
Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP)

Europe and Nuclear Disarmament: Controversial Views

Ekaterina Shirobokova

*Research Intern, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation**

August 2017

Abstract

International negotiations on a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons divided European states into two groups—strong advocates and opponents of a new document. Furthermore, three states—Finland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland—preferred to remain neutral and abstained from voting on the resolution to convene the negotiations. However, Switzerland and the Netherlands took part in a new multilateral process. In this article, the author investigates the key factors influencing the positions of Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Germany on nuclear disarmament in general, as well as on the international Humanitarian Impact Movement, and the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This analysis, based not only on the available sources of information, but also on interviews with a number of high-ranked diplomats and experts, shows that different attitudes of these five European states are driven by a wide range of factors—from the strategic situation in Europe and the influence of major powers and alliances to the various domestic circumstances, threat perceptions, identities, and political traditions. This study also reveals that, despite having relatively similar strategic positions, states may have significantly different visions of nuclear disarmament processes.

Key words: nuclear disarmament, negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, Humanitarian Initiative, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, nuclear diplomacy, Europe

* The views expressed in this paper are the author's own and do not represent those of the VCDNP.

Introduction

For the European Union, nuclear disarmament is one of the most controversial and sensitive issues: while EU members such as Austria, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, and Sweden believe it is time to take new steps to advance the elimination of nuclear weapons (NW) all over the world, France and the United Kingdom continue to possess NW and oppose this view. Furthermore, twenty-six European states are also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and benefit from its security assurances, including being protected by a nuclear umbrella (four of these countries—Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands—also host US nuclear weapons on their territories). The cases of Norway and Switzerland are no less interesting, since they closely cooperate with the European Union and are considered among the leaders in the global disarmament movement. However, their individual positions differ significantly and they have different relationships with the nuclear-weapon States (NWS): Norway has established itself as a leader among European NATO member-states in respect of burden-sharing but, at the same time, asked NATO and other foreign ships not to visit its ports when carrying nuclear weapons, while Switzerland has been described as “a proactive agent of neutrality.”ⁱ

In October of 2016, the European Parliament clearly supported the initiative to start negotiations on a new legally-binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons: in its resolution of 27 October 2016 on nuclear security and non-proliferation (2016/2936(RSP) the Parliament “...invited the EU member-states to support the convening of such a conference in 2017 and to participate constructively in its proceedings.”ⁱⁱ Unlike members of the European Parliament, European governments do not have a common vision of the nuclear disarmament process—some states rely on security alliances with the NWS while others follow radical disarmament approaches.

Not surprisingly, European states did not present a united front at the UN General Assembly (GA) and its First Committee during the vote on the resolution 71/258 (resolution L.41 at the First Committee) to convene negotiations in 2017 on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. The basis for this resolution was the final report of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on nuclear disarmament that met in Geneva in 2016—the report called, among other things, for convening the negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.ⁱⁱⁱ Three humanitarian conferences held in Norway, Mexico, and Austria in 2013 and 2014 emphasized catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and contributed to changing the discourse on nuclear disarmament and understanding of the need to intensify international efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons.^{iv}

The votes of Austria (for the resolution 71/258) and Germany (against the resolution) were predictable: the former was one of the sponsors of the resolution, and the latter consistently stood for a different, “step-by-step,” approach to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Norwegian vote against the resolution greatly disappointed disarmament advocates among states and civil society, since Norway was generally considered a strong proponent of the global nuclear disarmament and was one of the most active countries in

launching the Humanitarian Impact movement (HINW) focusing on the humanitarian dimension of, and the risks associated with, nuclear weapons and calling for their prohibition. Two interesting abstentions also took place among European countries: Switzerland, which was at the forefront of the humanitarian initiative movement, and the Netherlands—the only NATO member-state which did not vote against convening the negotiations. In spite of having abstained, both countries participated in the negotiations.

The main argument adduced by states that either abstained or voted against the UNGA resolution 71/258 rests in their doubts regarding the effectiveness of conducting negotiations without nuclear-weapons States, along with their belief that signing a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons would have controversial consequences, including, but not limited to, detracting from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) article VI, weakening other existing norms and treaties in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the division of the international community into states advocating for immediate nuclear ban and those which support more realistic^v approaches.^{vi} Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway underlined the necessity to work in the framework of the NPT rather than create a new legal instrument. One of their most prominent arguments is that the pursuit of the prohibition ignores current “security realities” and security concerns of some states, particularly in Europe and East Asia. Furthermore, Switzerland criticized the absence in the resolution L.41 of a concrete language about the importance of achieving general agreement on issues of substance during the negotiations.^{vii} Norway added that it is more important to build confidence between states than to stigmatize nuclear weapons.^{viii} German Ambassador Michael Biontino warned that an immediate ban on nuclear weapons without verification mechanisms or restrictions on the production of fissile material bears the risk of weakening the NPT.^{ix}

Thus, despite the European Union’s commitment to be a significant player in the field of nuclear disarmament expressed in the last edition of the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy (2016),^x decisions on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) policies are made on the national level and differ from state to state. It is important to analyze the roots of the different positions European countries hold on the elimination of nuclear weapons to understand their current nuclear policies.

This paper analyzes Austrian, Swiss, Dutch, Norwegian, and German positions on nuclear disarmament and, more specifically, on the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, as well as on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, taking into account the following factors:

- Membership in the European Union and NATO and influence of the key allies;
- Political and strategic environment in Europe;
- Domestic politics: government changes, influence of civil society and Parliament, political orientations of the elites, internal problems (for example, immigration crisis and the increase of terrorist threat);
- Role of individual decision-makers;
- Political traditions, cultural factors, and identities; and

- Threat perceptions.

Although nuclear policies of different states have received a lot of scholarly attention, this is not the case for the European states' current positions on nuclear disarmament and their engagement in this process. Most studies look at nuclear policies from the historical perspective, discussing various reasons for some countries to have abandoned their military nuclear programs.^{xi} Thus, this paper seeks to examine the combination of factors influencing current policies of five European states in the field of nuclear disarmament. The selection of states is based on their different approaches and attitudes to nuclear disarmament and negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, as well as varying alliance relationships with the nuclear-weapon States.

