

ITALY

National report regarding UNGA Resolution 79/239 on “Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security”

Italian G7 Presidency

Artificial intelligence (AI) was placed at the heart of political and technical discussions throughout the whole Italian G7 Presidency of 2024. The Apulia Leaders’ Summit recognized the impact of AI on the military domain and the need for a framework for responsible development and use.

On October 18-20, 2024, the first ever G7 Defense ministerial meeting took place in Naples. In that occasion, the G7 Defense Ministers reaffirmed their determination to address, in a cohesive and concrete manner, security challenges, at a time in history marked by great instability. Moreover, they stressed the need for a more cooperative approach in defence-related research and development, also in terms of sharing and leveraging expertise and knowledge, while fostering a safe environment to prevent malign access, in order to maintain competitive advantage, including in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies.

Finally, the G7 statement of the Non-Proliferation Directors’ Group recognized the profound impact of emerging disruptive technologies, such as AI, on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as on the future of military operations.

I. REAIM

Italy values the REAIM process that was launched by the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea in 2023 with the aim of providing a platform to discuss key opportunities, challenges and risks associated with military applications of AI. At the second REAIM summit (Seoul, 2024), Italy endorsed the “Blueprint for Action”, a document outlining key principles for responsible AI governance, including the importance of compliance with international law, human responsibility and accountability, the reliability and trustworthiness of AI systems, and appropriate human involvement in the development, deployment and use of AI in the military domain.

The Blueprint-endorsing States stress the need to prevent AI technologies from being used to contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the importance to not undermine arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Moreover, in order to develop common understanding of AI technology and its applications in the military domain, the Blueprint calls on States to commit in further discussions, developing effective legal review procedures, trust and confidence building measures and appropriate risk reduction measures. In this framework, the exchange of information and good practices, as well as the active involvement of other stakeholders, is crucial to progress in the debate.

II. Political Declaration on the Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy

Italy also values the “*Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy*”. Affirming that the military use of AI can and should be ethical, responsible and enhance international security, the endorsing States recognise that a set of measures should be implemented in the development, deployment and use of military AI capabilities. In particular, States commit to

minimising unintended bias in military AI capabilities, ensuring that their safety, security and effectiveness are subject to appropriate and rigorous testing and implementing appropriate safeguards both to detect and avoid unintended consequences, and to respond effectively in such cases. Moreover, it is important that a responsible human chain of command and control is defined and that military AI capabilities are used consistent with international obligations.

III. Pact for the Future

In September 2024, world leaders adopted the “Pact for the Future” and its annexes, reaffirming their global commitments and enabling States to address new and emerging challenges and opportunities. Action 27 encourages States to seize the opportunity posed by emerging technologies, including AI, but at the same time addressing the potential risks posed by their misuse. In particular, Member States will continue to assess such risks in the military applications of artificial intelligence, as well as possible opportunities throughout their life cycle, engaging with relevant stakeholders.

IV. Paris Declaration on Maintaining Human Control in AI enabled weapon systems

Italy also recently endorsed the “*Paris Declaration on Maintaining Human Control in AI enabled weapon systems*”, which was adopted at the margins of the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit (Paris, 6-11 February 2025). Underscoring that responsibility and accountability can never be transferred to machines, the endorsing States commit to a human-centric approach to the development, deployment and use of AI applications in the military domain. These States are committed to ensuring that the deployment of AI in the military sector is fully in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law, while fostering research, development and innovation with AI technology.

V. V. Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems (GGE LAWS)

The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning have also significant implications for the role of autonomy in weapons systems. In Italy’s view, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which combines diplomatic, legal and military expertise of representatives from governments, international organisations and specialised institutions, is by far the most suitable forum to address current and emerging issues relating to the development and use of weapons systems. Italy actively contributes to the discussions held within the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), launched under the auspices of the CCW, committed to advancing discussions on the development of elements of a future instrument, according to the mandate agreed during the 2023 Annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties.

In Italy’s view, this instrument should set clear prohibitions and regulations, so as to be eventually adopted as an Additional Protocol to the CCW. According to this approach, lethal autonomous weapons systems that cannot be developed and used in accordance with international humanitarian law would be *ipso facto* prohibited. On the other hand, systems featuring decision-making autonomy in critical functions, which can be developed and used in full compliance with international humanitarian law, would be regulated. The human element is in fact, in Italy’s view, crucial for the entire life cycle of lethal autonomous weapons systems, namely for their design, development, production, deployment and use. An appropriate level of human judgment and control should be retained also to ensure responsibility and accountability under international humanitarian law.

Italy is fully committed to reaching consensus on a set of elements of an instrument by the end of the mandate of the Group in 2026.

Conclusions

Stressing the urgency of discussions on AI applications in the military domain, Italy's approach seeks to maximize the benefits of AI while minimizing its potential risks. Italy promotes a vision of a safe, secure and trustworthy AI and supports the principle of maintaining human control in the decision-making phase to use weapons.