



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

2024

EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the international non-proliferation and disarmament framework continued to be impacted by Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, while multilateral fora were further polarised by the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, escalating tensions in other regions, and growing concerns over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Despite its growing isolation, Russia doubled down in its strategy marked by a prioritisation of its war effort against Ukraine over any other consideration in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Russia's provocative and irresponsible rhetoric, obstructive tactics, and continued dissemination of disinformation all contributed to the continued erosion of the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. The non-proliferation challenges posed by Iran's nuclear programme or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also continued to grow.

Confronted with such a complex and demanding geopolitical backdrop, the EU continued to apply the guiding principles set in the existing applicable strategic documents: the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy (doc. 10715/16), the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (doc. 15708/03), and the New Lines for Action (doc. 17172/08). These guiding principles include the following:

- effective multilateralism, safeguarding the centrality and the promotion of the universality of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, through diplomatic action and financial assistance to third countries and international organisations;
- close cooperation with countries to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime;
- addressing non-proliferation issues in the EU's bilateral political and non-proliferation and disarmament dialogue meetings, and in more informal contacts; and
- effective and complementary use of all available instruments and financial resources, in order to underpin EU foreign policy objectives.

Building further on the commitments enshrined in the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (doc. 7371/22), the EU and its Member States continued in 2024 to uphold, support and further advance the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control framework, in view of global and regional challenges, with a coordinated approach with partners.

With regard to weapons of mass destruction, the EU continued to participate at regular events, such as the second session of the Preparatory Committee to the Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Geneva, 22 July-2 August), as well as in all WMD-related multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament fora, including multilateral export control regimes.

Regarding conventional weapons, the EU took part in the Fourth Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (New York, 18-28 June), as well as the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Siem Reap, 25-29 November). It also participated in all other main multilateral fora aimed at preventing and curbing their illicit trafficking and to prevent human suffering (i.e., Arms Trade Treaty, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) and to pursue capacity building projects in this field. The EU continued to develop in 2024 its cooperation with Ukraine to prevent a potential future diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

All across these strands of work, the EU maintained a constant dialogue with third countries – in the G7 format, but also through formal dialogues and informal consultations – and cooperated closely with civil society. It also continued to promote cross-cutting priorities, such as supporting and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women across the whole realm of non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as the participation of the youth.

INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on the progress made throughout 2024 in the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, adopted by the European Council in December 2003 (doc. 15708/03), complemented by the *"New lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems"*, as endorsed by the Council on 8-9 December 2008 (doc. 17172/08). For the sake of completeness, further aspects regarding conventional weapons – including both small arms and light weapons and anti-personnel mines – are also touched upon.

This report is published by the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (article 27 of the Treaty on European Union). It is non-exhaustive and focuses on main developments.

Under the direction of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EEAS contributes to the EU's joint efforts on non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, along with Member States and the European Commission. The EU Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and his team in the Division for Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Export Control (SECDEFPOL.4) work with third countries, international organisations, and civil society, in order to reduce global weapons stockpiles, prevent their diversion to criminals and terrorists, and regulate the development of new weapons agents and technologies.

The Council Working Party on Non-Proliferation and Arms Exports, through both its disarmament and non-proliferation (CONOP) and conventional arms exports (COARM) subgroups, plays a central role in coordinating and establishing EU positions and policy, upholding international agreements, and advancing efforts in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms export control. The Delegations of the EU in Geneva, New York and Vienna, as well as the EU Liaison Officer to International Organisations in The Hague, represent the EU in non-proliferation and disarmament fora, prepare and coordinate EU statements, and organise side-events to promote the EU's objectives, also contributing to policy-making.

NUCLEAR ISSUES

In 2024, the EU remained fully committed to its long-standing objectives in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, including:

- the universalisation and the full, complete and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);
- the entry into force and the universalisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT);
- the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
- the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East; or
- supporting the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), recognising its safeguards system as a fundamental component of the NPT's non-proliferation regime, as well as its efforts in promoting nuclear safety and security, including in Ukraine.

Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine continued to impact on developments in the realm of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The EU and its Member States, in coordination with like-minded partners, continued to hold Russia accountable, calling out its irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, disinformation and disregard for the safety and security in and around nuclear facilities in Ukraine, and worked with the rest of the international community in an effort to preserve and further consolidate the international regime in this area. The EU condemned the announcements by Russia of its intention to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus and that an agreement had been reached between Russia and Belarus to this end, both of which go against Belarus' international commitments under the Budapest Memorandum 'to eliminate all nuclear weapons from [its] territory' and contribute to already heightened tensions.

The EU also voiced its concern over China's massive and continued nuclear build-up, developed in total absence of transparency, and that is not consistent with Beijing's obligations under Article VI of the NPT. The EU continued to call on China to engage in talks on nuclear arms control and on risk reduction, and to adopt and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

In 2024, the EU and its Member States continued to contribute constructively to the ongoing NPT review cycle. The second session of the Preparatory Committee ahead of the eleventh Review Conference was held in Geneva from 22 July until 2 August. As expected in the current geopolitical context, no consensual factual summary was agreed. However, contrary to 2023, the Chair of the Preparatory Committee session was able to issue a factual summary on his own authority.

The EU participated very actively in the session, delivering six statements,¹ submitting three working papers,² organising two side events³ and ensuring EU coordination, all in order to promote its priorities identified in the Council Conclusions on the tenth NPT Review Conference,⁴ which remain valid. The EU and its Member States also endorsed a joint statement on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,⁵ as well as a joint statement promoted by Ukraine.⁶

The International Atomic Energy Agency

The EU highly values the technical expertise, independence, and impartiality of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in fulfilling its mandate, which encompasses both nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Maintaining nuclear

¹ A general statement, one statement for each of the three clusters, a statement under cluster II on regional issues including with respect to the Middle East and implementation of the 1995 Middle East resolution, and a statement under cluster III on the special issue of improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process.

² The working papers submitted by the EU were the following:

- *"The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"* ([NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.1](#));

- *"Enhancing transparency and accountability in the implementation of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons obligations and commitments"*, ([NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.6](#)); and

- *"Towards a fissile material cut-off treaty: advancing the objective of stopping fissile material production for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in the 2026 Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle"*, submitted jointly with Argentina, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Japan, Peru, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea ([NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.12](#)).

³ The two side events were the following:

- *"Forging a Path Towards a WMD-Free Middle East – The WMD-Free Zone Compass"*, co-organised by the EU and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), within UNIDIR's Middle East WMDFZ Project, funded by the EU; and

- *"International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses"*, organised by the EU in cooperation with Brazil, South Africa and the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium.

⁴ Council Conclusions on the 10th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), of 15 November 2021 ([ST 13243/21](#)).