Austria

Austria is a non-aligned EU member-state that “is not only nuclear free, but also highly disarmament-minded.”^{xii} It is fully committed to substantive progress in global nuclear disarmament and has actively participated in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). “Austrian Security Strategy” adopted as a Resolution of Parliament in 2013 underlines its neutrality and does not reference any reliance on nuclear deterrence, alliances, etc.^{xiii}

Austria condemns significant investments in and ongoing modernization of nuclear weapons, arguing that they do not contribute to confidence building between states and increasing security for all. On the contrary, Austria argues that for people living in the NWS or in states that are in nuclear alliances, the danger of being victims of a possible use of nuclear weapons is much higher.^{xiv}

Austria uses all relevant international fora to express its vision of nuclear disarmament and to call on the NWS to fulfill their obligation to disarm under article VI of the NPT. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) Austria stated that “...if there is no clear progress towards ‘global zero,’ we will discuss with partners the feasibility of a global instrument to ban these weapons.”^{xv} In 2012 it co-sponsored UNGA resolution establishing the first Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and was actively involved in the Group’s work.^{xvi} Austria suggested the key indicators for progress and a clear direction towards nuclear disarmament that included diminishing the role of NW in security doctrines, lowering their operational readiness and alert status, decisions in the nuclear-weapon States with respect to budget allocation towards nuclear weapons, breaking the stalemate in the disarmament machinery—especially in the Conference on Disarmament, and others.^{xvii} Austria also submitted a “food for thought paper” suggesting possible contributions the non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) could make to take multilateral nuclear disarmament forward, such as highlighting the humanitarian consequences of NW, challenging the patterns of attaching value and special status to NW, education of the public and of future generations, addressing the urgency of nuclear disarmament and achievement of a world without NW.^{xviii} In the framework of the 2016 OEWG, Austria specifically underlined

the existence of a “legal gap,” the urgency of adopting additional legal (and non-legal) measures for full implementation of the NPT, and consequences of nuclear-weapons explosions.^{xix}

Due to its high attention to the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, Austria has made significant efforts to put this issue at the top of international discussions. It supported all the joint statements and resolutions concerning humanitarian consequences of NW, participated in the three major intergovernmental conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and hosted the third conference in Vienna in December of 2014. At the conclusion of the third Humanitarian Conference, Austria presented the Humanitarian Pledge, calling on all states parties to the NPT “...to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under Article VI, and to this end, to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.”^{xx} Furthermore, Austria pledged to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders “to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons” taking into account risks and consequences associated with them.^{xxi}

The Austrian pro-active position on nuclear disarmament is based on a long-lasting historical tradition and is a key element of Austrian identity.^{xxii} As an Austrian diplomat explained, this tradition stems from the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 that prohibited possession, construction, or conducting experiments with “any atomic weapon” in Austria.^{xxiii} Since then, Austria has been a neutral state, advocating for disarmament and skeptical of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy. During the Cold War, significant progress in nuclear disarmament could not be achieved; however, internal debates on nuclear energy took place in Austria. During the 1970s, the Austrian government started building a nuclear power plant in Zwentendorf. However, this plant never entered service—the project was interrupted after the referendum of 1978, as the majority of the population voted against its completion and against the use of nuclear energy. A few weeks later, the Austrian Parliament passed a law prohibiting the use of nuclear energy for the production of electricity.^{xxiv} Thus, by the end of the 1970s, a consensus on nuclear issues had been reached both in society and in the government. After the end of the Cold War, Austria became more and more active in multilateral disarmament efforts: in the framework of such international fora as the Conference on Disarmament, the UN First Committee, and the NPT review process.^{xxv}

Furthermore, the humanitarian dimension of disarmament has always been extremely important for Austria—it was actively engaged in negotiations on conventions prohibiting inhumane conventional weapons such as cluster munitions and antipersonnel mines.^{xxvi} Austria also endorsed the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament: after the 2010 NPT RevCon and the emergence of the Humanitarian Impact Movement, international disarmament movement intensified its efforts, and the Austrian position on nuclear disarmament became more visible and pronounced.^{xxvii}

Historical traditions and Austria’s concern about humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons were reinforced by disappointment with existing disarmament mechanisms and concern

about the lack of credibility of the status quo in nuclear disarmament.^{xxviii} Positive results of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences and the Prague speech by US President Barack Obama focused global attention on disarmament efforts and were an inspiration for the non-nuclear-weapon States. However, their positive expectations were neutralized by the results of the 2015 RevCon: the NNWS concluded that the NWS were not truly committed to achieving significant progress in disarmament in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, between the 2010 and the 2015 NPT RevCons very little of the 2010 Action Plan of nuclear disarmament was implemented while modernization of nuclear arsenals continued and the NWS reacted very negatively to the HINW movement and establishment of the first OEWG in 2013. After the 2010 Review Conference the NNWS hoped that it would be possible to advance nuclear disarmament in the framework of the NPT, but since the nuclear-weapon States did not (and do not) fulfill their disarmament obligations, the majority of states realized the need to create a new legally-binding instrument to reinforce the NPT. Hence, negotiating a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons became the only alternative for the NNWS, including Austria, to promote nuclear disarmament.^{xxix}

Unlike many other European states, Austria is not bound by a military alliance with any nuclear-weapon State and is not a member of NATO: this leaves Austria more space for maneuver and gives more opportunities to follow an independent nuclear policy in accordance with its national views.

Switzerland

Dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the field of nuclear disarmament, Switzerland has made several efforts to change it for the better. One of the key points of Swiss policy in this regard is lowering the alert levels of nuclear weapons. Being a member of the De-Alerting Group—a group of states advocating for a decrease of the operational readiness of nuclear arsenals—Switzerland co-authored a joint working paper submitted to the OEWG in 2016 that recognized “...the link between high alert levels and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons” and called on the nuclear-armed states to agree on concrete measures to reduce the operational status of NW.^{xxx}

Interested in substantive discussion on nuclear disarmament, Switzerland was actively involved in both Open-ended Working Groups. In the framework of the first OEWG in 2013, Switzerland and Ireland proposed the essential elements for achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world suggesting various paths towards this goal: through a “single treaty” approach (a ban treaty), through a number of free-standing instruments or treaties built around the NPT, through a framework convention with protocols, for example as in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, or through a combination of these approaches.^{xxxi} In 2016 Switzerland again expressed its commitment to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, since “...they represent a serious threat for international and human security.”^{xxxii}

Switzerland consistently highlights the catastrophic effects of nuclear detonations: it participated in a number of joint statements on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and coordinated the drafting and presentation of the first such statement at the 2012 Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2020 NPT RevCon, sponsored UNGA resolutions on the subject, and took part in three humanitarian conferences in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna.^{xxxiii} At the third conference in December of 2014, Swiss Ambassador Benno Laggner stated that “...an additional legally-binding instrument, or additional legally-binding instruments, will be required” for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.^{xxxiv} Despite this, Switzerland has not endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge, as the majority of European and NATO states became more skeptical and critical about the humanitarian conferences after the second conference held in Nayarit, which had shifted the focus from fact-based discussions to calls for the prohibition of NW. Switzerland tends to take into account position of the majority of European states on nuclear disarmament, and as a result it decided to take a certain distance from this process.^{xxxv} Moreover, one of the Pledge’s provisions urged the international community to “stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate” nuclear weapons; and Switzerland considered that prohibition and elimination in the near future were too soon.^{xxxvi} Hence, it was more acceptable for Switzerland to support the UNGA resolutions and joint statements that were not calling for the immediate prohibition and/or start of negotiations than take on certain obligations implied by endorsement of the Pledge.^{xxxvii} Switzerland reemphasized its concerns about the inhumane nature of NW at the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.^{xxxviii}

Another focal area for Switzerland is verification of arms-control and disarmament mechanisms, which was again underlined during the negotiations on a prohibition treaty. The Swiss representative expressed the opinion that “...the treaty will need to rely on a clear and robust verification regime based on the most developed and most robust safeguards.”^{xxxix} Switzerland also stressed the key role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in maintaining a verification regime.

