

PRESS RELEASE

10th anniversary of Wassenaar Arrangement for arms export controls commemorated today in high-level event

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies a commemorative act was held today in the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Vienna. Over 100 representatives of WA Participating States, States not members to the Arrangement, international organisations and institutions as well as the media attended the high-level event organized by Austria and the Netherlands

In order to underline the role of Vienna as a centre of international non-proliferation efforts Austria's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hans Winkler delivered the introductory speech. The Ambassador of the Netherlands to South Africa, Frans Engering, who chaired the negotiations leading to the establishment of the WA and the Mayor of Wassenaar Luigi van Leeuwen represented the Dutch Government. The objective of the event was to make the crucial role of the Wassenaar Arrangement in strengthening international security more visible to the outside world.

The Wassenaar Arrangement was established on 19 December 1995 in Wassenaar, a village near The Hague in the Netherlands. It was agreed to locate a Secretariat in Vienna to provide the necessary operational and logistical support. The inaugural Plenary Meeting was held in Vienna on 2 and 3 April 1996. The first regular Plenary Meeting took place on 12 and 13 December 1996. With this, the first global multilateral arrangement on export controls for conventional weapons and related goods and technologies was born: the Wassenaar Arrangement.

The WA's objective is to contribute to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in the transfer of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilising accumulations. The currently 40 Participating States seek, through their national policies, to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine these goals, and are not diverted to support such capabilities.

Vienna, 7 December 2006