

New Research Approaches to Small Arms Control: Interview with Daniel de Torres



Daniel de Torres is the Director of the Small Arms Survey. He has a broad portfolio of experience in the humanitarian, security, development and gender equality fields. From 2008 to 2019, he served in DCAF as deputy head and later head of the organization's Gender and Security Division. Prior to that, he worked for the Embassy of Spain in Washington DC, served in the Spanish Marines and led emergency relief work for an NGO in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s.

The Small Arms Survey is a global centre of excellence that generates evidence-based, impartial and policy-relevant knowledge and analysis on small arms and armed violence. What are the main lines of research in non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control?

Small arms control – both at the international and at the national levels – is a crucial component of good security governance. There are a number of issues tackled in small arms control interventions, from the prevention of diversion from stockpiles to the interdiction of illicit transnational trafficking in small arms and their ammunition. Those are some of the traditional areas of research where the Survey provides hard data and evidence to support policymaking by national and international institutions. Some additional research areas where we are focusing increased attention are the non-industrial manufacture of small arms through traditional metalwork craft, the conversion of non-lethal firearms and 3D printing. We have already published some studies on those topics and the interest on them is increasing.

Small Arms Survey's projects are increasingly focusing on gender perspective, supporting gender-responsive approaches to arms control policy and programming. Why is it so important to promote gender-informed and evidence-based solutions in this field? What can research centres do to influence international politics on this issue?

We live in a gendered world, and everything we do – every policy, programme or action – has a gendered effect: it will have different impacts on people with different sexual orientation and gender identities. A thorough gender analysis helps policymakers and practitioners understand those different impacts and thus design their actions in ways that, at the very least, do not

exacerbate gender inequality and at best will reduce inequality. Inclusive and participatory research can help uncover those different impacts and provide recommendations for actions that reduce inequality. It is particularly important that policy and programming decisions be grounded on evidence, not gendered assumptions. For instance, the Survey is currently conducting research on the role of women in illicit arms trafficking and in ammunition management, a field where such a role is traditionally not well understood and therefore deserves deeper analysis.

What role can the European Union play in advancing the international agenda on the intersections between non-proliferation, disarmament and gender issues?

The challenges to advancing these intersecting international agendas as they stand – let alone formulating and agreeing on more ambitious goals – are both political and technical. On the political side, the European Union has vast influence and capacity to lead by example, such as sharing its own experience dealing with converted firearms and other emerging challenges. On the technical side, the EU can tap into an extensive network of expertise and knowledge, and provide the financial support to deploy that expertise to assist partner countries. For example, the EU supports a large project in cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) that aims to strengthen the capacity of LAS member states to combat illicit small arms and light weapons, including their acquisition by terrorists and criminals. The project is implemented by the Small Arms Survey, Interpol and the World Customs Organization and provides a good example of a type of collaboration that is impactful, cost-effective and advances the strategic goals of both the EU and the LAS.

REVIVING THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL: A LITMUS TEST FOR EU DIPLOMACY

Prospects to revive the comatose 2015 Iran nuclear agreement – formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – have improved in recent weeks. Ongoing multilateral talks in Vienna have reportedly made progress on defining a roadmap for both Iran and the United States to return to full compliance. The Biden Administration has clarified its position on the type of sanctions that it is ready to lift if and when Iran returned to full compliance with the JCPOA. Iran, for its part, has accepted to extend to the end of June a preliminary arrangement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), under which it will keep record of information that the IAEA is entitled to acquire as called for by the JCPOA agreement. This arrangement is set to expire after Iran's presidential election, which reduces the risk that Iran's relationship with the IAEA becomes a matter of political contention during the campaign.