Domestic Swiss law confirms the country’s commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. As Austria, Switzerland has already made several steps towards disarmament in its national legislation: for example, the Federal Act on War Material (1996) prohibited any kind of possession of nuclear weapons, and its new provisions (inserted in 2012) extended prohibitions to direct and indirect financing of the development, manufacture, or acquisition of nuclear weapons.^{xl}

In light of the above, the Swiss position on the ban treaty might have seemed inconsistent: being active in the humanitarian initiative, then abstaining from voting on the resolution 71/258, but participating in the negotiations. First, such behavior derives from the traditional Swiss approach: to be at the forefront of nuclear disarmament and, at the same time, to hold a balanced position. There are two main factors that influenced Swiss abstention on resolution 71/258 in December of 2016. According to a Swiss diplomat, Switzerland has a lot of doubts about a comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament, in particular the fact

that the nuclear weapons possessors opposed the resolution on the negotiation of the ban treaty. Furthermore, Switzerland proposed to include in the text of resolution concrete language about the importance of achieving general agreement during the negotiations or, at least, to note the necessity of a consensus-based decision-making process.^{xli} However, the sponsors of the resolution refused to make any changes to the draft.

Despite its skepticism, Switzerland made a statement that it would participate in the negotiations, because of its support for nuclear disarmament in general and the idea of establishing new effective legal measures in particular. The lack of progress in the framework of various multilateral fora (first of all, the Conference on Disarmament) also motivated Switzerland to take part in the ban negotiations.^{xlii} Therefore, abstention from voting on the UNGA resolution was a suitable option for the government, as it reflected its dissatisfaction with the text of the resolution, but did not close the door for participation in the negotiations.

Furthermore, Switzerland has strong political traditions that motivate it to be involved in the multilateral disarmament processes: in the 1960s, the main understanding of the Swiss identity and of its politico-military role in terms of “armed neutrality” transformed into a more humanitarian understanding of neutrality.^{xliii} On this basis, Switzerland argues that the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons underpin the necessity of their prohibition. Another reason why Switzerland emphasizes the humanitarian dimension is probably the influence of civil society, which is represented by a wide range of NGOs based in Geneva. For example, the first cross-regional statement by the Group of 16 on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament presented by Switzerland in 2012 was built upon the arguments developed in 2010 by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Jakob Kellenberger.^{xliiv}

Individual decision-makers have also played a role in shaping Switzerland’s current position on nuclear disarmament. As a Swiss diplomat explained, more realism to the Swiss nuclear policy was brought by a new Minister of Foreign Affairs—Didier Burkhalter (in office since 2012). Ex-minister, Micheline Calmy-Ray, was in favor of a more comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament: in her statement at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, she called nuclear weapons “unusable, immoral and illegal” and underlined their incompatibility with International Humanitarian Law.^{xlv} Moreover, she expressed the hope that nuclear weapons would be outlawed in particular by means of a new convention. Unlike Mrs. Calmy-Ray, the incumbent Minister Didier Burkhalter stands not only for disarmament, but also for a “realistic” approach to achieve this goal (not an “idealistic” one).^{xlvi}

Finally, the current strategic situation in Europe, in which nuclear weapons supposedly play an important role for maintaining stability, is also considered by the Swiss government.^{xlvii} Meanwhile, low military threat perceptions by the Swiss population ensured the country’s participation in the negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.^{xlviii} The fact that Switzerland does not participate in any military alliances also provides the state with a wide range of possible activities in the disarmament field.

The Netherlands

The 2013 “International Security Strategy” of the Netherlands states that “...the Netherlands is working towards the complete abolition of nuclear weapons.”^{xlix} The Netherlands subscribes to a “progressive”—or “step-by-step”/“building blocks”—approach.^l For the Netherlands, one of the key elements in disarmament is strengthening the international legal order: the country advocates for the universalization of the NPT and of the amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, as well as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Another priority for the Netherlands is the immediate start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).^{li}

The Netherlands also works to increase the effectiveness of the IAEA safeguards system, arguing that the combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement with an additional protocol should be the current international verification standard. It is a member of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), which encourages cooperation between the NWS and NNWS in identifying objectives, procedures, and technologies for the verification of nuclear disarmament.^{lii} Another multilateral coalition the Netherlands is actively involved in is the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI): the coalition emphasizes, among other things, the issue of de-alerting nuclear forces and believes that “...de-alerting may provide a much-needed boost to disarmament efforts [which is] in line with the humanitarian initiative’s broad aims.”^{liii}

The Netherlands expresses limited support for the Humanitarian Initiative: although it took part in all the conferences on the humanitarian impact of NW, it did not participate in the joint statements on the humanitarian consequences of NW and voted against the resolution 70/48 adopted by the UNGA “Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.” The Netherlands explains such position by providing other considerations which should be taken into account along with the humanitarian consequences when trying to achieve nuclear disarmament: considerations of security and stability.^{liv} At the same time, the Netherlands is convinced that education and sharing the results of research and knowledge on the humanitarian impact of NW play an important role in advancing disarmament and can also help to inform and engage the younger generation in this field.

