

**Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons
Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

**Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems
Geneva, 9-13 April 2018**

**TOP 6 (b) - Further consideration of the human element in the use of lethal force; aspects
of human-machine interaction in the development, deployment and use of emerging
technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems**

Statement Austria

Mr Chair,

We appreciate the shared agreement in the room that human should retain meaningful human control over autonomous weapons system. This is the most important take away of this session on which we will be able to build upon consequently in the future.

Now, there is a need to clarify where gradual technological progress with regard to autonomy of weapon systems reaches a point that seems unacceptable in the light of international law and ethical standards. We believe that the possible transfer of control is the fundamental concern that distinguishes AWS from established weapons and warfare. Further deepening our understanding of the level of meaningful human control over critical functions, such as targeting and the use of force, is essential. For example, several delegations among them New Zealand and the Russian Federation highlighted the importance of leaving enough time for human decision making. So human control being a merely theoretical opening for man, because this would not be meaningful.

The fundamental concepts of State responsibility and individual accountability can by definition not be outsourced to machines. International legal norms are based on humans. States and humans are subject of law not machines.

We will need to look closer at the selection, targeting cycle and the established command and control chains in the use of force. Where are critical steps where human control needs to be ensured? The central question for my delegation is how to characterize meaningful human control? Where are the limits of the acceptable?

In our view, the decision in all critical functions must be taken by human all the time, including also after the decision has been taken the possibility to intervene.

The targeting process requires complex analysis including technical, but also legal, political and ethical consideration. These are deeply human considerations, which should not be transferred into algorithms.

Finally, I wish to express our gratitude to Poland for underlining the importance of the ethical dimension.