⁵ Joint statement *"Addressing the North Korean nuclear challenge"*, of 26 July 2024.

⁶ [Joint statement](#) of 22 July 2024.

safety and security in Ukraine and ensuring the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme remained the EU's top priorities at the IAEA. The EU Delegation in Vienna coordinated dozens of EU statements on these and other topics on the IAEA agenda and contributed to the successful adoption of a number of resolutions. Similar to previous years, the EU and its Member States continued to sponsor the annual IAEA General Conference resolutions on nuclear security and on safeguards. Consensus was reached on both resolutions at the General Conference in September 2024.

The EU provides strong support to the IAEA and its Member States through political backing and substantial financial contributions. The EU and its Member States are among the largest donors to the Agency, in particular its Technical Cooperation Fund, and including in the area of research and development. In addition, the EU remains among the largest donors to the IAEA in the field of nuclear security, through contributions from the CFSP budget and Member States.

Since 2003, the EU has provided EUR 67 million in support of the IAEA's nuclear security activities through nine consecutive actions under the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The most recent of these actions, which is currently underway, is Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/656, of 19 February 2024, on Union support for the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the areas of nuclear security ('IAEA IX'). The EU have allocated a total amount of EUR 7.2 million for a 36-month period, which includes an additional amount of EUR 1.12 million for IAEA assistance to Ukraine. The following three specific objectives are targeted: a) build capacity in IAEA Member States and assist them to strengthen nuclear security; b) provide nuclear security assistance to Ukraine, including by supporting the continued presence of IAEA staff at all nuclear sites in Ukraine; and c) strengthen the participation of women in careers related to nuclear security, in particular through the IAEA's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

The IAEA safeguards are a crucial element of the international security framework. The NPT serves as the cornerstone of global efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its article III requires that all non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the Treaty conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, in order to prevent the diversion or misuse of nuclear energy for non-peaceful uses. The EU supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system and remains of the view that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, in combination with the Additional Protocol, is the current verification standard. While a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement enables the IAEA to verify that declared nuclear material is not used for undeclared purposes, the Additional Protocol gives the IAEA

further possibilities to verify that there are no undeclared nuclear material and activities. The EU continues to call for universal adherence to them. During 2024, outreach to third countries focused on promoting the universalization of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol.

The safeguards agreement between the IAEA, Euratom and Euratom's non-nuclear weapon Member States, signed in 1973 in Brussels, represents the first multilateral NPT safeguards agreement. It includes a Protocol that amplifies the cooperation arrangements which are necessary because of the existence of the Euratom safeguards system. Under this Agreement, Euratom Member States accepted safeguards pursuant to the NPT on all nuclear material in all their peaceful activities, allowing for the implementation of effective and efficient safeguards in all EU Member States. Euratom is also a party to the safeguards agreements between the IAEA and France. Both agreements are complemented by their respective Additional Protocols, which came into force in 2004. Nowadays, Euratom Safeguards are regarded as an integral part of the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation.

The EU actively supports the IAEA safeguards system, including financial support for the IAEA Network of Analytical Laboratories, as well as the promotion of State System for Accountancy and Control of nuclear materials (SSAC) in partner countries. The European Safeguards Research and Development Association (ESARDA), operated by the European Commission, also continues its international outreach through its Memorandums of Understanding with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONe) and the Asian Pacific Safeguards Network, in close collaboration with the Institute for Nuclear Materials Management.

In 2024, the European Commission Cooperative Support Programme (EC-SP) to the IAEA continued to provide vital technical expertise and support in the field of nuclear safeguards. Operated by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in close collaboration with the Directorate General for Energy-Directorate Nuclear Safeguards (DG ENER), the programme remained a cornerstone of the IAEA's efforts to deter the spread of nuclear weapons. Through its ongoing tasks, the EC-SP enabled the effective implementation of safeguards verification measures, including the detection of undeclared materials, activities, and facilities. With over 40 active tasks, the programme's contributions are regularly reviewed and emphasized through biannual meetings, highlighting the importance of this collaborative work. The IAEA acknowledged the unique expert support provided by the JRC and DG ENER, recognizing the crucial role the EC-SP plays in ensuring that States honour their legal obligations to use nuclear material solely for peaceful purposes.

Euratom has allocated EUR 300 million under the Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation over the period 2021-2027 to promote nuclear safety, responsible radioactive waste management, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards in third countries. The Instrument supports, among others, a large training and education project is funded in the area of nuclear safeguards with the European Nuclear Education Network (ENEN), including – in cooperation with the IAEA – the first-ever academic postgraduate programme on nuclear safeguards.

The EU and its Member States continued to be strong supporters of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme, including through substantial contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund and the Peaceful Uses Initiative, which are important tools to enable the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology and to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The EU and the IAEA regularly hold annual Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) to review and plan their broad-range cooperation. The 10th EU-IAEA SOM meeting was held on 2 July 2024 in Vienna, bringing together senior officials of the IAEA and the EU to reaffirm their cooperation on nuclear activities and to further explore areas of cooperation, such as nuclear safety, security and safeguards, with a major focus on the situation in Ukraine.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

The entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and pursuing its objectives for a world free of nuclear testing, remain key priorities of the EU in the framework of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. All EU Member States have demonstrated their strong commitment to the Treaty by ratifying it and, pending its entry into force, by actively adhering to its objectives. As a key confidence- and security-building measure, the EU actively advocates for the CTBT's contributions to peace, security, disarmament, and non-proliferation, while also highlighting its civil applications.

In 2024, the EU continued to engage in diplomatic activities in support of the CTBT, in both multilateral and bilateral frameworks, consistently encouraging States who have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty, and in particular Annex 2 States, to do so without preconditions or further delay. Following the Russian revocation of its ratification of the CTBT, the EU continues to call on Russia to uphold its commitment to the object and purpose of the Treaty.

Since 2006, through nine actions, the EU has provided over EUR 29.5 million in extra-budgetary contributions to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), demonstrating the strong commitment of the EU and its Member States to the Treaty and its implementation. These funds are currently being utilized to support the CTBT verification regime and to enhance capacity-building for developing countries across all geographic regions.

In 2024, the implementation of Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/2064, of 23 September 2023, on Union support for the activities of the CTBTO in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities, commenced, reinforcing the EU support for the CTBTO's activities. Thus, the EU has allocated EUR 6.3 million for 36 months for the CTBT monitoring and verification system, strengthening the capabilities of States Signatories to fulfil their verification responsibilities, and promoting the Treaty's universalization and entry into force.

Pending the CTBT's entry into force, the EU continued to call on all States to abide by the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, and to refrain from any action contrary to the object and purpose of the Treaty.

