

NATIONAL REPORTS ON ARMS EXPORTS

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Since the early 1990s an increasing number of governments have chosen to publish national reports on their arms exports (see figure 1 and table 1). The initial push to publish national reports on arms exports came from various national parliaments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) demanding greater oversight of government implementation of arms export policies. Such demands gained particular traction following a spate of arms export-related scandals in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

National reports on arms exports vary enormously in both the amount of information they contain and the level of detail they provide. At a minimum,

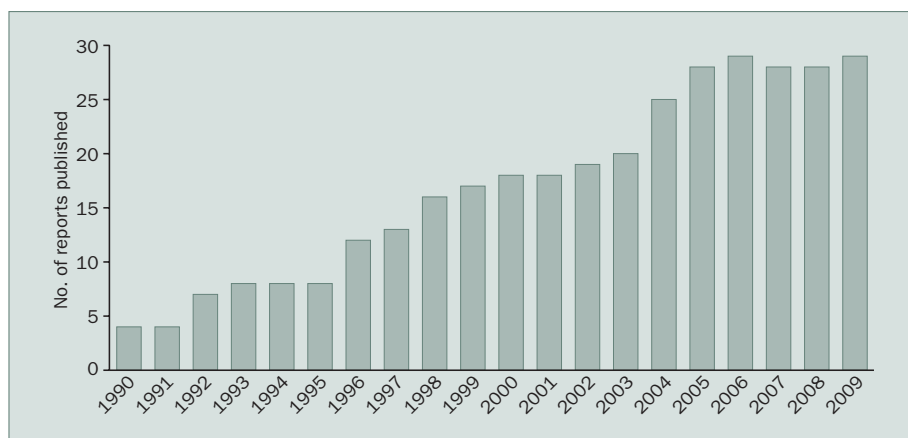


Figure 1. Number of states publishing a report on arms exports, 1990–2009

Note: Figures for 2003–2009 include Belgium but not its 3 regions.

they tend to contain background information on the states' national export control system and details of the arms export licences granted. However, some reports contain significantly more detail on arms export licences granted—including descriptions of the goods involved and the type of end-user—while others provide information on actual arms exports, arms brokering and export licence denials.

This Fact Sheet compares the level of detail provided in national reports on arms exports produced worldwide. Where available, this is based on the data

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KEY FACTS

- To date, 29 states have published national reports on their arms exports during 2009.
- The reports provide an important level of public and parliamentary oversight over governments' arms export policies and serve to promote their norms and standards internationally.
- The number of states publishing reports has risen from 4 for 1990 to 29 for 2009.
- The level of detail in states' national reports has increased substantially, with more complete information on licence denials and brokering licences.
- Of the 35 states that have published a report, 31 are European. There is little evidence that the practice of publishing a national report is expanding outside Europe.
- The format and content of national reports differ substantially, making it hard to compare national decision making on arms exports. But any attempt to standardize the content may reduce overall levels of transparency as states may agree to a lowest common denominator.

Table 1. States publishing national reports on arms exports
Years refer to the (financial or calendar) year reported on, not the year of publication.

State/Region	Year of first report	Year of most recent report
Albania	2007	2009
Australia	1992	2004
Austria	2004	2009
Belarus	2002	2006
Belgium ^a	1993	2009
Brussels ^a	2003	2009
Flanders ^a	2003	2009
Wallonia ^a	2003	2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004	2009
Bulgaria	2005	2009
Canada	1990	2009
Croatia	2009	2009
Czech Republic	2003	2009
Denmark	1999	2009
Estonia	2004	2009
Finland	1998	2009
France	1998	2009
Germany	1999	2009
Hungary	2009	2009
Ireland ^b	1998	1998
Italy	1990	2009
Macedonia	2005	2006
Montenegro	2006	2009
Netherlands	1997	2009
Norway	1996	2009
Poland	2009	2009
Portugal	1996	2008
Romania	2000	2009
Serbia	2005	2008
Slovakia	2004	2009
Slovenia	2005	2009
South Africa	1996	2009
Spain	1991	2009
Sweden	1984	2009
Switzerland	1989	2009
United Kingdom	1996	2009
Ukraine	2004	2009
United States ^c	1961	2009

^a Responsibility for issuing (and reporting on) arms export licences has been devolved to the 3 regional governments of Belgium since 2003. A biannual national report is also produced at the request of a parliamentarian. Unless otherwise stated, all 4 reports are counted in the data in this Fact Sheet.

^b The Irish report covers Jan. 1998 only.

