

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0241/06

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to the Council

Subject: Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

There are around 639 million small arms and light weapons in the world today. Eight million more are produced every year. Without strict control, such weapons will continue to fuel violent conflict, State repression, crime, and domestic abuse. Unless governments act to stop the spread of arms, more lives will be lost, more human rights violations will take place, and more people will be denied the chance to escape poverty.

There is currently an ongoing debate in the international community concerning the adoption of a global Arms Trade Treaty. A global Arms Trade Treaty would call on States to agree on a set of global principles on arms transfers, consistent with their existing responsibility and under relevant international law, including authorisation for all transfers, limitations on transfers contained in treaties and UN arms embargoes, a requirement not to transfer weapons that are likely to contribute to grave human rights violations or war crimes against humanity, or that are likely to contribute to outbreak or escalation of armed conflict and other safeguards based on respect for existing international law. In short, it would create legally binding arms controls and ensure that all governments control arms to the same basic international standards.

There are now in total over 40 countries which have publicly stated support for the ATT, and more who have made strong statements around the need for a legally binding agreement on arms transfers. The EU has publicly announced its support for the ATT as well.

1. What measures is the Council planning to undertake in clarifying its position on the ATT?
2. What measures is the Council planning to undertake in supporting the principles of the ATT?
3. What steps will the Council take to bring the ATT's implementation forwards in the course of 2006?