Nuclear Security and Related Issues

The EU is committed to upholding the highest international standards in nuclear security. While EU Member States bear the primary responsibility for ensuring nuclear security, an increasing number of related issues fall within areas where common EU rules and institutions also play a crucial role. This underscores the need for close collaboration and highlights the IAEA's essential role in supporting and enabling these efforts.

The EU stresses the need to continue strengthening nuclear security worldwide, considering that nuclear security goes beyond just preventing nuclear terrorism and facilitating peaceful uses of nuclear technology – it plays a vital role in delivering clean energy, advanced medical treatments, and improved food security.

The EU welcomed the fourth International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS 2024) held in Vienna and commended co-Presidents Australia and Kazakhstan for their leadership. In the absence of a new Ministerial Declaration, the EU stresses that the commitments agreed at the 2020 ICONS remain valid and must be implemented, in addition to addressing new challenges. The EU will continue to provide significant support for nuclear security activities of the IAEA. In addition, The EU and all EU Member States joined a cross-regional Joint Statement

delivered by Ukraine on behalf of 54 delegations to highlight the nuclear threats caused by Russia's war of aggression. During the Conference, the EU organized or funded five side events, ensuring high visibility throughout the week.

The EU condemned in the strongest possible terms, in multiple statements at the IAEA General Conference and the Board of Governors, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which is causing unprecedented nuclear safety and security threats, with daily breaches of the IAEA seven indispensable pillars for nuclear safety and security in armed conflict and potentially serious consequences. The EU reiterated its concern for the potential risks related to the physical integrity of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, radioactive sources out of regulatory control, illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials and technologies, as well as acts of sabotage at nuclear sites that stem from Russia's full-scale invasion against Ukraine.

The EU considers it important that all States accede to key nuclear security instruments, such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment (A/CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT), as fundamental elements of the global nuclear security and anti-terrorism architecture. The EU continued to support States in their efforts to fully implement these conventions. Furthermore, as these conventions only address violations of international legal framework by non-state actors, the European Commission, together with the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG), called on the international community to start a reflection on how to improve existing international instruments to protect nuclear sites in the context of war.

The EU continued to implement Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1187 of 19 June 2023 on Union support for the universalisation and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). The technical implementation was entrusted to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). It aims to increase the number of adherents to ICSANT, to improve national capacities to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases in which ICSANT is of relevance, to improve knowledge and understanding of the threat of radiological and nuclear terrorism and other criminal conduct involving such materials, to enhance policies, practices and procedures to prevent, detect and respond to the threat of nuclear terrorism, as well as to enhance international cooperation on the matter.

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the United States and Russia mutually agreed to pause all official GICNT activities, creating a significant gap in international

efforts to address radiological and nuclear terrorism. In order to bridge this gap, sixty-three countries and six international organizations, including EU, convened in Bucharest on 13-15 November 2024 for the inaugural meeting of the Global Forum to Prevent Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism (Global FTPRNT). Global FTPRNT reaffirms the importance of multilateral cooperation to counter radiological and nuclear terrorism, explores the current and evolving risk environment, and catalyses future capacity-building activities to address these risks.

A Practical Arrangement between the European Commission, represented by JRC, and the IAEA has been in place since 2013 and is successfully on-going, enabling close cooperation on nuclear security technical issues and fostering a strong partnership between the two organizations. This arrangement allows the European Commission, through JRC, to work closely with the IAEA to increase coordination of training and capacity-building activities, promoting and implementing sustainable Nuclear Security Culture practices, and enhancing the global nuclear security landscape. The European Nuclear Security Training Centre (EUSECTRA) has been fully operational since 2013, providing a unique platform for EU Member States and partner countries to enhance their nuclear security capabilities. The EUSECTRA offers a comprehensive range of training opportunities, covering the entire scope of nuclear security, including nuclear detection, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) radiological support, radiological crime scene management, and nuclear forensics. Utilizing radioactive and nuclear materials, cutting-edge technologies, and up-to-date knowledge, the EUSECTRA ensures that participants receive hands-on experience and training that reflects the latest developments in the field.

The European Commission continues to play a major role in international nuclear security efforts, demonstrating its commitment to strengthening global nuclear security. Notably, the JRC co-chairs the International Technical Working Group on Nuclear Forensics (ITWG), providing leadership and expertise in the development of guidelines and best practices for nuclear forensics. Additionally, the European Commission is an active participant in the Border Monitoring Working Group (BMWG), serving as part of the rotating Chairs (between the IAEA, the United States Department of Energy and the JRC) and contributing to the work of its two sub-groups on Detection Technologies and Capacity Building. Through these engagements, the JRC reinforces its position as a key player in the global nuclear security community, working collaboratively with international partners to address the complex challenges of nuclear security.

In cooperation with the partners from the United States, the European Commission organised in December 2024 in Bydgoszcz, Poland, another regional table-top exercise on radiological

security. The exercise brought together around 50 participants from Poland and neighbouring countries (Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia and Ukraine) and focused on the security of transport of radioactive sources. It was also an opportunity for the Polish co-hosts to test their procedures and cross-sectoral cooperation via a field exercise.

Verification Regimes and Initiatives

Based on the conviction that further development of multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capabilities could assist in the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and further to the 2023 consensus report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to Further Consider Nuclear Disarmament Verification Issues, the EU and its Member States continued in 2024 to support initiatives in that field of nuclear disarmament verification.

On 26 and 27 June 2024, in Geneva, the EU Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament participated in the Tenth Anniversary Meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), to which the EU and nine of its Member States⁷ belong. At the United Nations, all EU Member States backed the General Assembly Resolution 79/240 on a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, promoted jointly by Brazil and Norway.

Regional Issues and Aspects

Iran / JCPOA

IAEA reports continued to document the alarming acceleration of Iran's nuclear programme, gravely departing from its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in particular with regard to the expansion of its nuclear enrichment capacity and production of highly enriched uranium (HEU).

In particular, the further expansion of enrichment capacity and operation as reported by the IAEA in late November, as well as the sharp increase in the production of 60% enriched uranium, close to military levels, reported in early December, constituted another escalatory step. As a result of not having been able to perform JCPOA-related monitoring activities for

⁷ Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania, as well as the EU, are partners at the IPNDV.

more than three and a half years, the IAEA lost the continuity of knowledge as regards several key components of the nuclear programme of Iran.

The EU continued to call on all countries to support the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015) endorsing the JCPOA, which provides the basis for the IAEA's monitoring and reporting.

The High Representative, in his role of Coordinator, continued to be in contact with all participants in the JCPOA and with the United States.

As a reaction to the delivery by Iran of ballistic missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine, the EU adopted a set of sanctions.

In the meantime, the EU continued to cooperate with Iran in the civil nuclear field under Annex III of the JCPOA in the field of nuclear safety. Such cooperation includes support for the Iranian nuclear safety regulator (INRA), stress tests for the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, and the supply of equipment for Iran's INRA Nuclear Safety Centre.

