



The European Union's Arms Trade Policy: Consistent with its Principles? From CFSP to the Arms Trade Treaty

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Abstract

Weapons take the lives of 2,000 people every day. Most of these deaths occur in conflicts in the world's least developed countries. Meanwhile, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands - all developed countries and members of the European Union (EU) - rank among the world's largest weapon exporters. If the European Union's main principles include the defence of peace and human rights, is the EU being consistent with its principles when this specific type of exports by Member States costs so many lives every day?

This thesis will trace the development of the European Union's arms trade policies since the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy until the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. The aim is to evaluate whether the EU has acted consistently with its principles. The analysis will start by reviewing data on the amount and types of arms exports that Member States of the EU have made during the last years, followed by an examination of the EU's legal basis for regulating arms trade since the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) up to the newly entered-into-force Arms Trade Treaty. How will this Treaty affect the EU and its Member States' policies on the export of weapons? The final conclusion will describe the major of this thesis, trying to answer the question on whether the EU has been consistent with its principles when formulating its arms trade policies.