^c The US Department of State, Department of Defense and Congressional Research Service each publish an annual report. The statistics in this Fact Sheet refer to all 3 reports.

in reports on exports in 2009. For countries which had not published a report on 2009 at the time of writing, data in the most recent report is used instead (see table 1).¹

TRENDS IN REPORTING

The first country to publish a national report on arms exports was the United States, where the government has been legally obliged to publish a report since 1961. However, in recent years, European Union (EU) member states have been particularly ambitious in the production and development of reports. The first national report on arms exports produced by a current EU member state was published by Sweden, for 1984. This was followed in the early 1990s by reports from Italy, Spain and Belgium and the practice has now spread to almost all EU member states. A key factor driving this process has been the adoption of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (EU Code) in 1998 and its successor, the EU Common Position defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment (EU Common Position) in 2008 (see box 1). Under the EU Common Position, arms-exporting member states are now obliged to produce a national report on arms exports. Six EU member states—Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Malta—have yet to produce such a report.

As part of its efforts to promote the norms and standards of the EU Common Position, the EU has encouraged states in its immediate neighbourhood to publish national reports on arms exports. This effort has had particular success in South Eastern Europe, where several states aspire to EU membership. Since 2004 national reports have been published for the first time by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. In many cases, these reports contain a level of detail that equals or surpasses that contained in the reports of EU member states.

There continues to be limited interest outside Europe in producing national reports on arms exports. A number of major arms exporters, including

¹ Certain states also produce monthly, quarterly or biannual reports, which often contain more detailed information than the annual reports. Where available, this additional information has been used. National report documents cited here are available at <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/transfers/transparency/national_reports>.



Box 1. The European Union annual report on arms exports

Under the EU's Common Position establishing common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment, EU member states exchange data on the financial value of their export licence approvals and actual exports along with information on their denials of arms export licences.^a The data on licences and exports, along with aggregated data on denials, is compiled in a publicly available annual report. Originally intended to be a confidential exchange of information, the EU annual report has been publicly accessible since 1999 following pressure from the European Parliament, NGOs and the 1999 Finnish EU Presidency.^b

Since the 6th EU annual report, published in 2004, states have been asked to submit data on the financial value of both arms export licences and actual arms exports, broken down by destination and the 22 categories of the EU Common Military List. This information is reproduced in the EU annual report, which includes separate tables for different destinations and geographic regions. The EU annual report has developed into an important reporting mechanism and tool of transparency in the field of arms exports. Indeed, for several EU member states, the information available in the EU annual report is the most detailed available on their arms exports. However, questions remain about the usefulness of the information it provides.

The EU published its 12th annual report, covering transfers during 2009, in January 2011—the first time that this report has been published more than 12 months after the end of the period covered.^c All 27 EU member states supplied information to this report and 17 provided data for all requested categories (see table 2). This is a slight fall since the 11th annual report, which reached a record 19 full submissions: Greece and Ireland reported less information for 2009 than for 2008. The three largest arms exporters in the EU—France, Germany and the United Kingdom—all failed to make full submissions to the 12th annual report, thereby diluting its overall value as a transparency instrument. Germany and the UK have long had technical difficulties with collecting and submitting data on actual arms exports disaggregated by EU Common Military List categories.

^a Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 Dec. 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L335, 13 Dec. 2008.

^b Bauer, S. and Bromley, M., *The European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports: Improving the Annual Report*, Policy Paper No. 8 (Stockholm: SIPRI, 2004), p. 5.

^c Council of the European Union, Twelfth Annual Report according to Article 8(2) of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C9, 13 Jan. 2011.

China, Israel and Russia, do not publish reports. Of the 32 national reports covering exports in 2009 that had been published at the time of writing, only three were produced by non-European states—Canada, South Africa and the United States.

ARMS EXPORT LICENCES ISSUED

Data on arms export licences provide information on how states are interpreting and implementing their national controls on arms exports. In particular, it gives an indication of compliance with national arms export criteria. Over time, this data can be used to reveal changes in decision making on arms exports, but only if detailed information—such as a description of the goods involved, the number of items and the type of end-user—is provided on the licences granted.

Of the 38 most recent national reports, 35 provide information on export licences issued. Of these, 34 provide the number of licences issued, 30 provide the financial value of these licences and 30 provide additional information: 11 provide descriptions of the goods licensed for export, 10 give the number of items involved and 5 specify the type of end-user (see table 3). In addition, 29 reports disaggregate information on licences issued by destination, 23 by control list category, and 5 by individual licence. Eight of the 35 reports—those of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Brussels (Belgium), Estonia, Norway, South Africa and Switzerland—provide insufficient information to identify the goods licensed for export to a certain country of destination.