The establishment of the Open-ended Working Group in 2013 was welcomed by the Netherlands as an opportunity to achieve progress in disarmament, to come up with and discuss ideas to start multilateral disarmament negotiations.^{lv} In the framework of the first OEWG, the Netherlands expressed strong support for making progress on the most important disarmament issues “by means of starting negotiations, regardless of the forum in which those negotiations would take place.”^{lvi} However, that did not include the concept of negotiating a nuclear weapons convention or a ban treaty and more likely referred to FMCT negotiations. At the same time, the Netherlands noted that the best approach to achieve nuclear disarmament is a “step-by-step” approach, and it co-authored a working paper

suggesting concrete actions to achieve this goal.^{lvii} During the working period of the second OEWG in 2016, the Netherlands continued to follow the same track, but the “step-by-step” approach was slightly revised and replaced by a “progressive” approach presented by the Netherlands and other NATO allied states (this approach, however, does not differ significantly from its previous version). Furthermore, the Netherlands presented a working paper discussing the existence of a “legal gap” in the international law: the conclusion was that “...article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ... does not contain a legal gap.”^{lviii}

Thus, the Netherlands, on the one hand, advocates for a “step-by-step” approach, but, on the other, is the only NATO member-state to have participated in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The first and foremost reason behind the decision to take part in the negotiations was the pressure from the national Parliament which called on the Dutch government “...to take part in international talks on a ban of nuclear weapons.”^{lix} This recommendation was driven, on the one hand, by the overwhelming majority of Parliament supporting the prohibition of nuclear weapons—parties such as the Democrats 66, the GreenLeft, and the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy.^{lx} On the other, the Parliament was also subject to the influence of civil society: the initiative by PAX (a non-governmental organization standing for nuclear disarmament), ASN Bank, and the Dutch Red Cross to ban nuclear weapons put nuclear disarmament at the center of political agenda. The initiative was supported by more than 45,000 Dutch citizens: in spite of a complicated strategic situation in Europe, the level of military threats perceived by the Dutch population is relatively low and nuclear weapons are condemned by public opinion.^{lxi}

As it was explained by a PAX representative, parliamentary debates on ending the deployment of US nuclear weapons in the Netherlands have continued during the last six or seven years. For example, in 2010, the Dutch Parliament requested the government to “notify the US government that it is no longer attached to the protection of the European continent through the presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe, and that it regards the withdrawal of these nuclear weapons desirable.”^{lxii} In 2011, the Dutch government participated in a number of initiatives within NATO aiming to change the current deployment situation.^{lxiii} Consequently, nuclear disarmament issues had been part of the Dutch political discourse a long time before discussions on the ban negotiations started.^{lxiv}

The long-term cultural factors and political traditions of the Netherlands also influenced the Dutch position on nuclear disarmament and the country’s participation in the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting NW. Despite being a small country without a large military industry, the Netherlands has historically sought to play an important role in international relations through participation in multilateral initiatives and coalitions. The government tends to be engaged in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by taking part in all the relevant fora. The current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bert Koenders, stated that “...we may disagree on which measures should be taken at what point in time. But this should not prevent us from holding an open debate, discussing a wide range of options, and sincerely

attempting to find common ground in identifying a way forward for nuclear disarmament.”^{lxv} Although the United States put pressure on its NATO allies,^{lxvi} the Netherlands decided to be involved in the negotiations, as—according to a Dutch expert—the focus on multilateralism plays a more significant role in the Dutch political culture than Atlanticism traditionally associated with the North Atlantic Alliance.^{lxvii} However, at the ban negotiations the Netherlands underlined that the new treaty should be compatible with its obligations under NATO.^{lxviii} This fact underscores the argument that the Dutch government was “forced” to participate in the negotiations by the Parliament and places the NATO alliance above multilateralism considerations in this instance.

As a participant in the negotiations, the Netherlands was keen to make sure that a new treaty would include the language of the NPT and would be complementary to this instrument: “Dutch diplomats will try to include as much NPT language as possible in the ban treaty, making cross-references, to emphasize that the NPT remains the cornerstone of disarmament and that the ban treaty is an extra layer to it.”^{lxix} Hence, the Dutch government was keen to “build bridges” between the existing non-proliferation regime and a new norm stigmatizing nuclear weapons, as well as between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.^{lxx}

Finally, the fact that the Netherlands chaired the NPT Preparatory Committee meeting in May of 2017 could have also strengthened the arguments for participation in the negotiations. Logically, it was useful to be in the room to be aware of all the processes taking place in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in order to be open to all the delegations and to organize the debates in the most efficient way.

Norway

Despite the fact that Norway did not take part in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, it consistently reaffirms its commitment to eliminate NW, underscoring that this goal should be achieved through the “step-by-step” or “building-blocks” approach. Following this approach, Norway participates in a number of international coalitions, such as the Seven-Nation Initiative (7NI) aimed at fostering on-the-ground activities to promote further disarmament, IPNDV, and Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. The Norwegian government also sponsors disarmament diplomacy, education, and research: for example, it financed studies by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research, and the International Law and Policy Institute; supported projects concerning developing countries’ critical role in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, reduction of the NW’s role in national security policies, regional workshops on implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and other activities.^{lxxi} Furthermore, Norway generously funded the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and its various partners in 2010—2016.^{lxxii}

Moreover, Norway provided a lot of the funding for the verification work under the nuclear agreement with Iran and to minimize the use of highly enriched uranium (HEU) in the civilian sector.^{lxxiii} It supported some resolutions aimed at promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that were presented in the UN framework such as on a path to the total elimination of NW (A/C.1/55/L.39), on banning of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (A/C.1/71/L.65), on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/62/L.29). In 2016, Norway put forward a new resolution on nuclear disarmament verification which was supported by the overwhelming majority of states (adopted as the GA resolution 71/67).^{lxxiv} Norwegian officials also underline the importance of confidence-building measures to foster cooperation between states and to advance nuclear disarmament.

The Norwegian government was actively involved in multilateral efforts to advance nuclear disarmament. It took part in the Open-ended Working Groups—in 2013 and 2016—having seen them as an opportunity to have an interactive dialogue with the broad involvement of states, experts, and civil society.^{lxxv} Indeed, Norway sponsored, together with Austria and Mexico, the resolution on the establishment of the first OEWG. Norway suggested a number of steps to be taken to achieve a world without nuclear weapons: securing and minimizing the use of HEU and radioactive materials; achieving universalization of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as prohibiting the production of new fissile material for weapons purposes.^{lxxvi}

Norway is also highly concerned with the humanitarian consequences of NW. The government initiated and hosted the First Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in March 2013, having put the humanitarian dimension of an actual use of nuclear weapons at the center of multilateral debates in order to change the overall discourse on nuclear weapons.^{lxxvii} Despite having participated in the two following Humanitarian Conferences in Nayarit and Vienna in 2014, Norway, however, did not endorse the Humanitarian Pledge proposed by Austria. Similarly to the Netherlands and Germany, Norway found the language of the Pledge calling to “stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons unacceptable.

In the field of nuclear disarmament Norway is a bright example of a shift “from idealism to Realpolitik.”^{lxxviii} Why has the country that was at the heart of the start of the Humanitarian Initiative and the establishment of the OEWG opposed the ban negotiations? First, it seems that, despite highlighting the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and supporting the goal of a world without NW, the Norwegian government does not (and did not) intend to achieve this goal in a short timeframe. From the Chair’s Summary of the First Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, it is evident that, having initiated the Conference, the Norwegian government pursued a goal to start fact-based discussions of the humanitarian impact of NW detonations rather than launch a negotiation to abolish nuclear weapons.^{lxxix} The discourse was changed by Mexico when the chair of the Second

Humanitarian Conference in Nayarit stated that the Conference had shown that time had come to initiate a diplomatic process conducive to reach new international standards and norms through a legally binding instrument.^{lxxx} Hence, it is not surprising that Norway voted against the UNGA resolution 71/258 in December of 2016, since it was not in line with Norwegian vision of the disarmament process.

