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Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(10.12.2018)

Under the EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP<sup>1</sup> on the control of arms exports, the assessment of licence applications for the export of military technology and equipment is in the first place a responsibility of EU Member States. It is also their responsibility to assess the risks prior to authorising an arms transaction.

Common Position 2008/944/CFSP lays down eight risk assessment criteria against which EU Member States have to assess arms export applications. These criteria include assessing the risk that the arms might be used for internal repression or international aggression, for violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. Attached to the Common Position there is a User's Guide that suggests ways to make operational the criteria in the Common Position.

The Common Position also provides for transparency among EU Member States on the exports of military equipment and technology: the EU Council reports every year on the implementation of the Common Position and provides detailed information on the destination and volume of arms exports authorised by EU Member States. The EU's reports also give information on the number of authorisations denied per destination. Such denials demonstrate that the risk assessment regarding the destination in question can be negative and that not all arms exports are necessarily authorised. For instance in 2016, there were 18 denials concerning export licence applications to Saudi Arabia. The Council Working Party on Arms Exports (COARM) regularly addresses the policies of Member States on arms transfers to Saudi Arabia.

Yemen is regularly on the agenda of the EU Foreign Affairs Council. It should be recalled however that a complete embargo on arms trade with Saudi Arabia would require a Council decision to be adopted by unanimity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32008E0944>