

Finnish Arms Exports in 2010

In Focus: Nuclear Weapons

In 2010, Finland exported military equipment worth of 58.77 million euros. Thus, the total value of exports decreased from 86.54 million euros in 2009 by 32 percent. The total value of export licences granted in 2010 was 61.22 million euros. The export licences' total value was more than halved compared to the year 2009 when licences worth altogether 159.05 million euros were granted. The reason for this was that many countries had fewer available funds for military expenditure due to the ongoing financial crisis.

The long-term trend in Finnish arms exports, however, was still growing. During the five-years period between 2006 and 2010, Finland exported 23 percent more military equipment than during the previous period (2001–2005). In 2010, the most important export countries were Poland (30.4 % of total exports), Croatia (17.5 %), USA (11.0 %), the Netherlands (6.8 %) and Saudi-Arabia (6.2 %).

For dual-use technology altogether 293 export licences were granted. This is one licence more than in the previous year 2009. Neither the total value of these exports nor the countries of destination are known due to deficiencies in the public authorities' reporting.

For civilian firearms, export licences for altogether 195,767 weapons for 40 different countries were granted. This figure grew by 78 percent compared to the previous year due to the fact that then an exceptionally small number of licences had been applied for. However, also in this category, the long-term trend is a rising one. Thus, in the years 2006–2010, the number of licences granted grew by 28 percent compared to the previous period 2001–2005.

For civilian firearms' ammunition, export licences were granted for 111.93 million cartridges for 55 different countries. The number of licences granted in this category during the period 2006–2010 went down by 7 percent compared to the previous period 2001–2005.

Saferglobe's Grey List of Finnish Arms Exports

The report's grey list examines how the Finnish arms exports policy complies with the juridically binding EU Common Position on Arms Exports' eight criteria. Additional criteria for comparison were Finnish foreign policy's official goals such as mediating peace and promoting democracy and human rights.

In 2010, Finland exported military equipment, dual-use technology and civilian firearms and ammunition into 99 different countries, 55 of which ended up on SaferGlobe's grey list. Export licences for military equipment were given for 30 grey-list countries. Noteworthy export countries are Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Mexico, which is waging a war against drug trafficking organisations. Finland granted a licence to export sniper rifles to the latter.

Transparency of Finnish Arms Exports Still Weak

The transparency of Finnish arms exports did not improve when compared to the previous year. The Ministry of Defence of Finland did not improve its reporting and does not publish its report on arms exports in both official languages of Finland, Finnish and Swedish. Neither the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, responsible for the export licences for dual-use technology, nor the Finnish National Police Board, responsible for civilian firearms' and ammunitions' export licences, publish any annual reports. During the year 2010, several cases of arms trade related corruption surfaced.

Arms Control Treaties in 2010

In 2010, the worldwide discussion on arms reduction was dominated by the strife for a nuclear-weapon-free world. This strife was triggered by Barack Obama's speech in Prague (2009), which was followed by several high-profile letters to the editor during 2010. The best-known of these were written by so-called "gangs of four" in the USA and Belgium as well as in Finland.

During 2010, the negotiations for the international Arms Trade Treaty continued. Several states ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions adopted in 2008. Finland did not join the treaty.

Finland Finances Nuclear Weapon Manufacturers

The 2010 report's topic was nuclear weapons, which were discussed in four articles. Finnish trade unions, pension insurance companies, banks, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have made direct and indirect investments into companies manufacturing nuclear arms or financing their production. The issue raises ethical questions. The investing organisations defend their investments by pointing out that there is no treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons.

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