Table 2. European Union member states' submissions to the EU annual report on arms exports, 1998–2009

Years refer to the year reported on, not the year of publication.

State	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 ^a	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Austria	x*	x*	x	x	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Belgium	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Bulgaria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	x*	x*	x*
Cyprus	..	..	..	..	..	..	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Czech Republic	..	..	..	..	..	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Denmark	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Estonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Finland	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
France	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x*	x*	x	x	x	x
Germany	x*	x*	x	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Greece	x	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x
Hungary	..	..	..	..	..	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Ireland	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x
Italy	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Latvia	..	..	..	..	..	x	x*	x*	x*	x	x*	x*
Lithuania	..	..	..	..	..	..	x	x	x*	x*	x*	x*
Luxembourg	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Malta	..	..	..	..	..	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Netherlands	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Poland	..	..	..	..	..	x	x	x*	x	x	x	x
Portugal	x*	x*	x	x*	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x	x*	x*
Romania	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	x*	x*	x*
Slovakia	..	..	..	..	..	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Slovenia	..	..	..	..	..	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*
Spain	x*	x*	x	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x*	x*
Sweden	x*	x*	x*	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
UK	x	x*	x*	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Total	15	15	15	15	15	22	25	25	25	27	27	27
Total providing full submissions	11 (73%)	13 (87%)	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	7 (47%)	6 (27%)	13 (52%)	17 (68%)	16 (64%)	16 (59%)	19 (70%)	17 (63%)

x = data submitted; * = full submission; .. = not applicable.

^a The 10 member states that joined the EU in May 2004 were invited, but not obliged, to submit data to the report on 2003, which 7 of them did.

ACTUAL ARMS EXPORTS

In many cases, arms export licences are not used (meaning that the arms licensed for export are not exported) or the licences are used long after the licence is granted. In order to gain a fuller picture of the international arms trade, information is also needed on actual exports. Such information can help to identify destabilizing build-ups of weaponry and inform other states' export licensing decisions. However, a number of states continue to have problems collecting accurate data on actual arms exports because they lack effective information-gathering mechanisms.

Of the 38 most recent national reports, 25 provide information on actual arms exports, with 23 giving the financial value. All 25 reports disaggregate information on actual arms exports by destination, 15 by control list category and 3 by individual licence. Five of the 25 reports—those of Australia, France,

**Table 3.** States reporting on arms export licences issued, actual arms exports and arms export licence denials

State/Region	Information on arms export licences issued/actual exports/licence denials								Disaggregated by		
	No. of licences	Financial value	Destination	Control list category	Description of goods	No. of items	Type of end-user	Reason for denial	Destination	Control list category	Individual licence
Albania	x/. /x	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /x	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-
Australia*	x/. /-	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Austria	x/. /-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
Belarus ^{at}	- /.	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Belgium	x/. /-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Brussels	x/. /x	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	x/-/-	.. /-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Flanders	x/. /x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/-	x/-/x	.. /-	x/-/x	-/-/-	x/-/x
Wallonia	x/. /x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /-	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/-
Bosnia-Herzeg.	x/. /x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/x	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/x
Bulgaria	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /x	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
Canada	- /.	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-
Croatia	x/. /-	x/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-
Czech Republic	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/x	x/x/x	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/-/x	-/-/-
Denmark	x/. /x	x/-/-	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/x	-/-/-	x/-/-	.. /x	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/x
Estonia	x/. /x	x/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	-/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-
Finland	x/. /-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/x/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
France	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /x	x/x/-	x/-/-	-/-/-
Germany	x/. /x	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/-/x	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /x	x/x/x	x ^b /-/-	-/-/-
Hungary	x/. /-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
Ireland*	x/. /-	-/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-
Italy	x/. /-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/-/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/-/-	x/x/-
Macedonia*	x/. /-	-/-/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	.. /.	x/x/-	-/-/-	x/x/-
Montenegro	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
Netherlands	x/. /x	x/-/-	x/-/x	x/-/-	x/-/x	-/-/-	-/-/x	.. /x	x/-/x	x/-/-	x/-/x
Norway	x/. /x	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/x/x	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /x	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-
Poland	x/. /x	x/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Portugal*	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
Romania	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	.. /x	x/x/x	x/x/x	-/-/-
Serbia*	x/. /x	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/-/x	x/x/x	.. /x	x/x/x	-/-/-	-/-/-
Slovakia	x/. /x	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/x/x	-/-/-	x/x/x	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/x/x
Slovenia	x/. /-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
South Africa	x/. /-	x/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Spain	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/x	x/x/-	-/-/x	-/-/x	-/x/-	.. /x	x/x/x	x/x/-	-/-/x
Sweden	x/. /x	x/x/-	x/x/x	x/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/x	-/x ^b /-	-/-/-
Switzerland	x/. /x	x/x/x	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/x	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-
United Kingdom	x/. /x	x/-/-	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/-	-/-/-	.. /x	x/-/x	x/-/-	-/-/-
Ukraine	- /.	-/-/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/x/-	-/x/-	-/-/-	.. /.	-/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
United States	- /.	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	.. /.	x/x/-	x/-/-	-/-/-
Reports on	34	30	30	27	11	10	5	..	29	23	5
licences issued	(89%)	(79%)	(79%)	(71%)	(29%)	(26%)	(13%)		(76%)	(61%)	(13%)
Reports on	..	23	25	17	10	8	3	..	25	15	3
actual exports		(61%)	(66%)	(45%)	(26%)	(21%)	(8%)		(66%)	(39%)	(8%)
Reports on	23	7	13	10	9	3	3	11	12	6	6
licence denials	(61%)	(18%)	(34%)	(26%)	(24%)	(8%)	(8%)	(29%)	(32%)	(16%)	(16%)

