our outreach and engagement with these States. We reiterate our call on all UN Member States, especially the major arms importers, exporters and transit States, to sign, ratify or accede to the ATT without further delay. In the meantime, we urge States to improve their national arms export control systems and support international efforts to establish the highest possible common standards to regulate international arms trade.

The EU and its Member States will continue to play an active role in ATT universalisation efforts through the EU's Outreach Programme and diplomatic demarches. On the latter, just in the last two months, we conducted outreach to a number of non-State Parties, specifically the ten ASEAN countries not yet Party to the Treaty, as well as Bangladesh, China, India and Ukraine. While we are reasonably encouraged by the responses received to date, we would encourage other States Parties, either in the regions concerned or who have good relations with the countries approached, to reinforce the message we conveyed about the strong benefits of joining the Treaty.

Finally, the EU would like to express its support for the Presidency's Work Plan and recommendations, including for the adoption of the voluntary documents developed this year: the ATT Universalisation Toolkit, and the Welcome Pack for New States Parties. We further acknowledge the Sponsorship Programme, which was set up to promote full participation and inclusiveness, and welcome new financial contributions to it.

Thank you, Mr. President