

Ireland's role in disarmament

Achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and promoting disarmament of conventional weapons and arms control are priorities for Ireland.

Nuclear Disarmament

Achieving a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons is a long-standing priority for Ireland. Motivated by the immense human suffering which would arise from the detonation of a nuclear weapon, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, we are working for the complete elimination of these weapons. The main international agreement in this field is the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty \(NPT\)](#). The origins of the NPT are closely connected with Ireland; in 1958 we introduced the first of what became known as the "[Irish Resolutions](#)" at the UN which eventually led to the NPT. In recognition of this pioneering role, Ireland was the first country invited to sign the NPT in 1968. The treaty entered into force in 1970 and has 190 members.

Almost half a century later, the NPT remains at the heart of international efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. It contains the only international legal obligation to disarm nuclear weapons and is regarded as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Ireland remains an active and committed member of the NPT and is working with others to achieve progress on nuclear disarmament as well as on the Treaty's goals of non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

New Agenda Coalition (NAC)

The NPT has been successful in preventing the wholesale proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, concerned that the slow pace of implementing the Treaty's nuclear disarmament obligations might undermine the Treaty, Ireland was active in forming the **New Agenda Coalition**, a cross-regional group of States committed to promoting progress on nuclear disarmament.

The NAC was launched in Dublin in 1998 with a [Joint Ministerial Declaration](#) resolving to promote the objective of complete nuclear disarmament. Fifteen years later, the six members of this coalition - Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa - remain committed to this key objective. For the first six months of 2014, Ireland will assume the coordinator role of the NAC.

Ireland is a member of the [Conference on Disarmament](#) and, in August-September 2013 acted as president of the conference. The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade [addressed the Conference](#) on Disarmament in February 2013. We are participating in the [Open Ended Working Group](#) in Geneva established by the UN General Assembly to develop proposals for multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We are also part of a group of countries seeking to highlight the **humanitarian implications** of nuclear weapons as a means to increase pressure for more progress on nuclear disarmament.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) remains central to global efforts to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation and promote the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. Ireland has chosen not to include nuclear power in its energy mix. However, we remain committed to promoting and facilitating the peaceful uses of nuclear technology within the NPT context and under appropriate international safeguards. We have been a member of the IAEA since 1970 and we work with its Member States and partners worldwide to protect the peaceful uses imperatives of the NPT.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Ireland regards the [Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty](#) as an important means to promote and implement the objectives of the NPT. The CTBT would prohibit nuclear test explosions, thereby drawing a clear line between peaceful and military uses of nuclear technology. The Treaty will only enter into force when all of those countries listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty, which were nuclear-capable when the treaty was agreed, ratify it. Ireland is committed to promoting its early entry into force and calls upon the remaining Annex 2 countries - eight in total - to ratify immediately and without conditions.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

We are not only committed to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, but are also playing an active role towards eliminating all categories of weapons of mass destruction. Achieving a world free from the threat of all weapons of mass destruction is a longstanding priority of Irish foreign policy.

Ireland has been party to the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) (CWC) since its entry into force in 1997 and to the [Biological Weapons Convention](#) since 1972. For the past sixteen years, the CWC has made considerable progress towards eliminating an entire weapons category from global arsenals. As EU Presidency, Ireland played a key role in shaping the EU contribution to the [Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention](#) in The Hague in April 2013.

Cluster Munitions

We are proud that the text of the [Convention on Cluster Munitions](#) was agreed at a diplomatic conference in Dublin in May 2008. The Convention outlaws all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions to address the humanitarian consequences and unacceptable harm caused by the use of cluster munitions. Ireland was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention, which entered into force in 2010, and we are committed to its implementation. As Coordinator on Clearance, 2012- 2013, we worked hard to advance the work of the Convention on this issue.

Landmines

Ireland was one of the core group of countries which drafted the [Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention](#) and was among the first States to sign and ratify it in March 1997. The Convention not only prohibits the use of anti-personnel landmines, but also commits States to assist in the removal of mines from mine-affected lands. Ireland has been a strong supporter of the [Landmine Monitor](#), a civil society initiative to monitor the implementation of the APLC, since its foundation in 1998.

We have been an important supporter of humanitarian mine action since the early 1990s. Total [Irish Aid](#) expenditure on mine action in the period 2006 – 2012 amounted to over €25 million, including funding for work in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Iraq, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. Not only does this work prevent further casualties, it also allows land to be released for agriculture and business, directly contributing to longer-term stability and economic development.

Other Conventional Weapons

The adoption of the [Arms Trade Treaty](#) in April 2013 is a significant achievement for the international community. The ATT is the first legally-binding agreement to govern the global trade in conventional arms, from battle tanks and combat aircraft to missiles and small arms and light weapons. It demonstrates the vital contribution which the UN can make towards international peace and security.

A comprehensive and robust ATT had been a foreign policy priority for Ireland. We are proud to have been among the first States to sign the Treaty on 3 June 2013. The Treaty will enter into force once 50 States have ratified it. Nationally, we are working towards early ratification and implementation of the Treaty.

The [Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#) prohibits the use of specific weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary suffering or that indiscriminately affect both civilians and military personnel. It is for this reason that Ireland signed the Convention in 1981, the same year that it opened for signature.

Export Control Regimes

Ireland participates in five multilateral export regimes: The [Wassenaar Arrangement](#), [Australia Group](#), [The Missile Technology Control Regime \(MTCR\)](#), [Nuclear Suppliers Group](#) and the [Zangger Committee](#). Our obligations under the export regime arrangements require us to control the export of lists of goods specific to each regime. As an EU Member State, Ireland is also bound by the terms of the EU Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP which defines common rules governing the export of military technology and equipment, and the EU Council Regulation on Dual Use Goods, Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009.

The [Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation](#), has responsibility for licensing in Ireland. We work closely with our colleagues in that Department on applications for the export of military goods and certain dual-use goods from Ireland.

Civil Society

We recognise the important contribution that Civil Society is making in many disarmament & non-proliferation processes and we continue to work with Civil Society partners to advance our disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control goals.