x = information included; - = information not included; . = not applicable; * = pre-2009 report.

^a Belarus's reports describe the national export control system and provide a link to the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

^b These states provide disaggregation by destination and control list category in separate tables.



Germany, South Africa and the USA—provide insufficient information to identify the goods exported to a certain country of destination.

ARMS EXPORT LICENCE DENIALS

As with arms export licences issued, information on export licence denials provides important insights into how states are interpreting their national arms export policies. The exchange of this information among governments can also help national authorities make decisions on critical requests for export licences. Since data on export licence denials can reveal information on who is interested in the acquisition of which type of military equipment, many states are reluctant to release it.

Of the 38 most recent national reports, 23 provide information on export licence denials. All 23 reports give the number of licences denied, 7 provide the financial value of the licence denials, 9 provide a description of the goods, 3 give the number of items, 3 specify the type of end-user and 11 give the reason the denials were issued (see table 3). Of the 13 reports providing disaggregated information, 12 disaggregate by destination, 6 by control list category and 6 by individual licence. Five reports—those of Brussels (Belgium), Estonia, Montenegro, Poland and Portugal—limit the details on arms export licence denials to only the number of licences denied. In addition to these 5 reports, a further 7—those of Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland—provide insufficient information to identify the goods denied for export to a certain country of destination.

ARMS BROKERING

Governments and arms manufacturers often rely on arms brokers to arrange and facilitate sales. However, arms brokers have been implicated in facilitating the supply of arms to states and entities subject to United Nations arms embargoes and other ‘undesirable’ end-users. Effective controls on arms brokering are therefore widely seen as necessary for limiting illicit arms transfers. Information on the activities of arms brokers, and on states’ interpretation of their own brokering controls, remains largely outside the public domain. In recent years a number of states have started to provide some information on the individuals and companies that have been licensed to act as brokers, on approvals and denials of particular licences for brokering activities or on actual arms transfers involving brokers.

Of the 38 most recent national reports, 8 contain information on arms brokering licences (see table 4). All 8 give the number of licences issued; 5 reports provide the financial value of the licence; 4 provide a description of the goods; 4 give the number of items; 4 give the supplier (country of origin), and 1 specifies the type of end-user. Of the 5 reports providing disaggregated information on brokering licences, all 5 disaggregate by destination, 4 by control list category and 1 by individual licence. The 3 reports not disaggregating information on brokering licences—those of the Czech Republic, France and Sweden—make it impossible to know anything about the goods licensed for brokering to a certain country of destination.