Second, changes in the strategic and political environment that have taken place in recent years in Europe significantly influenced Norwegian foreign policy. In the latest Norwegian long-term Defense Plan issued in 2016, Russia is directly called “a central factor in Norwegian defense planning,”^{lxxxii} whereas in its previous version^{lxxxii} the Russian threat was not mentioned at all and in the early version of 2002 it was clearly stated that Russia “poses today no military threat to Norway” and that conflicts of interest between Norway and Russia in the northern areas were limited.^{lxxxiii} Currently Norway is highly concerned with Russian military reform, the modernization of Russia’s conventional forces, as well as the strengthening of its nuclear capabilities, the annexation of Crimea, Russian activities in Eastern Ukraine, and an increased Russian naval presence in the North Atlantic.^{lxxxiv} In view of these trends, Norway prioritizes strengthening its political and strategic relationship with the United States and NATO as an organization that can guarantee European security. Consequently, it is not in Norwegian interest to advocate for a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty, as NATO remains a nuclear alliance based on deterrence strategy. The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs officially stated in October of 2016 that “...it is not appropriate for NATO countries to embark on a process of unilateral disarmament on the basis of a ban.”^{lxxxv} Besides, the United States directly brought pressure on its allies urging them not to participate in the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting NW.^{lxxxvi} Furthermore, Norway is also subject to the influence of its Baltic partners. The Baltic States are traditionally not keen on nuclear disarmament due to the threat perceptions vis-à-vis Russia; they were the ones particularly opposed to the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Europe when this subject came up in the internal NATO debates.^{lxxxvii} After the annexation of the Crimea by Russia in 2014, the mistrust between the Baltic States further increased, as they were particularly vulnerable to conflict.^{lxxxviii}

The third factor that had an impact on the Norwegian position is a significant change of the government’s political orientation—from the centrist-socialist to the conservative: the majority of Jens Stoltenberg’s Government consisted of members of the Labor, Socialist Left, and Centre Parties, whereas in Erna Solberg’s Government the majority belongs to the Conservative Party. This change could not but influence the state’s nuclear policy, since the new government has corrected the Norwegian security and defense policy into a more realistic way and shifted the emphasis from the High North to the need for closer cooperation within NATO.^{lxxxix} Attitude of a new government to nuclear disarmament expressed itself when Norway did not support the Humanitarian Initiative in 2014, abstained from voting on the UNGA resolution to create the second OEWG and stated in its framework that prohibition of nuclear weapons would need the engagement of all the states possessing nuclear weapons

and a legal framework would be necessary at a certain stage (not in the near future),^{xc} stopped funding ICAN and its partners.

Germany

German policy in the field of nuclear disarmament could be interpreted as contradictory—on the one hand, it stands for a world without nuclear weapons, but, on the other, it criticizes the ban negotiations and the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Germany's concern with these negotiations is not only that the new instrument will be ineffective without the participation of the NWS, but also that such an approach will be “divisive and counter-productive” for international efforts to seek concrete reductions in the number of nuclear warheads, as well as to improve the verification measures of arms-control and disarmament.^{xci}

Like Norway and the Netherlands, Germany argues that a “step-by-step”/“building blocks” approach is a more realistic alternative to the nuclear-weapon-ban treaty, as it suggests concrete ways to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. In the framework of this approach Germany stands for progress on restricting the production of fissile material—it co-sponsored the resolution on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty aiming at facilitating efforts on preparing the ground for negotiations on this Treaty.^{xcii} As the majority of states, Germany also advocates for the continued implementation of the CTBT and its entry into force. Like the Netherlands, Germany is a member of NPDI and IPNDV and hosted the last IPNDV working group meeting in Berlin in March of 2017.

Germany participated in the Humanitarian Conferences; however, it was not very active in the Humanitarian Initiative. Germany did not support the joint statements on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, did not endorse the Humanitarian Pledge, and voted against the resolution “Humanitarian Pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.” Together with the Netherlands and other NATO allies, Germany supported the “alternative” joint statement on the humanitarian consequences presented by Australia to the UNGA First Committee in October of 2014 that highlighted that “eliminating nuclear weapons is only possible through substantive and constructive engagement with those states which possess nuclear weapons” and the need to “work methodically and with realism” to achieve this goal.^{xciii} Since the meetings in Nayarit and Vienna, Germany has been insisting on the fact that the NPT is “the only international and legally binding framework for further concrete progress” in disarmament, and as a result it could not support the Pledge calling for the stigmatization and prohibition of nuclear weapons.^{xciv}

Despite its participation in the OEWGs, Germany voted against the report which suggested starting negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in 2017. It was not a surprise, as Germany underlined its commitment to “building blocks,” having submitted—along with the Netherlands and others—a number of working papers arguing for “progressive” approach. Germany also considers the 2010 Action Plan the only way forward

in nuclear disarmament, so it was not ready to join a new multilateral process to ban nuclear weapons.

According to a leading German expert, it took a lot of time for the German government to make a decision on participation in the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.^{xcv} First of all, in its security doctrine, Germany relies on NATO's extended deterrence.^{xcvi} As mentioned above, the United States sent a clear message to NATO member-states urging them to vote against convening negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, not to abstain. Moreover, the United States asked its allies not to take part in any negotiations if the resolution was adopted and negotiations began. Germany was not willing to lose its reputation amongst NATO member-states; furthermore, it also faced pressure from its Baltic allies and Poland that are located close to Russia and concerned about Russian military threat.^{xcvii} Hence, from the perspective of the key allies, German participation in the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons would have undermined European deterrence.

Another German argument against the immediate ban on nuclear weapons is the political context in Europe and renewed tensions between NATO and Russia. In Germany there is a concern that Russia might broadly reject the Helsinki consensus of a rule-based European order.^{xcviii} In these circumstances, Germany would be unlikely to follow radical disarmament approaches which can—in German government's judgment—weaken its own and European security.

At the same time, there is a broad consensus against nuclear weapons in German society—the overwhelming majority of population supports the prohibition of nuclear weapons, according to a 2016 opinion poll.^{xcix} However, German civil society does not have real mechanisms to influence the government and the Parliament—for example, the decision-making process in Germany differs from that in the Netherlands, as German legislation does not give people the right to organize a referendum to put an issue to the agenda of Parliament.^c What is more, despite opposition to nuclear weapons, German society is likely more concerned about domestic security challenges in view of an increasing terrorist threat and immigration crisis. That is why people did not bring strong pressure on the government to make it participate in international talks to prohibit nuclear weapons.