The JCPOA Procurement Channel, which reviews transfers of nuclear or dual-use items to Iran, remained operational.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

During 2024, the EU continued to stress that continued DPRK ballistic missile launches represented a blatant violation of UN Security Council resolutions and posed a serious threat to regional and international peace and security as well as to the global non-proliferation regime. The High Representative on behalf of the EU issued a statement on 31 October in response to a DPRK intercontinental ballistic missile launch. This was complemented by other G7 Foreign Ministers statements and EU spokesperson statements. The EU underlined that illegal DPRK ballistic missile launches, along with the continuing activity in the DPRK nuclear programme, would never be accepted as legitimate. The EU continued to insist that the only route to sustainable peace and security lay in the DPRK taking action to comply with its obligation to abandon all its nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missile programmes and existing nuclear programmes, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and cease all related activities.

The EU and its Member States continued to encourage all members of the United Nations, especially members of the UN Security Council, to urge the DPRK to change course, emphasising that the most effective instrument to achieve this remained the full implementation of UN Security Council sanctions. The EU also further increased consultations with partners on other ways to restrict flows of finance, knowledge and components into the DPRK that could be used to support its illegal weapons programmes. The EU stressed that, despite Russia's veto of a UN Security Council resolution that would have renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1718, effectively preventing it from continuing its work, UN sanctions remain fully in place. As of the end of 2024, in addition to the 80 individuals and 75 entities listed under UN Security Council sanctions, 77 individuals and 21 entities were listed under the EU autonomous sanctions regime for the DPRK, following a dedicated package of restrictive measures targeting DPRK illegal weapons programme adopted by the EU on 31 May 2024.

In multilateral fora and other settings, including the UN Security Council, the EU also continued to call on the DPRK to return immediately to full compliance with the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, bring into force the Additional Protocol and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The EU insisted that the DPRK could not and would never have the status of a nuclear weapon State under the NPT or any other special status. The EU insisted that the situation could only be solved through peaceful means. The EU urged the DPRK to resume dialogue with the main parties and reiterated its readiness to support or facilitate any meaningful process of diplomacy aimed at the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

The EU strongly condemned the deepening military cooperation and arms transfers between the DPRK and Russia, which flagrantly violate multiple UN Security Council resolutions, as well as Russia's shift of position on the DPRK's denuclearisation.

Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

In 2024, the EU maintained its longstanding political support to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, freely agreed to by all States in the region.

The EU's backing also came in more concrete terms through the continued implementation of Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1306, of 26 June 2023, in support of a project on a zone free

of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in an evolving regional security environment. The project, implemented by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), focuses on: 1) assisting in mitigating regional trends in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); 2) encouraging regional security arrangements and arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament norms and processes; 3) developing a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between the Middle East WMD Free Zone and current regional and international developments; and 4) promoting an effective, verifiable, inclusive, and sustainable Middle East WMD Free Zone.

The EU also noted the five sessions of the UN Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction – the last one, held in New York from 18 to 22 November 2024 –, as well as their outcomes.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

In line with the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the EU remained committed to countering proliferation of chemical weapons through the full implementation and universalisation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The strong support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the implementing body of the Convention, was expressed in EU statements, demarches and voluntary financial contributions benefitting the OPCW's core activities. The EU and its Member States remained the biggest voluntary financial contributor in support of the OPCW.

On 20 February 2024, the EU and the OPCW concluded an agreement on cooperation taking the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The agreement formalises the long-standing relationship and constitutes a framework for strengthened coordination and collaboration with a high-level consultation mechanism that provides strategic guidance on key areas of the implementation of the CWC.

The Convention's continued vitality and addressing any threat of chemical weapons use is more important than ever in the current security environment with the confirmed use of riot control agents (RCA) as chemical weapons in Ukraine. The EU will continue its strong political and financial support to the OPCW with focus on capacity building, the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons and the fight against impunity for their use. To this end, the EU Foreign Ministers on 15 July 2024 approved a new voluntary financial contribution of EUR 1.6 million in support of enhancing "the OPCW Institutional Transitional Planning for Non-Routine Missions and Investigative Capacities" for 2024-26.

The new grant facilitates the transfer and integration of knowledge and expertise acquired by the OPCW non-routine missions, notably in Syria, into a permanent capacity embedded within the OPCW Technical Secretariat. In line with the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of 27 June 2018, the objective of this support is to ensure that the Secretariat can provide technical expertise to identify those who were perpetrators, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons, if requested by a State Party investigating a possible chemical weapons use on its territory.

On 14 October 2024, the Council of the EU prolonged the application of EU restrictive measures (sanctions) against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons imposed on 25 persons and 3 entities for an additional year until 16 October 2025. Those designated are

subject to an asset freeze, and EU persons and entities are forbidden from making funds, financial assets or economic resources available to them. In addition, a travel ban to the EU applies to the natural persons listed.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. It was the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. All EU Member States are States Parties to the BTWC.

The EU welcomed the work of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the BTWC, established by the Ninth Review Conference of the BTWC in 2022 to renew discussions on, among other issues, compliance and verification, and to establish individual mechanisms for International Cooperation and Assistance and Science and Technology Review. However, similarly as in 2023, the 2024 BTWC meetings, both the meeting of the Working Group and the Meeting of States Parties, faced disruptive attempts of Russia aiming at attacking any dissenting voice, undermining transparency and inclusivity, and slowing any progress on substance. Despite Russia's attacks, the EU and its Member States continued to play an active role in countering Russia's disinformation campaign and in supporting progress on substantive matters in the BTWC Working Group. This also includes the EU's and EU Member States' push for a Special Conference on the establishment of a mechanism to review and assess scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention, and a mechanism to facilitate and support the full implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X.

In line with the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and as a long-term backer of the BTWC, the EU continued in 2024 its consistent support through the implementation of two Council Decisions. A new Council Decision in support of the BTWC was adopted in January 2024, funding activities of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in support of capacity building to strengthen BTWC national implementation, fostering biosecurity networks in the Global South, strengthening the preparedness of States Parties to prevent and respond to attacks involving biological agents and enabling tools for outreach, education and engagement. In 2024, the EU also continued to support the UNODA initiative "Youth for Biosecurity" and a sponsorship programme allowing for inclusive participation. Another important aspect of EU support was related to the universalisation of the Convention and preparation of workshops, including the regional workshops on universalisation and number of national-level workshops. EU-funded activities largely contributed to the accession of Tuvalu and Micronesia to the BTWC in 2024, as 186th and 187th States Parties to the Convention.

