

ENAAT Country report for Norway 2008

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1. Norwegian arms exports in 2008

This report is written before the governmental arms export statistic for 2008 is presented. For this reason, the accounts of the actual arms exports in 08 in this report cannot be exhaustive, and have to rely upon other sources than the previous Norwegian country reports to ENAAT.

The Norwegian customs statistics indicate that 2008 was yet another year of massive growth in the Norwegian arms exports. This statistics suggests that the arms trade increased by 44,5 % in 2008. This increase is worth 954 mill NOK (107 mill Euro), bringing the total value of the arms export this year to more than 3 billion NOK (337 mill Euro). At this time, we can not tell whether other exports of war materials increased similarly this year.

USA is still the biggest buyer of Norwegian arms by far. The Americans are buying most of the Norwegian arms being exported, and this proportion is growing. Since 2000 the American share of the market has been rising steadily, seemingly independent of the overall volume of the Norwegian arms export. The US imported war materials from Norway worth 1,7 billion NOK in 2008 (191 mill Euro). This is an increase of 85,6 % from the previous year.

The main weapon system being exported from Norway to the US is the Kongsberg produced PROTECTOR arms mounting system. Kongsberg has signed the biggest arms contract ever in Norway, worth 8 billion NOK (900 mill Euro), for deliveries of PROTECTOR to the US Army. As of february 2009, 15 countries in addition to USA have ordered the same system from Kongsberg. 4000 systems have been delivered since 1998, and 7000 more are ordered from Kongsberg at the moment. This means that future export growth for this system is certain.

2. Norwegian arms trade policy since May 2008

Two new courses of arms trade policy has been emphasized by the Norwegian government since May 2008:

- 1) A seemingly increasing dedication towards SALW issues, ATT and Armed Violence from the Norwegian government.**

After years of pressure from the Norwegian Peace Association, the government finally presented a white paper on the Norwegian disarmament policies in 2008¹. The parliamentary debate on this issue, and the public hearings held in this regard, brought about some clarifications in regard to arms trade policies. Most importantly; all parties represented at the parliament stated their support for the ATT process, encouraged a more active ATT policy by the government and stated that SALW (including SALW ammunition) should be included in the scope of ATT. There were also given positive signals made from a united parliament in regard to the establishment of a parliamentary export control council, marking and tracing of ammunition and the strengthening of HR clauses in the export control system.

Since October 2008, the government has also proclaimed that the success of the Oslo process (the establishment of the cluster munitions convention) will be followed by an increased dedication to the SALW issues. Resulting from this, the Ministry of foreign affairs have established a «humanitarian disarmament project» within the ministry to deal with these issues. This new body is put up to deal with the 2001 SALW convention, the Geneva Declaration on Armed violence as well as the ATT process, and is portrayed as an institutional expression of the renewed priorities of these issues by the government. It is also being talked about renewed efforts to control SALW flows more generally by the government. However, the same government has released two white papers in early 2009 that should be of relevance to these efforts, but that avoids addressing arms trade issues. The first addresses development policies under three headings: climate, war and capital flows.² This white paper does not address the relevance of legal arms trade as an obstacle for development. The second white paper addresses the overall national interests of the Norwegian foreign policy, without addressing its interests in the international arms trade. Considering that the most frequent input during the hearings during the preparations of this paper addressed Norwegian arms exports, the white paper totally neglects these issues. One should therefore be critical to whether this increased SALW focus actually is materializing in practical policies. On the other hand, the governments report on their efforts at the UNGA in 2008, holds that the progress made in the ATT process was among the most important developments in that session. In the latest governmental report on humanitarian efforts, the ATT process is also portrayed in a constructive and more activist manner.

2) Revision of the ethical guidelines of the governments pension fund:

As we discussed at the last ENAAT congress, the Norwegian government has been in the process of revising these guidelines, also of relevance to arms trade over last year. It has resulted in the presentation of a white paper on this to the parliament on the issue in April 2009. This has raised public debate about the funds investments in the Israeli military industrial complex.

In 2008, the screening criteria for the pension fund were extended, so that companies will be excluded if they sell weapons or weapon technology to regimes on the list of nations whose government bonds the fund is prohibited from investing in. At present, this means that the fund must not invest in companies that sell weapons to Burma. So far, this has led to one company being excluded from the fund.³

¹ Available in english at: <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2007-2008/report-no-27-2007-2008-to-the-storting.html?id=520773>

² Available in english at: <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2008-2009/report-no-13-2008-2009-to-the-storting.html?id=552810>

³ See: <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/fin/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2008-2009/report-no-20-2008-2009-to-the-storting.html?id=559122>

3. Norwegian export control practice since May 2008

In May 2009 the Norwegian export control guidelines of 1992 adopted the EU common positions criterias. This adoption does not represent any real change in policy, since the code of conduct has been a vital basis for the Norwegian licensing procedures for many years. Simply put, this is just about formulating principles already in place in the Norwegian licensing practice. In terms of transparency we have seen some minor improvements in governmental reporting over this period.

After strong pressure from the Norwegian Peace Association over several years, the government is now in working on how to establish a parliamentary export control council (after the Swedish model), and the introduction of end user certificates with re-export clauses for "close allies" are being supported by more parties than last year. However, we have not seen any evidence of institution building or change in export control practice on these issues in 2008.

4. Norwegian peace work against the arms trade since May 2008

The Norwegian Peace Associations Arms Trade Group has been visible in the media and public debate on arms trade throughout the year, particularly emphasizing and explaining the growth in the Norwegian arms exports.

The top priority for the Norwegian Peace Associations arms trade work in 2009 is the ongoing ATT process. We are following the process closely, and are trying to use this process as a vehicle for many of our more traditional policies, i.e attacking state subsidies of the arms industry and Norwegian arms exports as an obstacle to international development. In addition to conducting ATT research, (see point 5), we are also spending a lot of time formulating ATT policy, lobbying and coordinating NGO efforts towards the ATT process nationally. We have established a national group on ATT issues with Norwegian Church Aid (the largest development organization in the country), Red Cross, Amnesty, Changemaker and Forum for Development and Environment (an umbrella for 60 Norwegian development, solidarity and environmental NGOs).

2009 is also a national election year in Norway. We are using this opportunity to campaign against the governments subsidizing of the arms industry, arranging election meetings on arms trade issues and cooperating with other parts of civil society to address the myth of Norway as a peace - state with stories portraying Norway as a war profiteer through its arms exports.

5. Funding for peace work against the arms trade since May 2008

We managed to get funding for arms trade activities from the Ministry of foreign affairs for the first time in 2007. In 2008 and 2009 this support has gradually increased, and for 2009 this supports amounts to 60 000 NOK (6700 Euro). This funding has been used to raise awareness by giving talks on the Norwegian arms trade issues all over the country, and conducting research on the issues.

Since November 2009 we have also been funded by the Norwegian directorate for development (Norad) to do research in regard to the ongoing Arms Trade Treaty process, and how the arms trade affects development. This has enabled us to produce one large study on North- South divisions in the ATT process, and the Norwegian policies towards it. We will continue conducting this type of research throughout 2009, publishing at least one more study in December. Unfortunately, this research will not be available in English.