Taking into account all these factors, the German government advocates for “step-by-step” approach to nuclear disarmament and has not participated in the ban negotiations, despite recommendations of the academic community to take part in a new multilateral process.^{ci}

Conclusion

The positions of the five European countries examined in this paper demonstrate a wide range of attitudes towards nuclear disarmament process, the negotiations on the treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, and the Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons. These different attitudes are driven by various factors. Austrian and Swiss historical traditions and identities,

as well as their disappointment with ineffectiveness of the disarmament machinery and the NPT review process determine their pro-active roles in nuclear disarmament. Moreover, both countries are not bound by obligations within any military alliance or alliance with the nuclear-weapons States, which allows them to follow more independent policies. At the same time, the Swiss, Dutch, Norwegian, and German positions tend to be more balanced and take into account the current strategic situation in Europe and the positions of European and NATO states—in case of Switzerland not least because of the personal position of the incumbent Minister of Foreign Affairs. Low military threat perceptions among the Swiss and Dutch population provide wide support for disarmament policies. Influence of civil society is especially noticeable in case of the Netherlands where public opinion and Parliament played the key role in urging the government to participate in the ban negotiations. The opposite situation can be witnessed in Germany: despite the manifestations in favor of participation in the negotiations, the German government decided to boycott them. Political traditions of the Netherlands to “build bridges” and to be engaged in multilateral processes were reinforced by the Dutch chairmanship of the 2017 NPT PrepCom. Germany follows a strong realistic approach as its domestic situation is complicated due to the recent challenges to the state’s security. Norway, like Germany, also faces pressure from its NATO and Baltic allies and is highly concerned about the current strategic situation in Europe and the Russian military threat. Furthermore, the conservative Norwegian government has significantly changed its disarmament policies since 2013.

The evidence demonstrates that there is no single factor that can explain all the cases— even if states are in almost the same strategic positions such as Germany and the Netherlands, their policies differ significantly. In each case analyzed in this article various combinations of factors led to formation of different positions on nuclear disarmament and the ban negotiations. Now, once the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been adopted by 122 states, the next step will be its ratification and entry into force. Due to the lack of consensus between states, this initiative will have to go a long way before it can become a reality. A combination of strategic considerations, alliance relations, and domestic politics will continue to affect the different states’ decision regarding signing and/or ratifying the ban; hence, acceptance of the new treaty will probably take a particularly long time in Europe.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank for help and support Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova and Massimiliano Moretti of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Dr. Anastasiia Malygina of Saint-Petersburg State University, EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, and Swedish Radiation Safety Authority.

Notes

ⁱ Ursula Jasper, “The ambivalent neutral: rereading Switzerland’s nuclear history”, *The Nonproliferation Review* 19:2 (2012), p. 286.

ⁱⁱ European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2016 on nuclear security and non-proliferation (2016/2936(RSP)), Strasbourg, October 27, 2016.

ⁱⁱⁱ Report of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, Geneva, August 2016, <<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/OEWG-report-final.pdf>>.

^{iv} For more information about the Humanitarian Initiative see, for example: William C. Potter, “Disarmament Diplomacy and the Nuclear Ban Treaty”, *Survival* 59:4 (2017), pp. 75—108; Alexander Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and its effect on the nuclear weapons debate”, *International Review of the Red Cross* 97 (2015), pp. 681—709; Heather Williams, Patricia Lewis and Sasan Aghlani, *The Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons Initiative: The ‘Big Tent’ in Disarmament* (London: Chatham House, 2015); Nick Ritchie, “The Humanitarian Initiative in 2015”, *ILPI-UNIDIR NPT Review Conference Series, Paper 1 of 5* (2015); Jenny Nielsen and Marianne Hanson, *The European Union and the Humanitarian Initiative in the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Cycle* (EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, Non-proliferation Papers, 2014).

^v The term “realistic” is used in this paper with the meaning “logical,” “pragmatic” and is not connected with the realist paradigm in the Theory of International Relations. It is interesting to note that the states themselves have different understandings of this term: for instance, Switzerland tends to take into account EU and NATO positions and strategic environment, at the same time following independent disarmament policy; while Norway, Germany, and the Netherlands consider that nuclear ban is “unrealistic” in the current circumstances and do not support the treaty.

^{vi} Explanation of Vote by Germany's Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament Michael Biontino, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, October 27, 2016, <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/EOV_Deutschland.pdf>; Explanation of Vote by the Netherlands, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, October 27, 2016, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com16/eov/L41_Netherlands.pdf>; Explanation of Vote by Norway's Special Representative for Disarmament Mr. Knut Langeland, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, October 27, 2016, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com16/eov/L41_Norway.pdf>; Explanation of Vote by Switzerland, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, October 27, 2016, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com16/eov/L41_Switzerland.pdf>.

^{vii} Explanation of Vote by Switzerland, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com16/eov/L41_Switzerland.pdf>.

viii Explanation of Vote by Norway's Special Representative for Disarmament, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com16/eov/L41_Norway.pdf>.

ix Explanation of Vote by Germany's Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/EOV_Deutschland.pdf>.

x "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe", A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy, June 2016, <http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf>, pp. 41–42.

xi See, for example, Harald Müller, "After the Scandals: West German Nonproliferation Policy", PRIF Reports No. 9, Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt, 1990; Harald Müller and Alexander Kelle, "Germany", in: H. Müller, ed., *European Non-Proliferation Policy 1993–1995* (Brussels: European University Press, 1996), pp. 103–128; Harald Müller, "German national identity and WMD proliferation", *The Nonproliferation Review* 10:2 (2003), pp. 1–20; Maria Rost Rublee, *Nonproliferation Norms: Why States Choose Nuclear Restraint* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009); Harald Müller and Andreas Schmidt, "The Little-Known Story of De-Proliferation: Why States Give Up Nuclear Weapons Activities", in: W. C. Potter and G. Mukhatzhanova, eds., *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation: The Role of Theory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 124–158; Jasper, "The ambivalent neutral"; Elmar Hellendoorn, "The birth of a nuclear non-proliferation policy: the Netherlands and the NPT negotiations, 1965–1966", in: R. Popp, L. Horowitz, and A. Wenger, eds., *Negotiation the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Origins of the nuclear order* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), pp. 58–76.

xii Clara Portela, *The Role of the EU in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: The Way to Thessaloniki and Beyond* (Frankfurt, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt Reports No. 65, 2003), p. 4.

xiii "Austrian Security Strategy" (Vienna, Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, Department IV – Coordination, Division IV/6 – Security Policy Affairs, July 2013).

xiv "UN talks to prohibit nuclear weapons", podcast, ICAN, March 16, 2016, <<http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/podcast-first-round-of-un-talks-to-prohibit-nuclear-weapons/>>.

xv Statement by H.E. Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Foreign Minister of Austria at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, New York, May 3, 2010, p. 5.

xvi "67/56. Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament Negotiations", Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/67/56, New York, January 4, 2013.

xvii "Perceptions and views on nuclear disarmament: addressing differences and bridging gaps", working paper submitted by Austria to the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, Geneva, May 21, 2013, pp. 5–6.

xviii "Food for Thought Paper" submitted by Austria to the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, Geneva, June 27, 2013.

xix "The "legal gap", the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and different approaches on taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations", working paper submitted by Austria to the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear

disarmament negotiations, Geneva, February 22, 2016; The “Legal Gap”, Recommendations

to the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward nuclear disarmament Negotiations, Geneva, May 4, 2016; “Nuclear weapons and security: A humanitarian perspective”, working paper submitted by Austria to the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward nuclear disarmament Negotiations, Geneva, February 22, 2016.

