

EU joint reply to UNGA Resolution 80/25
“Relationship between disarmament and development”

This joint contribution is an update of EU actions since the submission of its joint contribution to the report of the UN Secretary-General following UNGA Resolution 79/43.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) shares the view that development is closely connected to peace and security, as reaffirmed most recently by the Pact for the Future. Thus, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation contribute to maintaining and enhancing stability and increasing resources made available for development. The EU has made major contributions towards this objective.¹

The EU recognises the linkages between sustainable development, humanitarian action, gender equality and conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as the importance of diplomatic and political solutions to support peace and security, in line with the EU Global Strategy and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and designs its multilateral and international cooperation efforts on disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation accordingly.

The EU regularly undertakes diplomatic outreach to convince states to ratify or accede to multilateral arms control agreements, and to raise awareness for the role of multilateral export control regimes as instruments contributing to peace and security, thus creating the conditions for sustainable development worldwide.

The EU also continues to support capacity building to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and projects addressing the threats of anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war with the aim to enhance the socioeconomic development in certain affected states and regions.

The EU is performing and supporting the following actions:

The link between disarmament and development with regard to several weapon categories

Chemical and Biological Weapons

The EU maintained its strong political, and financial support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The EU and the OPCW further enhanced mutual coordination, strategic cooperation and exchange of views to support the implementation of the Convention under a Cooperation Agreement (MoU) signed in 2024. Important EU voluntary financial contributions supported OPCW core tasks and contributed to supporting the OPCW’s activities related to Syria and Ukraine and enhancing OPCW operational effectiveness through satellite imagery², as well as supporting capacity-building efforts in CWC States Parties through the OPCW Africa Programme.

¹ For background relating to EU strategic documents, see EU contribution to the UNSG report following UNGA Resolution 78/23 “Relationship between disarmament and development”, [https://docs-library.unoda.org/General_Assembly_First_Committee_-_Seventy-Ninth_session_\(2024\)/78-23-EU-EN.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/General_Assembly_First_Committee_-_Seventy-Ninth_session_(2024)/78-23-EU-EN.pdf)

² Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/2354, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202502354

The EU continues to provide substantial support for the universalisation and implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)³, supplemented in 2025 by an instrument⁴ to support the BTWC in its inter-sessional programme and preparations for the Tenth Review Conference, States Parties in national capacity building and preparedness in order to prevent and respond to potential attacks involving biological agents and toxins, and partner countries in building and maintaining biosecurity networks. In addition to direct support for the implementation of UNSCR 1540⁵, the EU in line with the UNSCR 1540 has extended support to biosecurity and biosafety in a number of countries in Latin America.⁶

As a member of the G7 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the EU actively supports 63 states in all regions of the world through its EU CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence.

Anti-Personnel Landmines

The EU continues to support the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including through Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/781 in support of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan for the implementation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction⁷. The EU and its Member States are major donors for mine action worldwide, supporting survey and clearance of mined areas, mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction in third countries, capacity building and research and development in technology for mine detection and clearance.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

The EU continues its engagement in support of aims of UNSG's Agenda for Disarmament 'Securing our Common Future, including through the frameworks of the ATT, the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management and the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA), and is committed to implementing these international instruments. The EU continues strengthening conventional arms control instruments and improving protection for civilians from the effects of these weapons, inter alia by promoting further compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law and fostering the fight against illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW. The EU supports the adoption of regional and national roadmaps, targets and commitments, with appropriate means to track progress and mobilise international support. The EU promotes preventing diversion and ensuring effective stockpile management through international tools and initiatives on tracing and capacity building, including the UN PoA, the International Tracing Instrument and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. The EU highlights the need to address new technology developments in SALW technology, design, manufacture and trade, especially regarding small arms with a polymer frame or a modular design and developments in SALW technology and design, including 3D-printing.

In the implementation of the EU Strategy against illicit Firearms, Small Arms & Light Weapons and their Ammunition ('the EU SALW Strategy') of 19 November 2018, the EU continues to provide considerable assistance through a number of projects to various countries and regional organisations to strengthen their action against illicit SALW. The priorities include stockpile management, the destruction of surplus and confiscated SALW, capacity building for marking,

³ Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/349, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32024D0349>

⁴ Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/494, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/494/oj/eng>

⁵ Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/654; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023D0654>

⁶ Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/645, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202400645

⁷ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202500781

record keeping and tracing of SALW, support for law enforcement capacities in countering arms trafficking and tracking the sources of illicit weapons and ammunition in conflict affected areas. The EU is also assisting countries to enhance their national arms transfer control systems to prevent weapons from falling into unauthorised hands. The EU by means of Council Decisions has been continuously providing assistance regionally to the League of Arab States⁸; OAS in the Americas⁹; OSCE for actions in South-Eastern Europe¹⁰ and in Ukraine¹¹; to SEESAC through UNDP in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe¹²; as well as for the continuation of support for the development by GICHD/AMAT of an internationally recognised arms and ammunition management validation system AAMVS¹³.

