



EUROPEAN UNION

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## Statement on the adoption of the UN resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, issued the following statement yesterday:

*"Honourable Members of the European Parliament,*

*Today the international trade in weapons is one of the least regulated sectors of international commerce.*

*Armaments can be easily diverted to the illegal market, fuel conflicts, be used in serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and contribute to international crime and terrorism. Weapons that fall into the wrong hands can have a devastating effect on regional and international peace and security. International action is urgently needed to address this.*

*Through the negotiation of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty, we have the opportunity to see the highest possible standards to regulate international trade in arms.*

*Such a Treaty will make trade in arms more transparent, more accountable, and prevent the diversion of weapons.*

*The EU has been at the forefront of this initiative since its outset. We strongly believe that the Arms Trade Treaty has the potential to improve the lives and security conditions of hundred of thousands around the world by ensuring that weapons are traded in the most responsible way.*

*The European Parliament has played a major role in this campaign. Your first resolution adopted in 2007 at the outset of the process helped to gain political momentum in support of the ATT initiative. Welcome today the adoption of a new EP resolution a head of the UN Conference in July where the Treaty will be negotiated.*

**P R E S S**

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*This is a collective effort. EU Foreign Ministers will also agree in June 2012 on comprehensive Council Conclusions on the ATT, setting the EU priorities for the negotiating Conference.*

*To have a real impact on the way arms are traded at international level, we need to make sure that the ATT we will negotiate in the UN will be as strong and robust as possible.*

*The Treaty should make sure that not only exports of weapons, but also transit, transshipment, and brokering, are controlled. There should be a shared responsibility by all actors involved in arms trade.*

*Similarly, we should make sure that all types of conventional weapons are controlled, and not only major military systems. Transfers of large quantities of small arms can have a much more destabilizing effect than the transfer of a limited number of large military vehicles.*

*We should make sure that the Treaty contains clear and strong parameters, against which arms transfers should be assessed. This will ensure that arms are transferred and used in full respect of human rights and international humanitarian law.*

*An ATT should also include a credible implementation mechanism, requiring States Parties to set in place national control systems to control transfer of weapons and to penalize transfers that have not been properly authorized.*

*Finally, the Treaty should contain credible and clear transparency mechanism to increase accountability in the global arms trade.*

*The unity and coherence of the EU as a block will be put under pressure during the negotiations. But we must remain united. That is why my services are putting a huge amount of time and resources into coordinating our negotiating positions so that we are ready to defend them strongly at the negotiating table.*

*We are also proactively engaging with major stakeholders in the remaining time. ATT has been raised by the EU in all recent high-level meetings with third countries, including with China, India, US, Russia, Pakistan, and Mexico.*

*On top of this we have been conducting a major worldwide outreach campaign since 2009 including ten regional seminars covering almost all countries in the framework of two Council Decisions.*

*Our work will not end with the negotiation of the Treaty. In order to have real impact on international peace and security, an ATT must be implemented.*

*The EU is ready to play its part, including through provision of assistance to those countries that show willingness to establish effective arms transfer controls, but need our support to do so."*