^{xx} “Humanitarian Pledge” presented by Austria at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Vienna, December 9, 2016, p. 2.

^{xxi} Ibid.

^{xxii} This assessment is based on the interview with an Austrian diplomat, May 11, 2017.

^{xxiii} State Treaty for the Re-Establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria, Vienna, May 15, 1955, art. 13.

^{xxiv} Peter Weish, “Austria’s no to nuclear power”, the paper presented in Japan (Tokyo, Kyoto and Wakayama) in April 1988, p. 1.

^{xxv} This assessment is based on the interview with an Austrian diplomat, May 15, 2017.

^{xxvi} For more information about Austrian participation in the international process to ban cluster munitions see: John Borrie, *Unacceptable Harm: A History of How the Treaty to Ban Cluster Munitions Was Won* (UNIDIR, Geneva, August 2009).

^{xxvii} This assessment is based on the interview with an Austrian diplomat, May 15, 2017.

^{xxviii} Ibid.

^{xxix} Ibid.

^{xxx} “De-alerting”, Working Paper Submitted by Chile, Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland (the De-alerting Group) to the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, Geneva, April 12, 2016.

^{xxxi} “Identifying the essential elements for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons”, Working Paper submitted by Ireland and Switzerland, Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, Geneva, July 19, 2013.

^{xxxii} “Pathways to Nuclear Disarmament”, Statement by Switzerland, Open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament, Geneva, May 11, 2016.

^{xxxiii} See Joint Statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament delivered by Ambassador Benno Laggner of Switzerland to the First Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, Vienna, May 2, 2012; Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons delivered by H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, New York, April 28, 2015; Resolution adopted by the General Assembly “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons” (A/RES/70/47), New York, December 11, 2015; Resolution adopted by the General Assembly “Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons” (A/RES/70/48), New York, December 11, 2015.

^{xxxiv} Statement by H.E. Benno Laggner, Head of the Division for Security Policy and Ambassador for Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, General Debate, Vienna, December 9, 2014.

^{xxxv} This assessment is based on the interview with a Swiss diplomat, April 4, 2017.

^{xxxvi} Ibid.

^{xxxvii} Ibid.

^{xxxviii} Statement by Switzerland—“Pathways to Nuclear Disarmament”, Open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament, May 11, 2016,

http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Statements/11May_Switzerland.pdf>, p.1.

^{xxxix} S. E. Mme Sabrina Dallafior, Représentante permanente de la Suisse auprès de la Conférence du désarmement, Echange de vues general [Statement by H. E. Mrs. Sabrina Dallafior, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament], Conférence des Nations Unies pour la négociation d'un instrument juridiquement contraignant visant à interdire les armes nucléaires en vue de leur élimination complète, New York, March 28, 2017, p. 3.

^{xl} Federal Act on War Material of 13 December 1996 (Status as on 1 February 2013), <<https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19960753/index.html#fn5>>, art. 7, 8b, 8c.

^{xli} This assessment is based on the interview with a Swiss diplomat, April 4, 2017.

^{xlii} Ibid.

^{xliii} Jasper, "The ambivalent neutral," p. 286.

^{xliv} Kmentt, "The development of the international initiative on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and its effect on the nuclear weapons debate", p. 685.

^{xliv} Statement by H.E. Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, New York, May 3, 2010.

^{xlvi} This assessment is based on the interview with a Swiss diplomat, April 4, 2017.

^{xlvii} Ibid.

^{xlviii} Wolfgang Zellner, Irina Chernykh, Alain Délétroz, Frank Evers, Barbara Kunz, Christian Nünlist, Philip Remler, Oleksiy Semeni, Andrei Zagorski, *European Security – Challenges at the Societal Level* (Hamburg: OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, 2016), p. 19.

^{xlix} "A Secure Netherlands in a Secure World", International Security Strategy, June 21, 2013, <<https://www.government.nl/documents/policy-notes/2013/06/21/international-security-strategy>>, p. 15.

^l For more information about this approach see, for example, "Building Blocks for a World without Nuclear Weapons", working paper submitted to the OEWG, Geneva, June 27, 2013; "A progressive approach to a world free of nuclear weapons: revisiting the building-blocks paradigm", working paper submitted to the OEWG, Geneva, February 24, 2016; "The road to zero: The progressive approach", working paper submitted to the OEWG, Geneva, April 21, 2016.

^{li} Ibid.

^{lii} Statement by Foreign Minister Koenders to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, February 29, 2016.

^{liii} "De-alerting", Joint working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative to the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, New York, March 14, 2014.

^{liv} Theo Peters, Head of Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Export Control Policy, Statement at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons General Debate, Vienna, December 9, 2014.

^{lv} Statement by the Netherlands, Open-ended Working Group on Taking forward Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, Geneva, May 14, 2013, p. 1.

^{lvi} Ibid.

lvii “Building Blocks for a World without Nuclear Weapons”, working paper submitted to the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, Geneva, June 27, 2013.

lviii “The existence of a “legal gap”, working paper submitted by the Netherlands to the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, Geneva, April 12, 2016.

lix Citizens’ initiative “Sign against nuclear weapons”, 34419 No. 11: Motion Proposed by the Member Servaes et al. on April 28, 2016, House of Representatives of the States General, The Hague, 2015—2016 Session.

lx This assessment is based on the interview with a Dutch diplomat, March 17, 2017.

lxi Zellner, Chernykh, Délétroz, Evers, Kunz, Nünlist, Remler, Semenyi, and Zagorski, *European Security – Challenges at the Societal Level*, p. 19.

lxii Motie 32 123 V, No. 86, Motie van de leden Van Velzen en Azough over de wenselijkheid van terugtrekking van Amerikaanse kernwapens uit Europa – Vaststelling van de begrotingsstaten van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (V) voor het jaar 2010 [Motion on the desirability of withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Europe], House of Representatives of the States General, The Hague, February 22, 2010.