A dedicated assistance instrument for UNODA¹⁴ was adopted in 2025 to support forward-looking global policy developments in the context of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the UN PoA in 2024 and its follow-up, to strengthen effective national and regional implementation of PoA and the International Tracing Instrument, and to support gender-responsive SALW control policies and programmes. The support also covers the implementation of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.

The EU continues to support a global reporting mechanism on illicit conventional arms and their ammunition to reduce the risk of their diversion and illicit transfer, most recently under Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/612 ("iTrace VI")¹⁵. The current focus is to further provide Union policy makers, arms control experts and arms export control officers with systematically compiled, relevant information, which is to assist them in developing effective, evidence-based, reactive and preventive strategies against the diversion and illicit spread of conventional arms, their ammunition, and dual-use goods in order to improve international and regional security, including conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction.

Export Controls of Arms and Dual-use Goods

The EU decisively opposes narratives that imply a conflict between export controls and peaceful development. The EU strongly believes that effective and transparent export controls are important for facilitating the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of advanced technologies, including nuclear energy, without hampering peaceful and legitimate trade and cooperation. All available data shows that export controls have never impeded economic development. Denials of specific exports of dual-use goods by EU Member States are based on case-by-case assessments, identifying concrete proliferation and militarization risks. These denials are rare, currently covering only 0.01% of value of EU external trade, and have never posed an obstacle to legitimate trade. Notably, in the EU there is an increasing trend in the number of licenses and the value of authorized trade while the number and value of denied exports is significantly decreasing.

⁸ Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/2500, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/2500/oj/eng>

⁹ Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/1451, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202501451

¹⁰ Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3097, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/3097/oj/eng>, amended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/344, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/344/oj/eng>

¹¹ Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3003, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024D3003>

¹² Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3006, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/3006/oj/eng>

¹³ Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2275, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D2275&qid=1669035358051&from=EN>

¹⁴ Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/2565, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202502565

¹⁵ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202600612

The EU fully supports the existing multilateral export control regimes (Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Nuclear Suppliers Group, Wassenaar Arrangement, Zangger Committee). It stresses their crucial role in the prevention of the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, in the implementation of UNSC embargoes, and in promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilizing accumulations. As concerns weapons of mass destruction, the multilateral export control regimes respond to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, which calls for multilateralism as the only effective means of combating the proliferation of WMDs. More broadly, these regimes define a series of products and technologies that are subject to export controls, regardless of their potential destinations. It is up to each participating state to apply the corresponding control, whose resolutions are based solely on non-proliferation criteria. Additionally, the multilateral regimes promote best practices, build trust between exporters and importers, and support coordination without infringing on national sovereignty.

The EU is active in promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in real terms, for instance by supporting IAEA or OPCW, also financially. The EU is promoting strong non-proliferation mechanisms under the Treaties and UNSC resolutions by promoting robust export controls and related legislations worldwide.

The EU is also providing widespread support to partner countries in setting up or enhancing their own export control systems. In this light, the EU puts a major emphasis on globally enhancing the security of dual-use CBRN materials, whose malevolent use poses a risk for international peace and development. The EU CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE) Initiative provides a platform for voluntary regionalized cooperation with 64 partner countries on all CBRN-related hazards. With a budget of EUR 147 million for the period 2021-2027, financed through the European Union's Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe, the Initiative represents the EU's largest civilian external security programme. The EU Partner to Partner (P2P) Export Control Programme aims to enhance the effectiveness of export control systems of dual-use items and military equipment, currently covering 56 countries across the globe.

EU Member States also continue to apply Criterion Eight of Common Position 2008/944 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment as included in the EU Common Military List which itself reflects control lists updates agreed within Wassenaar Arrangement. The Common Position requires EU Member States to consider the compatibility of the exports of the military technology or equipment with the technical and economic capacity of the recipient country, taking into account the desirability that states should meet their legitimate security and defence needs with the least diversion of human and economic resources for armaments. Furthermore, on 14 April 2025, Criterion One of Common Position 2008/944 was updated to stipulate that an export licence shall be denied if approval would be inconsistent with the commitments of EU Member States under the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. The value of such management for achieving relevant targets of the SDGs related to the reduction of illicit arms flows and the prevention of violence through strengthened national institutions has been recognized by UNGA Resolution 79/54. The Criteria of Common Position 2008/944 are also applicable to exports of dual-use goods by EU Member States.