

CSP3 Transparency and Reporting: UK Statement

Mr President

1. I would like to align myself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and offer a few comments in a national capacity.
2. To start I should register my thanks to Ambassador Paul Beijer and Mr. Guillaume Michel for their efforts on the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting over the past year.
3. The UK remains a strong supporter of transparency which is key to the success of the ATT. We continue to encourage other states to report fully, transparently and on time. Ahead of CSP2 a lot of very good work was done developing and agreeing a reporting template, in order to aid the reporting process. There will always be things that could be improved but, whilst appreciating that this is a living document, there now needs to be a period of 'bedding in' before any further adjustments are made. I note that this seems to have been the view of a significant number of participants in the Working Group.
4. We also need to reduce the risk of reporting fatigue and therefore it is important that wherever possible we look for synergies with existing regimes such as the UNPOA and UNROCA. Similarly we welcome the work towards an online reporting option. Anything which can reduce the burden of the reporting process will not only improve transparency among States Parties but also remove one of the disincentives to those countries contemplating joining the ATT.
5. It is important to remember that reporting is a tool to help identify illicit flows, not an exercise in form-filling best practice. There is an important role to be played by the Secretariat, the EU and NGOs in encouraging and supporting those states which need to increase their level of reporting. It's also important that reporting is not used in such a way as to deter states from moving towards greater transparency. Issues of concern highlighted in reporting need to be addressed, but the Treaty is not a court of inquisition. We need to find discrete mechanisms to discuss concerns or questions about the policies and practises of particular countries, but the Treaty community is too new for these conversations always to happen in plenary. Using a State's report as the basis for criticism rather than to provide guidance or support could be counterproductive and undermine the co-operative and supportive nature of the ATT.