

# EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY DIRECTORATE

Disarmament, Non-Proliferation  
and Arms Export Control Division

## **EU joint reply to UNGA Resolution 78/31 "Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation" 28 May 2025**

The European Union (EU) believes that young people are powerful agents of change, economic development and technological innovation. It recognises their significant role in promoting and achieving sustainable peace and security. Engaging young people worldwide in discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation (NPD) is crucial to addressing current and future global challenges. It is also essential to listen and engage with the younger generation to advance collective efforts in reducing NPD risks. The EU's commitment to this priority is also demonstrated by its co-sponsorship of UNGA Resolution 78/31.

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) for Foreign and Security Policy, adopted on 28 June 2016, highlights the importance of enhancing mobility, cultural and educational exchanges, research cooperation, and civil society platforms, in turn, strengthens social links and international security. Reflecting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the EUGS adopts a comprehensive approach that integrates humanitarian, development, security, migration, economic, infrastructure, education, health, and research policies. It entails, therefore, the engagement to nurture societal resilience also by deepening work on education, culture and youth.

The EU Youth Action Plan in the EU external action for 2022-2027 continues to be employed as the first-ever policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people worldwide to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. It helps deliver on international commitments, such as the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, by enhancing meaningful youth participation and empowerment in the EU's external action policies.

The EU believes that active engagement of young people worldwide can provide opportunities to benefit from their views, insights and ideas and it is crucial in achieving peace, security and sustainable development.

The EU supports the universalisation and implementation of NPD conventions and the implementation of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction through Council Decisions that systematically consider youth engagement. Under EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/124 supporting the Hague Code of Conduct and missile non-proliferation, the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS) established a Youth Group of young NPD advocates to develop expertise on missile-related issues and raise awareness about the Code. Seventeen selected fellows (June 2023-June 2025) participated in expert-led workshops, discussions on the role of multilateral instruments in curbing missile proliferation,

a visit to a space launcher production site, and the preparation of research papers on missile proliferation topics.

In the context of Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1344 in support of enhancing the operational effectiveness of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the EU supported initiatives engaging youth and raising awareness on chemical weapons. This includes financing a side event at the 28th Conference of States Parties (November 2023) to empower the next generation for CWC implementation; the OPCW-Brazil “Education and Training Programme on Peaceful Uses of Chemistry for Youth” (April 2024); and supporting the 101st International Session of the European Youth Parliament in The Hague (April 2025), which focused on the CWC and OPCW and involved 300 youth from 41 European countries.

Under Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/656 in support for the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the area of nuclear security, the EU financially supported the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP), which encourages young, highly motivated and talented women to pursue a career in nuclear sciences, technology and non-proliferation studies by providing scholarships for graduate degree programmes along with IAEA internship opportunities. As of November 2024, 242 students had completed their master’s programmes with support from MSCFP. Of these graduates, 136 have been confirmed for an internship at the IAEA. As part of the MSCFP, EU support also facilitated the 5th two-week IAEA Nuclear Security School (September 2024).

Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/349 in support of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) provides capacity-development opportunities for young policymakers, scientists and academics from the Global South engaged in fields related to the BTWC, with a focus on young women’s participation. These opportunities came in the form of several seminars in Geneva and a fellowship that exposed youth to multilateral disarmament negotiations and engagement with diplomats and high-level experts. Concretely, the EU supported an online Biosecurity Diplomacy workshop and an in-person visit to the meeting of the BWC Working Group meeting in August 2023 and 2024 for young scientists from the Global South participating in the Youth for Biosecurity Fellowship.

The EU is supporting projects with a specific geographical focus that consider youth engagement from the Americas. Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/847 in support of efforts to prevent and combat illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition and their impact in the Americas expands the OASIS program and offers daily extracurricular activities and trainings for at-risk youth in communities on prevention of violence and assistance to victims. One illustration of this is the organisation of orchestra and choir classes in Tela, Honduras, aimed at enhancing life skills and reducing the likelihood of engagement in armed violence among 166 young individuals.

The EU actively promoted youth education in NPD education through Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/597 promoting the European network of independent non-proliferation and disarmament think tanks. Within this, the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium (EUNPDC) ran several initiatives to engage the next generation. These include a proliferation awareness course for young natural scientists; 30 internships for graduate students and young diplomats; university outreach to raise awareness and visibility of the field; a Next Generation skill-building workshop; the EU NPD eLearning Course; and the Young Women in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament mentorship programme. The EU’s support to the EUNPDC was extended under Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/889 on 12 May 2025, aiming to expand its global footprint by increasing the visibility of the field and available opportunities, and by deepening engagement with the younger generation.