BALLISTIC MISSILES

The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC) is an important transparency and confidence building instrument. It is the only multilateral instrument aiming at both preventing ballistic missile proliferation and increasing transparency about ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles. States that subscribe to the HCoC voluntarily commit themselves to provide pre-launch notifications on ballistic missile and space-launch vehicle launches, and to submit an annual declaration on their policies on ballistic missiles and space-launch vehicles.

The EU is a long standing supporter of the HCoC. All EU Member States have subscribed to it. The EU regularly reaches out to non-subscribing States in support of the further universalisation and effective implementation of the Code. With the subscription of Qatar in 2024, a total of 145 UN Member States are now Subscribing States to the Code.

Through a number of consecutive projects under the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU has since 2008 financed HCoC outreach activities, side events, research papers, expert meetings and regional awareness seminars, implemented by the Paris-based *Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique*. The current project under Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/124 was adopted in 2023 and runs until 2026.⁸

The 23rd Annual Regular Meeting (ARM) of the Hague Code of Conduct took place in Vienna on 11-12 April 2024. At the meeting, the EU and its Member States reiterated their strong support for the HCoC, its universalisation, full implementation and efficient functioning and expressed ballistic missile and UAV related concerns with regard to activities of Russia, Iran and DPRK.⁹ As in the previous two years, there was no press release by the HCoC subscribing States from the meeting, in contrast with the practice of ARM meetings preceding 2022.

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023D0124>

⁹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/vienna-international-organisations/eu-statement-23rd-annual-regular-meeting-hague-code-conduct-against-ballistic-missile-proliferation_en?s=66

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1540

UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540) is a fundamental pillar of the global framework for preventing the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction. It plays a crucial role in international efforts to curb proliferation, particularly to terrorist groups and other non-state actors.

Effective prevention of proliferation, including controlling materials and expertise, requires not only the adoption of national legislation but also consistent enforcement and oversight across borders and sectors. The EU works with partner countries to strengthen their capacity to adhere to the provisions of UNSCR 1540 and supports UN agencies in their work to promote understanding and compliance.

The EU and its Member States actively engaged by the work of the Committee, mandated by the Resolution 2663 (2022) adopted on 30 November 2022, to review its internal guidelines on matters regarding its Group of Experts. The mandate of the Committee was renewed for ten years, until 2032. Several updates were made and a new document (*“Assistance mechanism procedures and templates – Revision 2024”*) was adopted. Four new experts joined the Committee’s group of experts.

EU support to the implementation of UNSCR 1540 includes notably the following:

- The EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence Initiative provides significant assistance to mitigate risks from accidental, natural or criminal incidents in partner countries. This needs- and demand-driven initiative strengthens all-hazards security governance, both at national and regional levels. With a budget of almost EUR 147 million in 2021-27, the CBRN Centres of Excellence supports capacity-building also through real-time, cross-border exercises with 64 countries.
- The EU helps States mitigate CBRN risks through the EU Partner-to-Partner Export Control Programme for Dual-Use Goods, which focuses on reducing the risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by strengthening international cooperation in the field of dual-use trade controls and strengthening national and regional capacity.
- The EU support from the CFSP budget to other States specifically related to the implementation of UNSCR 1540, has been taking place since 2006 and has contributed to diminishing the number of non-reporting States and the number of States that did not submit additional information required by the 1540 Committee following their submission

of incomplete reports. An ongoing Council Decision, adopted in 2023, supports of the implementation of UNSCR 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. This action provides approximately EUR 2.3 million to UNODA for activities, building on previous Joint Actions, aiming for improved sustainability of projects, enhanced partnerships and strengthened national implementation of the Resolution.

- The EU helps third countries implement their obligations under UNSCR 1540 through the implementation of multilateral non-proliferation Treaties. This support from the CFSP budget takes place through bilateral cooperation and assistance partnerships and support to the UN and regional organisations. This support to non-proliferation efforts focuses notably on the BTWC, the CWC, the NPT, the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons (UNSGM) and the HCoC.

Export controls are crucial in the context of UNSCR 1540. They prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Resolution calls on States to establish, develop and maintain appropriate effective national export and trans-shipment controls over materials related to nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, or their means of delivery, and to take cooperative action to prevent their illicit trafficking. The EU actively participates in all multilateral WMD-related export control regimes, as well as in the work of the G7 Global Partnership initiative against the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the Australia Group.

CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Small Arms and Light Weapons

In line with its 2018 Strategy on illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition, “Securing arms, protecting citizens”, the EU in 2024 remained fully committed to preventing and curbing the illicit trade in SALW and their ammunition and to promoting accountability and responsibility with regard to their legal trade.

Over the course of 2024, the EU continued pursuing several SALW-control projects with a focus on voluntary civilian disarmament campaigns, collection and destruction of surplus SALW and ammunition, physical security and stockpile management for SALW and ammunition, and capacity building for making, record keeping and tracing. Most of these projects have a regional scope and were implemented with the help of regional organisations.

Supporting Ukraine in defending its national sovereignty and territorial integrity against the illegal and unprovoked Russian military aggression by providing military equipment to Ukraine remained a political priority and strategic necessity for the EU and its Member States in 2024. EU Member States confirmed that the export of military equipment to Ukraine is fully in line with the legal obligations stemming from the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on arms export and with obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as with the Wassenaar Arrangement Initial Elements, which stipulate that “this Arrangement will not interfere with the rights of states to acquire legitimate means with which to defend themselves pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations”. These norms prohibit exports towards an aggressor, not towards a State victim of external aggression. Given the many grave breaches by Russia of the Geneva Conventions, including attacks directed against population and civilian objects, arms transfers to Russia would not be permitted under the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The EU has continuously urged all States Parties to the ATT to refrain from any transfers to Russia.

Records of SALW and other military equipment is a national responsibility. Military equipment, weapons and ammunitions provided under the European Peace Facility by EU Member States have been cautiously recorded by the EEAS, based on the delivery verification certificate signed by the Ukrainian authorities and provided by EU Member States’ implementing actors. Furthermore, there was a longstanding cooperation between the EU and Ukraine regarding the threats deriving from the diversion and illicit trafficking of SALW. In 2024, the EU-funded projects in support of Ukraine’s efforts to combat illicit trafficking in SALW, ammunition and

explosives were Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2321 with the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its main implementer, Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/381 amending Decision (CFSP) 2019/2111 (expired on 31 December 2024), replaced by Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3003, with OSCE as its main implementer, and Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/387 in support of iTrace V.

Ukraine was identified in the EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025 as a key region for specific actions at the external level. The joint security commitments between the EU and Ukraine, signed in June 2024, confirmed that the EU and Ukraine will intensify work to prevent and counter the diversion of firearms and SALW, their ammunition and explosives. The EU committed to continuing to support Ukraine building up robust capacity to monitor the stocks, the acquisition and possession of firearms and SALW, investigate and prosecute their illegal possession and trafficking, support international cooperation and assistance in this area, and support the designation and development of appropriate structures aiming at an effective control and disposal of firearms and SALW. The EU and Ukraine also committed to actively expose and counter Russian information manipulation in this area.