lxiii Wilbert van der Zeijden, Susi Snyder, and Peter Paul Ekker, “Exit Strategies: The case for redefining NATO consensus on U.S. TNW”, *IKV PAX Christi*, April 2012, p. 13.

lxiv This assessment is based on the interview with PAX representative, May 8, 2017.

lxv Statement by Foreign Minister Koenders.

lxvi United States Non-Paper “Defense Impacts of Potential United Nations General Assembly Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty,” note by the Secretary, October 17, 2016, <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NATO_OCT2016.pdf>.

lxvii This assessment is based on the interview with a Dutch expert, April 10, 2017.

lxviii See, for example, Statement by the Netherlands at the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, regarding the agenda item 8 (b), New York, March 28, 2017, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/statements/28March_Netherlands.pdf>; Ambassador Lise Gregoire-van Haaren, Explanation of vote of the Netherlands on text of Nuclear Ban Treaty, the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, New York, July 7, 2017, <<https://www.permanentrepresentations.nl/latest/news/2017/07/07/explanation-of-vote-of-ambassador-lise-gregoire-on-the-draft-text-of-the-nuclear-ban-treaty>>.

lxix Lionel Fatton, “Dutch role as bridge builder in nuke talks should inspire Japan”, *Kyodo News*, June 10, 2017, <<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2017/06/dcb8affee16b-focus-dutch-role-as-bridge-builder-in-nuke-talks-should-inspire-japan.html>>.

lxx This assessment is based on the interview with a Dutch expert, April 10, 2017.

lxxi Marianne Hanson, “The advocacy states”, *The Nonproliferation Review* 17:1 (2010), p. 84.

lxxii Potter, “Disarmament Diplomacy and the Nuclear Ban Treaty,” p. 81.

lxxiii Norway votes against nuclear disarmament resolution in the UN, Press release, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 28, 2016, <<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-votes-against-nuclear-disarmament-resolution-in-the-un/id2518168/>>.

lxxiv Strong UN support for Norwegian disarmament resolution, Press release, Norwegian

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 28, 2016, <<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/disarmament-resolution/id2518174/>>.

^{lxxv} Norwegian Statement, Open-ended Working Group, Geneva, May 2013, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/statements/15May_Norway.pdf>.

^{lxxvi} Knut Langeland, Statement, Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, Geneva, May 2, 2016.

^{lxxvii} Espen Barth Eide, Opening Statement at Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Oslo, March 4, 2013.

^{lxxviii} This quotation is taken from the interview with a Swiss diplomat, April 4, 2017.

^{lxxix} Espen Barth Eide, Chair's summary "Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons", Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Oslo, March 5, 2013.

^{lxxx} Chair's Summary, Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Nayarit, February 14, 2014.

^{lxxxi} "Capable and Sustainable", Long-Term Defense Plan, Norwegian Ministry of Defense, June 17, 2016, <<https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/fd/dokumenter/rapporter-og-regelverk/capable-and-sustainable-ltp-english-brochure.pdf>>, p. 8.

^{lxxxii} Norway releases new Defence Plan; emphasises improved operational capability, personnel and updated F-35 procurement schedule, March 23, 2012, <<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-releases-new-defence-white-paper/id676237/>>.

^{lxxxiii} The long term defence plan for 2002—2005: Short version, February 16, 2001, <<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/The-long-term-defence-plan-for-2002-2005--Short-version-text/id419317/?q=Long%20Term%20Defence%20Plan>>.

^{lxxxiv} Øystein Bø, "Joining forces to improve NATO's readiness - From Wales to Warsaw and beyond", Security in Northern Europe (SNE) Conference, June 7, 2016, <<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/joining-forces-to-improve-natos-readiness---from-wales-to-warsaw-and-beyond/id2503282/>>.

^{lxxxv} Norway votes against nuclear disarmament resolution.

^{lxxxvi} United States Non-Paper: "Defense Impacts of Potential United Nations General Assembly Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty", Notice AC/333-N(2016)0029 (INV), Brussels, October 17, 2016, Annex 1.

^{lxxxvii} Nikolai Sokov, Miles Pomper, "Russia's Actions Resolve NATO Nuclear Dilemma—For Now", *Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies*, September 2, 2014, <<http://www.nonproliferation.org/nato-nuclear-dilemma/>>.

^{lxxxviii} Oliver Meier, Volker Perthes, "A Baltic Test for European Arms Control," *Project Syndicate*, February 15, 2017, <<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/nato-russia-baltic-security-dialogue-by-volker-perthes-and-oliver-meier-2017-02?barrier=accessreg>>.

^{lxxxix} Justyna Gotkowska, "Norwegian security and defense policy – strategy in the time of crisis", *The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, July 9, 2014 <<https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-07-09/norwegian-security-and-defence-policy-strategy-time-crisis>>.

^{xc} Statement by Mr Knut Langeland, Special representative for Disarmament Affairs, MFA Norway, Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament

Negotiations, Second session, May 11, 2016, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Statements/11May_Norway.pdf>.

^{xc}_i Opening of the UN Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination—German position, Federal Republic of Germany—Foreign Office, 29 March, 2017, <<http://m.genf.diplo.de/contentblob/5042288/Daten/7491622/20170402deukommunikationny.pdf>>.

^{xc}_{ii} “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”, revised draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1, UN General Assembly, New York, October 26, 2016.

^{xc}_{iii} Joint Statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons Delivered by Ambassador John Quinn, Australian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva and Ambassador for Disarmament, UNGA First Committee, October 20, 2014, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000057368.pdf>>.

^{xc}_{iv} See statements by Germany at the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons: Statement by Germany during the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Nayarit, February 13, 2014; Statement by Ambassador Christoph Eichhorn, Deputy Federal Commissioner for Arms Control and Disarmament, at the 3rd Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Vienna, December 9, 2014.

^{xc}_v This assessment is based on the interview with a German expert, March 23, 2017.

^{xc}_{vi} Leo Hoffmann-Axthelm, “Germany: In defense of nuclear weapons?”, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung: The Green Political Foundation*, August 24, 2016 <<https://www.boell.de/en/2016/08/24/germany-defense-nuclear-weapons>>

^{xc}_{vii} This assessment is based on the interview with a German expert, March 23, 2017.

^{xc}_{viii} Zellner, Chernykh, Délétroz, Evers, Kunz, Nünlist, Remler, Semeni, and Zagorski, *European Security – Challenges at the Societal Level*, p. 15.

^{xc}_{ix} “German public rejects nuclear weapons”, *ICAN*, 23 March, 2016, <<http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/german-public-rejects-nuclear-weapons/>>.

^c This assessment is based on the interview with a German expert, March 23, 2017.

^{ci} Ibid.