

EUROPE'S DEFENCE INDUSTRY SUPPORTS STRONG, ENFORCEABLE UN ARMS TRADE TREATY

Vienna, 11 February 2010 – ASD, the Aerospace and Defence Industries association of Europe, has expressed its support for the adoption of a binding and enforceable Arms Trade Treaty at the global level. ASD has stated its position on the occasion of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) seminar, held on February 11-12th in Vienna.

François Gayet, ASD's Secretary General, declared: "ASD considers of prime importance the creation of a legal instrument covering the international arms trade that reflects its security aspects, its economic realities and the principles of human rights in accordance with international initiatives to promote peace".

The European defence industry, represented by ASD, considers that the United Nations proposed Arms Trade Treaty is a welcome step towards countering two complex and serious challenges arising in the international arms trade now and in the future, namely the globalisation of the supplier base for conventional arms and the growing threat represented by the trade in, and the resulting global proliferation of, small arms. The success of such an Arms Trade Treaty will require a proper assessment of these challenges, as well as the creation of an effective and enforceable compliance mechanism.

The **globalization of the supplier base for conventional arms** is characterized by the following features:

- Outside Europe, a few major suppliers from countries such as the United States, Russia and Israel currently dominate the global defence industry
- New market entrants are emerging, such as suppliers from Brazil, China, India, South Korea
- 10 years from now, the face of the world defence market will be considerably altered: today's importing nations will become tomorrow's exporters

An Arms Trade Treaty will reduce the export control risk presented by new competitor nations, which have not yet adopted the strict policies which traditional exporting countries have been imposing on their arms trade for decades. It is therefore vital that all major players, present and future, sign up to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Countering the growing problem of small arms:

Over the past 2 decades, the problem presented by the global proliferation of small arms has been considered to be a lesser international priority than that of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Yet small arms/light weapons (SALW) and Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) today are the main armament of combatants in civil conflicts/wars. They are employed by terrorists, warlords and by organised crime, and as such have been the cause of most casualties, including among civilians, in recent conflicts. The so-

called “hi-tech weapons systems” do not represent the major political risk in the international arms trade, because they are in general tightly controlled by the supplier nations and responsibly deployed by their recipients. The real uncontrolled risk is the international trade in SALW, much of which is illegal and benefits from the fragility and inefficiency of third world administrative and regulatory mechanisms. Consequently, successful control of illegal transfers of SALW and MANPADS requires a strong commitment to the strengthening of those regulatory mechanisms. In that context, the **enforcement of a binding and effective monitoring mechanism, ensuring compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty**, is a prerequisite for the success of the future Treaty.

The European defence industry is committed to a strict compliance with national legislation and international regulations. It attaches great importance to any international policy that helps create conditions of fair competition in its sectors of activity. This necessarily requires a level playing field in which governments and companies operate and compete under the same constraints. Therefore, the adherence of EU Member States to such a legal instrument must be conditional upon assurances that a binding and effective monitoring mechanism, applicable to each and every exporting country, will be put in place.

For more information, please contact:

Alexandre Dossat (ASD PR & Communications Manager)

Alexandre.dossat@asd-europe.org

Tel: +32 2 775 81 33 – Mobile: +32 493 09 79 87

Note to Editors

ASD, AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe, represents the aeronautics, space, and defence industries in Europe. ASD has 28 member associations in 20 European countries, and represents over 2000 companies with a further 80 000 suppliers, many of which are SMEs. www.asd-europe.org

The European aeronautics, space and defence Industry at a glance:

Employment: around 676 000 in aerospace & defence
Industry Turnover: over €137 billion.