Ukraine remains firmly committed with its participation in international law enforcement initiatives, notably the European Multiplatform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) on firearms, where EU Member States participate, along with EU Agencies and Institutions and non-EU countries of interest, as Western Balkans jurisdictions, Ukraine and Moldova.

In 2024, in line with the regional priorities set out in the EU SALW Strategy, the EU continued to support Western Balkan Partners through EU Council Decisions (CFSP) 2019/2111, Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2321, and Council Decision 2024/3006, with SEESAC as its main implementer. The Western Balkans continued to be the largest recipient of EU regional support to conventional arms control. The implementation of the Western Balkans Roadmap against Illicit Arms Trafficking remained an EU priority, adopting two regional projects worth respectively EUR 4 million (Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3006) and EUR 3.8 million (Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/3097) for the implementation of the West Balkans SALW Roadmap and support to arms control in general. At the EU-West Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs in Budva, Montenegro, in October 2024, and the EU-Western Balkans summit on 18 December 2024, the EU welcomed the second phase of the Roadmap until 2030. Furthermore, the successful regional Roadmap approach in the Western Balkans has become a blueprint for other regional conventional arms control initiatives.

With a view to the implementation of the EU SALW Strategy, the EU continued its comprehensive support of the full and effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, enhanced international, regional and national security, contributed to the realisation of human security, and promote sustainable development through SALW control. In line with Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/1965, the EU: a) supported forward-looking global policy developments in the context of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action in 2024, and actively participated in that Conference, guided by Council Conclusions of 27 May 2024, contributing to the adoption of its outcome document; b) contributed to strengthening an effective national and regional implementation of the Programme of Actions and the International Tracing Instrument; and c) promoted gender-responsive SALW control policies and programmes.

Since 2013, the EU has been supporting iTrace, a global reporting mechanism on illicit SALW and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition in conflict-affected areas. During the reporting period, iTrace conducted field operations in conflict areas in the Middle East, West and East Africa, the Gulf, Central Asia and Ukraine, assisting efforts to disrupt illicit trade in arms and ammunition. Operations in Ukraine comprehensively documented and traced the origin of components of Russian and Iranian advanced weapons systems, and contributed to confirmation of the use against Ukraine of ballistic missiles supplied by the DPRK to Russia.

Supporting and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the core of EU policies, both at home and abroad. In line with its SALW strategy, the EU systematically applies gender mainstreaming in the design of new projects relating to the fight against gun violence and SALW control in general. In addition, the EU continued supporting the development of an internationally recognised arms and ammunition management validation system to prevent illicit proliferation, under Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2275, implemented by the Ammunition Management Advisory Team (AMAT) of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

The EU also continued, through various political dialogues, to promote the ATT's universalization and effective implementation. The EU maintained its financial support for the Treaty's implementation support programme, providing countries in Africa, Latin America, and South-East and Central Asia with technical assistance in strengthening their national systems in line with the Treaty's requirements, under Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2309 implemented by Germany's Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) and France's international technical cooperation agency *Expertise France*. Additionally, the EU sustained its

support for the ATT Secretariat, under Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/2296. The EU also continued to promote effective arms export controls among countries in South and East Europe, Caucasus, Middle East and North Africa, as well as Central Asia, under Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/2539, implemented by BAFA.

Anti-personnel mines

In 2024, the EU continued to implement the Oslo Action Plan adopted by the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention at the occasion of the Fourth Review Conference in 2019 in Oslo.

To that end, the EU finalised the implementation of the Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/257, dedicated to supporting States Parties to the Convention to implement its provisions, engage in realising the Oslo Action Plan, encourage non States Parties to join and empower the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention.

The EU participated and supported the tenure of the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention which took place in Siem Reap-Angkor, Cambodia in November 2024. EU Member States adopted council conclusions in May 2024¹⁰ in view of the summit to support its efforts and contributed to the adoption of a political declaration and a new action plan for the next five years. In a message, the EU High Representative reaffirmed the Convention's crucial role in humanitarian disarmament and highlighted the EU's strong commitment to an anti-personnel mine ban. The urgent need to address new contamination was also stressed, particularly with regard to Ukraine. The EU contributed to the success of the Review Conference through statements on key topics, its engagement with third parties and its outreach activities.

The EU also participated in all three preparatory meetings of the Fifth Review Conference in Geneva, as well as to the Ninth Pledging conference on 1 March 2024.

The EU has remained a major donor to mine action worldwide, contributing over EUR 180 million since 2023. This support includes funding critical activities carried out by international demining NGOs, such as non-technical surveys (NTS), research and development, mine risk education, clearance, victim assistance, and livelihoods support. These efforts have been

¹⁰ Council Conclusions on an EU position on strengthening the ban against anti-personnel mines in view of the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, of 27 May 2024 ([ST 9442/24](#)).

implemented through international organizations and specialized NGOs in over 20 countries/ regions around the world.

In 2024, the EU supported the Government of Ukraine in its ambitious sector reform aimed at ensuring land is cleared safely and efficiently, thereby enhancing community resilience and facilitating reconstruction efforts. This support includes providing additional Ukrainian and international expertise to the Ministry of Economy and other state mine action stakeholders.

As a result, on 28 June 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the National Mine Action Strategy along with its respective Implementation Plan. While the Strategy is designed to cover the period until 2033, the Implementation Plan focuses on the initial three years of implementation (2024-2026). Its execution is led strategically by the newly established Center for Humanitarian Demining, supported by its International Advisory Board, on which the EU is represented alongside other international partners.

Between 2022 and 2024, Ukraine received over EUR 1 billion in international assistance for humanitarian demining through 170 donor-funded Mine Action projects. The EU and its Member States contributed over EUR 370 million of this support, with the EU's direct contribution amounting to approximately EUR 80 million.

EXPORT CONTROL REGIMES

The EU fully supports the existing multilateral export control regimes (Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Nuclear Suppliers Group, Wassenaar Arrangement, and Zangger Committee). It stresses their crucial role in preventing the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, implementing UN Security Council (UNSC) embargoes, and promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilizing accumulations. The EU contributes to the full implementation of strong non-proliferation mechanisms under the Treaties and UNSC resolutions by promoting robust export controls and related legislations worldwide. The EU also provides widespread support to partner countries in setting up or enhancing their own export control systems to implement UNSCR 1540, through the CBRN Centres of Excellence and the EU P2P Programme on arms and dual-use export controls. Multilateral export control regimes foster the legitimate transfer of dual-use goods and technologies that are essential to international cooperation on peaceful uses.

