Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
European and International
Affairs

Vienna Conference on
**Autonomous
Weapons Systems**
2024

Humanity at the Crossroads:
Autonomous Weapons Systems
and the Challenge of Regulation

Vienna Conference 2024

Provisional Conference Programme

29 April 2024

08:30	Registration open
08:30 – 10:00	Coffee available

10:00 – 11:00   **High-level opening**
Welcome and introduction

H.E. Alexander Schallenberg
Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria

H.E. Izumi Nakamitsu
United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

H.E. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger
President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Further speakers to be confirmed.

11:00 – 12:30   **High-level panel – "The need for regulation – action – partnership"**
A high-level panel of invited guests will assess the need for regulation of autonomous weapons systems (AWS) and of partnerships to move this objective forward in a moderated discussion.

Several ministers and other high-level participants have already confirmed their participation, others are still pending. The final set-up for the high-level panel will be communicated as soon as possible.

12:30 – 14:15   **Lunch**
Side events and 'stalls' provide opportunities for interaction.

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| 14:15 – 15:45 | **Panel 1 – Emerging technologies, AWS and the (future) shape of conflict** |
| | **Panel presentations – followed by moderated Q&A** |

The panel will set the scene for the conference, discussing where technological development in the field of AWS is going and how the issue of AWS relates to wider questions around Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the military domain and large-scale data processing. It will address implications of 'autonomy' on international security and society in general and introduce the specific humanitarian, legal, ethical, security and technological challenges of AWS.

Dr Agnes Callamard

Secretary General, Amnesty International

Dr Beyza Unal

Head of Science and Technology Unit, Science and Technology Unit, UNODA

Jimena Viveros

Member of the United Nations High-level Advisory Body on AI
Chief of Staff and Head Legal Advisor, Mexican Supreme Court

Elina Noor

Senior Fellow, Asia Programme, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Further speaker to be confirmed.

| 15:45 – 16:15 | **Coffee Break** |

| 16:15 – 17:45 | **Panel 2 – Human control and accountability under the law** |
| | **Panel presentations – followed by moderated Q&A** |

The panel will consider the role of humans in the use of force regarding AWS. It will provide the basis to discuss the necessary positive obligations that would allow for adequate human judgement and control. It will also assess to what extent human decision-making is indispensable to make moral and legal judgements ahead of the use of force and to hold people accountable as required by international law. The panel will further address design, development and training aspects related to AWS.

Dr Cordula Dröge

Chief Legal Officer and Head of the Legal Division,
International Committee of the Red Cross

Prof Harold Hongju Koh

Sterling Professor of International Law, Yale Law School

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Prof Arthur Mutambara

Director, Institute for the Future of Knowledge, University of Johannesburg

PD Dr Frank Sauer

Head of Research, Metis Institute for Strategy and Foresight,
University of the Bundeswehr Munich

Richard Moyes
Director, Article 36

17:45	**End of Day 1**

30 April 2024

08:30 – 09:30	Coffee available and presentation / interactive stalls open

09:30 – 11:00   **Panel 3 – Human dignity and the ethics of algorithms**
Panel presentations – followed by moderated Q&A

The panel will consider the range of ethical and human rights aspects that are of key relevance in relation to AWS and their regulation. This includes the question of processing people as data through sensors and algorithms to make decisions about subjecting them to physical force, the targeting of people and the wider risks including the role of bias in data sets and algorithms.

Peggy Hicks
Director, Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division,
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Hon. Dr Solomon Ayele Dersso
Commissioner, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

Dr Neil Renic
Researcher at the Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen

Dr Fan Yang
Assistant Professor of International Law, Law School of Xiamen University

Anja Kaspersen
Director for Global Markets Development and Frontier Technologies,
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

11:00 – 11:30	**Coffee Break**

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11:30 – 13:00   **Panel 4 – How dealing with AWS will shape future human-technology relations**

Panel presentation – followed by moderated Q&A

This panel will focus on the wider questions of why action is necessary for society as a whole and the future of armed conflict. Lessons learnt from autonomy and AI in civil applications will be discussed. The risk of an 'autonomy' arms race, lowering the threshold for military confrontation and proliferation to non-state armed groups and terrorists demonstrate the urgency to take action.

Dr Patricia Lewis
Research Director, International Security, Chatham House

Prof Mary Ellen O'Connell
*Robert & Marion Short Professor of Law and Professor of International Peace Studies,
Kroc Institute at University of Notre Dame*

Dr Thompson Chengeta
*Reader in Law, Liverpool John Moores University, and Board Member,
UN Secretary General Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters*

Prof Kenneth Payne
Professor of Strategy, King's College London

Emilia Javorsky MD, MPH
Director of the Futures Programme, The Future of Life Institute

13:00 – 14:30   **Lunch**
Side events and 'stalls' provide opportunities for interaction.

14:30 – 16:00   **Session 1 for statements by attending states and other stakeholders**

16:00 – 16:30   **Coffee Break**

16:30 – 17:30   **Session 2 for statements by attending states and other stakeholders**

17:30 – 18:00   **Closing session**
This session presents the conference chair's outcome document outlining the main points made during the presentations and discussions. The Conference Summary will be submitted by Austria as input for the UN GS report pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution A/78/409.

18:00   **Conference Ends**

The Conference will also be livestreamed on the [Conference website (www.aws2024.at)](www.aws2024.at).