Weapons of Mass Destruction

Nuclear, chemical & biological weapons, and ballistic missiles. Prevent, deter, halt or eliminate WMD proliferation programmes worldwide. Prevent acquisition by terrorist groups.

The EU works to strengthen the international system of non-proliferation by:

Promoting the universality and full implementation of the existing multilateral agreements:

- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
- Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
- Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)
- Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)
- The Hague Code of Conduct against Missile Proliferation (HCoC)
- UNSC Resolution 1540
- Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)
- Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)

ensuring strict implementation of and compliance with these agreements

Key policy tool:

- Strategy against proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- Progress Report on the implementation of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of WMD

EU policy on WMD works by giving technical & financial assistance to relevant countries and cooperating closely with key partners:

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemicals Weapons (OPCW)
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)
- UNSC 1540 Committee

In 2008 the EU Strategy on WMD was reinforced by the "New lines for action", which seek to better coordinate EU-wide action, such as:

- countering proliferation flows & financing
- sanctioning acts of proliferation
- preventing illegitimate transfers of knowledge
• raising awareness in companies, scientific/academic circles and financial institutions
• cooperating with international organisations and relevant countries, to help them improve their non-proliferation policies and export controls.

Documents

• Council Decision in support of the implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004) (Decision 2017/809/CFSP)
• Council Decision in support of a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (Decision 2019/938/CFSP)

Action through the G7/G8

The EU also acts through the G7/G8

• It is represented in the G7 forum for WMD control – the Non-Proliferation Directors Group – by its Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (currently Jacek Bylica).
• And through the G7, the EU is also part of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Nuclear Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which also includes 17 other donors.

Under the Partnership, the EU has committed almost €1bn, mainly in Russia and Ukraine, to help with dismantling decommissioned nuclear submarines, redirecting former weapons scientists, improving the safety of nuclear installations and decontaminating/converting former chemical weapons production facilities.

See: G-7 Statement on non-proliferation & disarmament (2017)

Nuclear weapons

The EU policy in this field has 3 main strands:

• non-proliferation – persuade non-nuclear states to stay that way, by abiding by and eventually joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
• disarmament – persuade existing nuclear states to reduce their nuclear arsenals
• terrorism – prevent nuclear material or weapons falling into the hands of non-state groups

Key policy tools

• Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
• Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)
• UNSC Resolution 1540
• Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)

Non-proliferation Treaty

The EU participates in the 5-yearly Review Conferences for the NPT.

• Latest Review Conference (2015)
• Previous Review Conference (2010)
**Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

The EU has 2 goals:

- persuade all relevant parties to sign the CTBT
- ensure the CTBT enters into force

[Brochure on the EU's special effort in support of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty](#)

**Disarmament**

The EU regularly calls for negotiations in the [Conference on Disarmament](#) on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

**Terrorism**

The EU participates in, or contributes to, initiatives such as:

- IAEA programmes for safe and secure nuclear power
- Proliferation Security Initiative
- Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism
- Nuclear Security Summit
- Nuclear Suppliers Group & Zangger Committee (export control regimes).

**Documents**

- Council Decision in support of activities leading up to the 2020 NPT RevCon ([Decision (CFSP) 2019/615](#))
- Council Decision on support for the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ([Decision 2016/2383/CFSP](#))
- Council Decision in support for the activities of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) ([Decision (CFSP)2018/298](#))
- Council Decision promoting the universal adherence to and the effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) ([Decision (CFSP)2018/1939](#))

**Biological and Toxin Weapons**

The [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)](#) is the cornerstone of the efforts of the international community to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons by anyone, at any time, whether States or non-State actors.

We support the [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention](#) and work to strengthen it by:
promoting universal adherence
developing national capacities for BTWC implementation
enhancing interaction with non-governmental stakeholders on science and technology
building confidence in compliance
strengthening the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Biological and Toxin Weapons

This involves participating in the **5-yearly BTWC review process**.

On the basis of this, developing **assistance programmes** (since 2006). The latest one is the Council Decision in support of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) (Decision 2019/97/CFSP).

**Documents**


**Chemical Weapons**

The European Union strongly supports the **Chemical Weapons Convention** (CWC). This is a successful international instrument which is close to eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The CWC aims at preventing countries producing, acquiring, trading, stockpiling or using these weapons.

By **financing and supporting** the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which promotes and implements the Convention, aiming at achieving a world free of chemical weapons (CW) and targeting their non-re-emergence, thereby **strengthening international security**.

The EU has since 2004 contributed 12.5 million EUR to the OPCW's core activities. The EU member countries are the bigger contributors to the OPCW, accounting together for 40% of its annual budget.

**Goals**

- promoting universal adherence to the Convention
- full and effective implementation of the Convention by all States Parties
- international cooperation on peaceful uses of chemistry
- monitoring advances in science and technology relevant to the Convention
- preparedness of Convention parties to prevent and respond to attacks involving chemicals.

Since 2015, the EU is represented to the OPCW by an EU official residing in The Hague.

The EU participates to the **annual Conference of the States Parties**.

The EU also participates in the **5-yearly review conferences** for the Convention:

- Third Review Conference – 2013

**Documents**

- Council Decision on the destruction of **Syrian Chemical Weapons** (Decision 2017/2303/CFSP,
amended by Decision 2018/1943/CFSP

- Council Decision to assist clean-up operations at the former chemical weapons storage site in Libya (Decision 2017/2302/CFSP)
- Council Decision in support of the strengthening of chemical safety and security in Ukraine (Decision 2017/1252/CFSP)
- Council Decision in support of activities of the OPCW (Decision (CFSP) 2019/538)

Goals

Since 2013 the EU has contributed €21.6 million to the dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal.

Video EU-OPCW Cooperation

Ballistic Missiles

The EU supports both multilateral efforts and regional solutions to:

- prevent the spread of ballistic missiles and other WMD means of delivery/technology
- encourage maximum restraint by states in developing, testing and deploying missiles
- encourage reductions in states' missile holdings.

Key policy tools

- Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation
- Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

The Hague Code of Conduct against Missile Proliferation

All EU countries have signed and are implementing the Code. It seeks to increase transparency and promote confidence among subscribing states, in particular through:

1. Annual declarations
   Subscribing states submit an annual declaration with information on their missile policies, launch test sites and the number/generic class of missiles (including space launch vehicles) they launched in the preceding year.

2. Pre-launch notifications
   Subscribing states exchange – in advance – notifications of their launches and test flights of ballistic missiles and space-launch vehicles (information includes class of missile/vehicle, launch time, area, planned direction, etc.).

Background documents


Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

This informal, voluntary association of 35 countries seeks to coordinate national export licensing
efforts, to prevent the proliferation of missile equipment, material, and related technologies/know-how (in particular to non-state groups).

The MTCR works through its members' adherence to common export policy guidelines.

19 EU countries are members of the MTCR and all EU countries implement the MTCR export control list (through Regulation (EC) 428/2009).

documents

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

See also

Iran and the EU
www.eeas.europa.eu

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