A re-activation of the JCPOA would be a diplomatic achievement for the E3 (France, Germany and the UK) and the EU, which have tried to keep the nuclear deal afloat since former President Trump withdrew the US in May 2018. With Biden, the Europeans have rekindled their role as facilitators of US-Iranian diplomacy, a role they have played in one form or another for almost twenty years. The assumption behind the original agreement was that, by the time the JCPOA limits on Iran's nuclear activities begin fading in 2026, years of good faith implementation and greater integration of Iran into the global economy would have created much needed reciprocal trust to avoid a new proliferation crisis. Yet, Iran will now only get partial economic relief given that Biden is not willing to lift all sanctions imposed by Trump, and the US and Europe will soon face the problem of the gradual expiration of the JCPOA limits. In the current climate of mutual mistrust, facilitating a follow-on agreement that would further extend the limits on Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for greater sanctions relief is a tall order for the Europeans.

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Latest Publications

THE EU'S ARMS CONTROL CHALLENGE: Bridging nuclear divides, Clara Portela, The European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2021

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The Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons: how it was achieved and why it matters, Alexander Kmentt, King's College London, 2021

Toward Nuclear Disarmament: Building up Transparency and Verification, Malte Götsche, Alexander Glaser, the German Federal Foreign Office, 2021

CONSORTIUM NEWS

The EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Papers Series

As part of its mandate, defined in Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/299 of 26 February 2018, the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium is publishing a new series of Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Policy Papers. One of the latest papers is authored by Nivedita Raju, Associate Researcher with SIPRI and Research Fellow with Open Lunar Foundation and Director of Legal Affairs for Space Court Foundation.

A proposal for a ban on destructive anti-satellite testing: What is the European Union's role?

Summary

International fora have pursued space security regulation with little progress. The European Union (EU) has been proactive in this regard by advocating a multilateral code of conduct for outer space activities, however, it failed to survive negotiations. Further concrete measures to strengthen space security on a multilateral scale have been slow, as states are polarised on the subject of weaponisation in outer space. Among threats to space security, destructive anti-satellite (ASAT) testing has emerged as a particularly destabilising force. With an increasing number of states demonstrating ASAT capabilities, the regulation of ASATs demands action to prevent tensions from escalating to the point of conflict. This paper gives an overview of past ASAT tests and argues that destructive ASAT testing requires urgent policy intervention. The paper proposes a complete ban on destructive ASAT testing, drawing inferences from the EU's draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The paper additionally proposes that the EU assumes the role of facilitator in the proposed policy measure.

Read the full paper [here](#)
Previous papers can be found [here](#)

Network Calls

Trick and Treat: Firearms diversion through fraud in the EU

During their – often very long – lifecycle firearms can be diverted from the legal into the illegal market through various types of fraudulent activities. In the European Union little systematic empirical research has been undertaken on this type of diversion. This has resulted in a limited intelligence picture on firearms fraud. Project DIVERT analysed 45 cases of firearms fraud and identified various subtypes of fraud, such as the forging of authorisation to acquire or transfer firearms, the tampering with arms registers and false declarations of theft, loss or deactivation of firearms. While every year thousands of firearms are diverted this way, a more precise number of diverted firearms through fraud cannot be estimated since this type of fraud is often not detected and can involve very large quantities of firearms in specific diversion cases. This webinar will present the main findings of Project DIVERT on firearms fraud.

Organiser: the Flemish Peace Institute
Date: 23 June 2021 9:30 - 10:45
More info: [here](#)

NETWORK NEWS

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING NON-PROLIFERATION, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

On 20 May 2021, the Center for Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament of The Professional Association of Security Sector (PASS), headed by Secretary-General Dr. Marina Kostić, held an online event entitled: *"Strengthening Security through Education: A Case of Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Studying"*.

The aim of the meeting was to underline the importance of studying the topics of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament and the contribution that the European Union is making in that field.

Distinguished guests included two members of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium: *Dr. Niklas Schörnig*, Senior Researcher, Deputy Chairman of the Research Council at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt and *Ms. Mara Zarka*, Project/Events Manager and Research Associate at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation.

In his presentation Dr. Schörnig expressed special concern about the non-proliferation of conventional weapons and delivery systems, especially Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems. Ms. Zarka addressed the contribution of the European Union in the study of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament and mentioned the work and various activities of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium in this field, ending her remarks with a quote by Nelson Mandela: *"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"*.

More info can be found:
[Online Meeting on The Importance of Studying Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament](#)