The resolution titled "Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security" was tabled by China and a group of states and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2024. This marked the third adoption of the resolution since 2021. The EU perceives the resolution as a misinformation-based attempt to undermine export controls which are necessary and required under legally-binding international instruments for non-proliferation purposes. No evidence supports the claim that the existing non-proliferation export controls and multilateral export control regimes are misused or abused to the detriment of peaceful utilization of technologies or that they inhibit sustainable development. On the contrary, specific exports of dual-use goods are denied because of proliferation and militarization risks based on assessments in each case. Therefore, the EU continues to oppose that resolution in the UN General Assembly's First Committee.

On 20 June 2023, the EC issued the Joint Communication on "European Economic Security Strategy". Priorities of the Strategy include, *inter alia*, protecting the EU from commonly identified economic security risks by better deploying the present tools, including export controls. The established dual-use export control architecture – with the multilateral export control regimes as standard-setters – has in recent decades addressed the Union's security policy objectives, while at the same time nurturing openness and a conducive climate for research and innovation and non-proliferation at large. The Strategy confirms that the EU will strengthen its support for the work of multilateral regimes, although its effectiveness is

hindered by the fact that it is only a member of one of the existing Multilateral Control Regimes, and an observer in a second.

As a follow-up to the Strategy, the Commission issued in 2024 a White Paper on Export Controls¹¹ proposing to: i) introduce uniform EU controls for items that have not been adopted due to blockages or delays in export control regimes; ii) improve coordination between the Commission and Member States through a senior-level forum; iii) introduce a mechanism to improve coordination in relation to the National Control Lists; and iv) expedite the review of the Regulation (EU) 2021/821 (“Dual-Use Regulation”) up to 2025 to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Further, in September 2024, the EC adopted a Delegated Regulation¹² updating the EU dual-use export control list under Regulation (EU) 2021/821. This update aligned the EU's control list with decisions made by multilateral export control regimes, including the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

These developments reinforce the capacity of the EU to play fully its role as a global actor in a context where the multilateral export control regimes are under pressure, in full respect of the EU's and Member States' respective competences.

Nuclear Suppliers Group

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation of two sets of Guidelines for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports, which are implemented by each Participating Government in accordance with its national laws and practices on licensing requirements. All EU Member States are Participating Governments to the NSG. The EC participates as an observer, and implements the control lists of the Guidelines in Regulation (EU) 2021/821 and its modifications¹³ for the EU Member States.

¹¹ European Commission [White Paper on Export Controls](#) of 24 January 2024.

¹² [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2024/2547](#) of 5 September 2024 amending Regulation (EU) 2021/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the list of dual-use items.

¹³ Idem.

Deliberations within the NSG are subject to confidentiality. The EU participated in the 2024 Plenary (Rio de Janeiro, 8-12 July 2024). Two statements were delivered on behalf of the EU.

Diverging views among Participating Governments prevented once again the adoption of a public statement. The Group confirmed South Africa as the next Plenary Chair for 2025, and the continuation of outreach activities.

The NSG Consultative Group, one of the standing bodies, meets three times a year and is tasked to hold consultations on issues associated with the Guidelines on nuclear supply and its technical annexes. In 2024, the NSG Consultative Group met in Vienna on 8-9 April, in Rio de Janeiro on 8-12 July 2024, and in Vienna on 25-26 November, where the EU was present from behind the observer seat of the EC.

Australia Group

The Australia Group (AG) is a group of like-minded countries seeking to harmonise export controls for chemicals, biological agents and related dual-use technologies. It has 43 members, including the EU and all EU Member States.

Deliberations within the AG are subject to confidentiality. The EU participated actively at the AG Plenary in Paris on 3-7 June, including in the discussions on the threat of use of chemical and biological weapons, shared concern over the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, exchange on enforcement cases as well as on dual use relevant scientific and technological progress. The Statement of the Chair of the 2024 AG Plenary¹⁴ reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening chemical and biological weapons-related counter-proliferation efforts and reiterated that the use of these weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable and prohibited under international law.

Missile Technology Control Regime

The EU continued to strongly support the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The MTCR is an informal and voluntary association of countries sharing the goals of non-proliferation of unmanned delivery systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction

¹⁴ [Statement by the Chair of the 2024 Australia Group Plenary](#), of 7 June 2024.

and seeking to coordinate related national export licensing efforts. It plays a key role in tackling the proliferation of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicle technologies.

The single set of EU export control rules under the EU Export Control Regulation implements MTCR guidelines and control lists, and ensures that they are effectively applied in all EU Member States, including those that are not yet members of the MTCR.

To date, eighteen EU Member States are members of MTCR. A further nine EU Member States are candidates to join the MTCR: Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The longstanding blockage of their accession is of fundamental importance to the EU in the MTCR context.

Deliberations within the MTCR are confidential. The EU has consistently supported the adoption of strong public MTCR statements, reflecting concerns about ballistic missile launches and significant missile technology development by, notably, Iran and the DPRK.

No plenary meeting of the MTCR took place in 2024 and no MTCR public statements were published during the year.

Wassenaar Arrangement

The Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) was established in order to contribute to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies. It comprises 42 Participating States, 26 of them being EU Member States. Participating States apply export controls to all items set forth in the List of Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and the Munitions List, which they regularly review, with the objective of preventing unauthorized transfers or re-transfers of those items. Both lists form the basis of the EU Dual-Use Control List and the EU Common Military List, respectively, which are updated regularly by the Council following WA decisions. Participating States seek, through their national policies, to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine these goals, and are not diverted to support such capabilities nor acquired by terrorists. Participating States also regularly exchange information and are required to report their arms transfers and transfers/denials of certain dual-use goods and technologies to destinations outside the Arrangement on a regular basis.

In 2024, Participating States continued to exchange information on arms and dual-use technology transfers and assess risks related to potentially destabilizing arms flows, particularly in conflict-prone regions. Participating States reaffirmed the critical role of strong export controls and international cooperation in preventing arms diversion and restricting access to conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies by terrorist actors. As part of their ongoing efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the WA, Participating States conducted a comprehensive review of the Control Lists, resulting in the adoption of new controls on sub-orbital spacecraft and high-performance additive manufacturing technologies. Existing controls were also clarified, including those related to control systems for submersible vehicles, directed energy weapons, and semiconductor manufacturing materials.

The 28th WA Plenary meeting took place in Vienna on 4 and 5 December 2024. Deliberations within the WA are subject to confidentiality.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

The speed by which emerging technologies, and in particular Artificial Intelligence (AI), continued to change the world in all aspects in 2024 also remained a significant challenge to non-proliferation and arms control.

For the EU, retaining human control over weapons and weapons systems, no matter how technologically sophisticated they may be, remained a critical condition. This position was repeatedly presented in various international fora, notably at the discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, which in 2024 continued its important work on regulating the application of emerging technologies to weapons and weapons systems in accordance with International Humanitarian Law.

