

The European Policy on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

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SALW: Framing the issue

- Weapons of calibres of less than 100 mm which can fire a projectile and may be carried by an individual or a small number of people (1997 UN Panel of Experts)
- Easily available, simple to carry and use, require a minimum of maintenance and logistics, easy to conceal
- Weapons of choice in armed conflicts and violent crime
- Consequences of SALW use and proliferation
 - More than 740,000 deaths each year as a result of armed violence
 - Majority of death (490,000) outside of armed conflicts zones
 - In conflicts zones, most death are indirect consequences of SALW use (200,000 out of 250,000)
 - Social and economic implications of armed violence
 - Undermine security and long-term development
- SALW are the real weapons of mass destruction



EU Position on SALW

- The destabilising accumulation and spread of SALW and their ammunition constitute a growing threat to peace, security and development
- 2005 Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition
 - Integrated approach and comprehensive plan of action
 - Build upon EU existing policies and actions
 - Mainstreaming SALW in EU overall policies
 - Focus on assistance to other countries
 - Geographical priorities: sub-Saharan Africa + Eastern and S-E Europe
 - EU “compelling obligation to act”
- Main objectives of the EU Action Plan
 - Promote multilateralism
 - Respond to the accumulation and the problems caused by existing stocks
 - Deal with the causes and consequences of SALW for human development
 - Establish and/or develop structures within the EU



EU Activities/Initiatives on SALW

- **Multilateralism**
 - International: Programme of Action, Protocol on Firearms, Traceability Instrument, Arms Trade Treaty
 - (Sub-)Regional: OSCE, African regions, etc.
 - Agreements, structured dialogues: SALW clause, promotion of EU export control principles, etc.
- **SALW-specific assistance initiatives**
 - National: Cambodia, Ukraine, etc.
 - Regional: African RECs, E and S-E Europe, etc.
 - Continental: 2010 Pan African Project
- **Broader initiatives**
 - Instrument for Stability: Central America, Bosnia-H, Africa
 - European Development Fund: Cotonou Agreement



EU Activities/Initiatives on SALW

- SALW export controls initiatives
 - 2008 Common Position on arms export (ex-Code of Conduct)
 - 2003 Common Position on arms brokering
 - 2011 Regulation on firearms transfers?
 - 2007 Initiative to hinder illicit trafficking of SALW by air transport
- SALW export
 - 2.1 billion €: Export licences granted annually by EU MSs for SALW in 2005-2009 (7.5% of total)
 - Geographical distribution
 - Sub-Saharan Africa: 0.8%
 - Other European countries: 9.0%
 - Latin America: 2.5%
 - Middle-East: 19.7%
 - North Africa: 2.1%

EU Activities on SALW: An Analysis

- Strong European political stance on SALW
- Limitations
 - EU SALW definition
 - Focus on “illicit” SALW trade
- EU approach encompasses a broad range of actions
 - Geographical priorities
 - Long-term initiatives
- Gradual improvement of institutional coordination within the EU
- No structural monitoring of EU SALW Policy implementation
- Loopholes/failures of EU Member States SALW export and brokering controls

Perspectives

- Institutional implications of the Lisbon Treaty
 - Before: Council (Secr.) + Commission (RelEx + Dev) + MSs
 - After: External Action Service (N-Prolif. + Security Policy Units) + Commission (AidCo) + MSs
- Next steps for multilateral initiatives
 - Implementing existing instruments
 - Seeking improvement of export controls in main non-EU exporting countries: China, Russia, etc.
- Importance of “long-term”
- A monitoring body for a greater coherence and consistency of EU actions
- Improving EU MSs SALW export and brokering controls
- Squaring the circle: exporting multilateralism, assistance and SALW?

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