

EXPERT WORKSHOP

Transatlantic Approaches to Global Arms Control: How to Close the Arms Trade Treaty Implementation Gap?

**Tuesday, 30th November 2021
3PM – 4.30PM Brussels Time**

The proliferation and trade of weapons – from small and light weapons (SALW) to the global transfers of heavy weaponry – as well as the undermining of treaty-based approaches to addressing the threats of nuclear weapons and chemical weapons pose significant risks to global peace and security. The controversial export of conventional arms by European and American companies to countries involved in conflict with significant civilian casualties (such as currently in Yemen) or to countries with a track-record of human rights abuses (such as Egypt) warrants a broad reflection about how these approaches affect international security – as well as national security within countries in Europe and the United States – and avenues for an urgently needed change of policies.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) represents one framework to advance such reflections. The ATT is the first legally binding global treaty to regulate the international arms trade, with a particular emphasis on preventing weapon sales that have a risk of undermining peace and stability and contributing to human suffering. Currently there are 110 States Parties to the treaty, and whilst the European Union has been a strong advocate of the ATT and all EU Member States are ATT States Parties, there are still significant implementation gaps and clear violations of the spirit and letter of the ATT by European arms exporting countries. Furthermore, the United States signed the ATT in 2013, but has not yet ratified the treaty due in part to political opposition in the U.S. Senate as well as intense domestic lobbying against the treaty by the National Rifle Association and political manoeuvring of the Trump administration.

Given that the United States and European states (e.g., France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy) are responsible for more than half of global arms sales, a renewed push for transatlantic implementation of the ATT would benefit international peace and security efforts. China's growing role as a global arms exporter and its recent accession to the ATT in October 2020 provides further openings for transatlantic engagement, including with China, on the issue of arms trade regulations.

However, significant gaps in ATT implementation remain, resulting in missed opportunities, and waning momentum. This policy workshop seeks to bring together policy officials, experts, and civil society representatives from both sides of the Atlantic to explore new opportunities for transatlantic cooperation on global arms control and for advancing the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in particular.

The workshop is part of a wider project on “Transatlantic Approaches to Global Arms Control: Opportunities, Challenges, and Ways Ahead”—run by the Global Governance Institute (GGI) Brussels, The Stimson Centre Washington, and the Washington DC office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

The project seeks to explore potential avenues for a transatlantic reinforcement of multilateral approaches to the regulation of the arms trade around the globe.

Workshop Programme

“Transatlantic Approaches to Global Arms Control: How to Close the Arms Trade Treaty Implementation Gap?”

Tuesday 30 November 2021
9AM – 10.30AM Washington DC Time
(15.00 – 16.30 Brussels time)

Online via Zoom

0900 AM – 0910 AM **Welcome and Introduction by the Co-Organizers**
(15.00 – 15.10 BXL time)

0910 AM – 09.30 AM **Initial Input from US and European Representatives**
(15.10 – 15.30 BXL time)

0930 AM – 1020 AM **Roundtable Discussion with experts from Multilateral**
(15.30 – 16.20 BXL time) **Organisations, Academia and Civil Society**

1020 AM – 10.30 AM **Conclusions and Wrap up by the Co-organizers**
(16.20 – 16.30 BXL time)

Guiding Questions

- What are the core implementation barriers for the ATT?
- What are current multilateral, US and EU approaches to ATT implementation and how can they be strengthened?
- How can transatlantic cooperation advance ATT implementation?