

Welcoming remarks by Gábor Bródi
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Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be with you this morning to open this conference. On behalf of the Hungarian government, the Foreign Ministry and my colleagues from other ministries and national agencies represented here today, I would like to welcome you to the Fifth International Conference on Export Controls.

The fight against terrorism has sharpened the focus on export controls and given rise to explicit demands for restrictions with respect to both dual-use items and military equipment. This, together with the increasing globalisation of the world economy, has demonstrated the need for deeper co-operation on export controls across national boundaries. Technological advancement has revolutionised the way we live every day and commerce is conducted. The opportunities for proliferators are consequently much greater. A key element of the solution, apart from increased vigilance, will be to strengthen controls both at the national and the international level. All countries can do much to successfully counter proliferation, by way of sharing information and harmonise licensing policies.

Policies and good intentions, however, are doomed to failure without effective transformation into tangible results. Implementation and enforcement of export controls are complex issues, requiring a comprehensive approach and partnerships between government agencies, industry, NGOs and other relevant civil society groups, as well as bilateral, regional and international co-operation. Governments and other relevant agencies should continually review their experience, identify and respond to problems and weaknesses.

Co-operation on export controls of dual-use items and conventional weapons takes place mainly through a number of regimes. There is still considered to be a significant risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. There is continuous discussion within these regimes of which products and technologies should be controlled and which states may be sensitive from the point of view of proliferation. During the past two years these arrangements have focussed increasingly also on non-governmental entities and the risk of terrorists gaining access to sensitive products that could be used for the production of weapons of mass destruction.

Export controls of intangible transfers are increasingly important as open, modern societies are becoming increasingly dependent on information technology. Regardless of their whereabouts, small and relatively weak entities now have considerable potential for inflicting damage and disruption on large, powerful states. Since IT systems are often interdependent, an attack on one element of such a system can cause serious damage and disrupt essential functions.

A great novelty in this year for us is information received about for which countries were issued denials in 2002 under the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and the reasons given for the denials.

Getting fully involved in the work done within the framework of the EU code of conduct on arms exports is of paramount importance to us. We highly acclaim the information exchange that takes place in accordance with the code and are ready to take part in it.

Hungary remains committed to working with other states to find common ground on the issue of export controls. We aim to forge partnerships across the regions, with states with different perspectives and approaches to export controls in an effort to secure a universal commitment to strengthening international controls, thereby making an important contribution to the global effort to combat weapons proliferation. We invite you to join this international effort.