All EU Member States also aligned themselves with the Blueprint for Action agreed at the Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM24) in Seoul in September 2024. REAIM remained the most comprehensive and inclusive process on responsible military use of AI. Likewise, the EU followed closely developments in the US-led Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of AI and Autonomy, which all EU Member States signed up to and participate in the implementation of.

For the EU, the adoption of the AI Act in August 2024 was a major step forward for the Union's human-centred approach to AI. As the AI Act also covers dual use, it is likely to have an impact on military use of AI, although AI systems developed only for military use fall outside its scope. The details of the way in which the AI Act will be implemented in relation to dual use were still in the making in 2024.

Throughout 2024, the EU continued efforts to better grasp and manage the consequences of the impact of emerging technologies on arms and arms control with a view to continue its efforts to contribute to international security and disarmament. The EU continued to support two projects launched in 2022 addressing fast developments in the area of emerging technologies, and notably Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2269, of 18 November 2022, on Union support for the implementation by UNODA and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) of the joint project *"Promoting Responsible Innovation in AI for Peace and Security"*, and

- Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2320, of 25 November 2022, on Union support for the implementation of the project *“Unlocking Innovation: Enabling Technologies and International Security”*.

In 2024, work was undertaken to continue to support UNIDIR's important programme on emerging technologies and arms control.

COLLABORATION WITH THINK TANKS AND NGOS

Civil society is a driving force in the field of disarmament, contributing to the development, promotion and implementation of international disarmament instruments, as well as to disarmament education. Civil society's role, especially in ensuring transparency and accountability, is vital. The EU continuously stands for the inclusion of civil society in discussions in multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament fora. The EU also provides financial support to civil society organisations for specific projects.

The most prominent area of cooperation between the EU and civil society in issues covered by this report is the **EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium**. The Consortium comprises the following six European think tanks: *Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique* (FRS), the International Affairs Institute in Rome (IAI), the International Institute for Strategic Studies – Europe (IISS-Europe), the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (HSFK/PRIF), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP). Based first on Council Decision (CFSP) 2010/430 of 26 July 2010, the implementation of the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been actively supported by the Consortium, which started its activities in January 2011. Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/597 of 11 April 2022 extended EU support for the activities of the Consortium for another 3 years, building on the achievements to date and adding new initiatives. All throughout 2024, and in principle until 17 May 2025, the Phase IV of the project was implemented.

The Consortium's activities continued to increase EU visibility vis-à-vis third countries and civil society and contributed substantially to EU policy shaping in the areas of non-proliferation and disarmament. The Consortium provides a platform for informal contacts among practitioners and stimulates dialogue between different stakeholders. Its activities have helped raise awareness of the challenges posed by weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms and explored solutions to address these challenges. It draws on an extensive Network of think tanks and research centres across Europe, including members from all EU Member States as well as from partner countries such as Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. During 2024, five entities from Georgia, Germany, Italy, Norway and Spain joined the Network, bringing the total number of members to 115 at the end of that year. The Network includes university research centres from a range of social and natural science disciplines.

During 2024, the Consortium organised the following activities to implement different aspects of Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/597:

- The 13th EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference (12-13 November);
- The 13th EU Consultative Meeting, gathering EU officials and European experts (10 and 13 June);
- Four *ad hoc* seminars on AI for Member States and EU institutions:
 - 1) “Framing the AI + Conventional debate: what is the technology, what are the legal and ethical challenges?” (23 February);
 - 2) “How is AI changing the CBW technological and regulatory landscapes” (19 April);
 - 3) “How is AI changing the nuclear weapons landscape?” (31 May); and
 - 4) “AI and arms control: Common challenges and way forward” (14 October);
- Two WMD proliferation awareness training courses for graduate and post-graduate students of natural science disciplines (28-31 May and 2-5 December);
- The 5th UN Disarmament Fellows visit to Brussels (18-19 June); and
- A Next Generation Workshop (12 November).

In its work towards the achievement of the objectives of the Council Decision, the Consortium mainstreams gender issues and promotes the next generation of researchers and practitioners in non-proliferation and disarmament fields, as well as on connecting the gaps between the natural sciences and social sciences, between policymakers and academia, and between academia and policy research institutes. As part of this, the Consortium organizes non-proliferation awareness training courses for graduate and post-graduate students of natural and engineering sciences and implements the Young Women and Next Generation Initiative. All events convened by the Consortium ensured diversity of participants and speakers in terms of gender, age, expertise, and geographical representation.

Other activities related to the promotion and strengthening of non-proliferation and disarmament education in 2024 included hosting and updating e-Learning courses on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and EU policies, developing and maintaining an online repository of non-proliferation and disarmament university courses (‘Teaching clinic’)¹⁵ and supporting ten non-proliferation and disarmament internships in members of the Network.

¹⁵ Available at <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/education-resources/teaching-resources/>

The Consortium published a monthly newsletter as well as five EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament papers during 2024.¹⁶ The Consortium also released 26 episodes of the EUNPDC podcast on NPD issues.¹⁷

¹⁶ Available at <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/activities/online-publishing/non-proliferation-papers/>

¹⁷ Available at <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/category/podcast/>

DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

The EU continued to seek to systematically include clauses on WMD non-proliferation commitments and cooperation on SALW in the negotiations with partner countries for association agreements and partnership and cooperation agreements.

The EEAS continued to conduct dialogues or consultations on non-proliferation and disarmament with a range of third countries and international organisations. During the year, dedicated non-proliferation and disarmament dialogues were held with China in May, Ukraine in July, Cuba in October and Brazil in December. A high level non-proliferation and disarmament dialogue was held with the US in September. High Level Consultations with the OPCW were held in May and November, based on the Memorandum of Understanding for enhanced cooperation between the EU and the OPCW adopted in February. Non-proliferation and disarmament issues furthermore continued to be integrated in the EU's various political and security dialogues with partners.

Within the G7, several statements relating to non-proliferation and disarmament were issued during 2024 under the Italian G7 Presidency, including by the G7 Non-Proliferation Directors Group on 18 April,¹⁸ by the G7 Foreign Ministers on 17-19 April,¹⁹ 12 September²⁰ and 4 November,²¹ and the G7 Leaders' communique of 13-15 June.²²

¹⁸ <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/NPDG-Statement-2024.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/G7-Capri-Communique-ADDRESSING-GLOBAL-CHALLENGES.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/091224-G7-Foreign-Ministers-Statement.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/G7-FM-Statement-on-the-Launch-of-an-Intercontinental-Ballistic-Missile-by-the-DPRK.pdf>

²² <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/Apulia-G7-Leaders-Communique.pdf>