Of the 38 national reports, 2 contain information on actual arms transfers involving brokers. Both give the financial value, a description and the sup-



Table 4. States reporting on arms brokering

State	Information reported on arms brokering licences issued/arms transfers involving brokers/arms brokering licence denials									Disaggregated by		
	No. of licences	Financial value	Destination	Control list category	Description of goods	No. of items	Type of end-user	Reason for denial	Country of origin	Destination	Control list category	Individual licence
Czech Republic	x/./-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	././-	-/-/.	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
France	x/./-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	././-	-/-/.	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
Germany	x/./x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x	././-	-/-/.	x/-/x	x/-/x	x/-/x
Montenegro	x/./-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-	././-	x/x/.	x/x/-	x/x/-	-/-/-
Poland	x/./-	x/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	././-	x/-/.	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-
Romania	x/./x	x/x/-	x/x/x	x/x/x	x/x/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	././x	x/x/.	x/x/x	x/x/x	-/-/-
Sweden	x/./-	-/-/-	x/-/-	x/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-	././-	-/-/.	-/-/-	-/-/-	-/-/-
United Kingdom	x/./x	-/-/-	x/-/x	-/-/-	x/-/x	x/-/x	-/-/-	././-	x/-/.	x/-/x	-/-/-	-/-/-
Reports on brokering licences issued	8 (21%)	5 (13%)	6 (16%)	5 (13%)	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	..	4 (11%)	5 (13%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)
Reports on transfers involving brokers	..	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	0	..	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	0
Reports on brokering licence denials	3 (8%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	..	3 (8%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)

x = information included; - = information not included; . = not applicable.

plier (country of origin) of the goods. Information on arms transfers involving brokers is disaggregated by destination and control list category in both cases.

Of the 38 national reports, 3 contain information on denials of arms brokering licences. All 3 give the number of licences, the control list category or a description of the goods disaggregated by destination. While 2 of the 3 reports provide the number of items denied for brokering, only 1 provides the financial value, the type of end-user and a disaggregation by individual licence.

THE TIMELINESS OF ARMS EXPORT REPORTS

In addition to the type of information that states make available, the level of transparency achieved by a particular state can also be measured in other ways. In particular, reports should be produced in a timely manner so that the information they contain is useful and relevant. Certain national reports are produced more than 12 months after the period they cover, limiting their value as a means of holding governments accountable for their decision-making in the field of arms exports. Several factors affect states' ability to produce national

Table 5. The timeliness of national annual reports on arms exports for 2009

Time periods refer to the time between the end of the period covered and the date of publication. Data is not available for all reports. States may also produce more timely monthly, quarterly or biannual reports.

Less than 3 months	More than 3 months	More than 6 months	More than 9 months	More than 12 months
South Africa	Flanders (Belgium)	Czech Republic	Albania	Austria
Sweden	Bosnia and Herzegovina	France	Croatia	Finland
Switzerland	Italy	Ukraine	Denmark	Poland
	Netherlands		Germany	Portugal
	Norway		Hungary	
	UK		Romania	
			USA ^a	

^a The US Department of Defense and Congressional Research Service both published their 2009 reports within 9-12 months; the Department of State took more than 12 months to publish its report.

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reports in a timely manner. For example, in several cases the report must be approved by the parliament before it can be published, slowing down the process of releasing information to the public.

Time spans between the end of the reporting period 2009 and the publication of annual reports vary from less than 3 months to more than 12 months (see table 5). In addition to annual reports on arms exports, Flanders (Belgium), the Netherlands and Sweden publish monthly reports, Romania and the UK publish quarterly reports, and Belgium, Brussels (Belgium) and Flanders (Belgium) publish biannual reports. Some of these reports provide more information than the annual report, and the shorter time period covered increases the timeliness of the information they contain. Since June 2009 the UK has also maintained a searchable database on arms export licensing decisions.²

CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, states have made significant improvements in the level of detail contained in their national reports on arms exports. This process was originally driven by domestic demands for increased oversight in this area, but EU activity has also played an important role in improving standards, both among EU member states and elsewhere in Europe. Nonetheless, in many areas levels of reporting are low and states outside Europe continue to be unwilling to adopt the practice of publishing national reports on arms exports.

Among the states that do report, the lack of standardization in the information contained in the reports and the ways in which it is presented make international comparisons of arms export policies difficult. To a great extent, variety in the content of national reports on arms exports is unavoidable. Indeed, any attempt to harmonize practices in this area would be likely to lead to an overall reduction in transparency, and so the variety can be considered desirable. Nevertheless, greater efforts could be made to standardize the content and format of the different national reports. States should also make greater efforts to improve the timeliness of their reports.

All EU member states that do not already produce national reports on arms exports should begin to do so. Those that export arms have committed themselves to do so. In addition to breaching EU regulations in this area, failure to fulfil this commitment limits the transparency of EU member states' arms exports and weakens the EU's ability to promote its norms and standards in the field of arms export controls elsewhere in Europe and in the wider world.

² British Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 'Strategic export controls: reports and statistics', <<http://www.exportcontroldb.berr.gov.uk/>>.