



## **Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe**

### **Recommendations of the Euro-Atlantic Association**

The attention of the European and global public opinion is mostly focused on strategic nuclear weapons, i.e. on weapons designed to inflict crushing strikes intended to vanquish the enemy and successfully end a huge conflict, or to protect the side wielding it against a strategic defeat of an almost existential nature. Therefore, it is not only a weapon of huge power, but it is coupled with means of transport allowing striking at great, also intercontinental distances.

The USA and Russia are the two states which currently have at their disposal by far the largest nuclear potential.

For many years there had been a clear a tendency towards bilaterally reducing the number of these weapons, thus avoiding a costly arms race, which offered no effect in the form of obvious military superiority.

This intention was expressed in the past in several agreements concluded between the USA and the USSR, and recently in the bilaterally ratified START agreement concluded between the USA and Russia.

While this treaty sets forth the maximum number of strategic missiles and nuclear warheads and provides for a whole range of means of verification and mechanisms ensuring transparency of its observance, the arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons designed to secure superiority or success in a specific war theatre remains outside of any control or even transparency.

The number of these weapons, although reduced compared with the Cold War period, is not at all insignificant. There are no official data but, according to reliable estimates made in 2009, there are 500 such weapons in the state of operational readiness and another 500 in storage, in the USA alone. The corresponding figures for Russia are 2,076 and 3,400,

respectively. According to the same sources, 200 American atomic bombs designed to be carried by aircraft such as the F-16 or the Tornado, are located in several army bases in Turkey, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Germany. As regards Russian tactical nuclear weapons, their location is unknown, although it is thought that a majority are currently in the European part of Russia, possibly also in the Koenigsberg (Kaliningrad) District.

In this situation, bearing in mind the understandable and deeply equitable concerns regarding extending the trust-building means, and also considering the highly doubtful usefulness of these weapons in Europe from the military, but mostly, from the political point of view, and in order to reduce the threat of their uncontrolled use or appropriation by non-State, criminal or terrorist groups, the following decisive actions should be taken:

1. Establishment of procedures for making official declarations by the USA and Russia regarding the number and location of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, or at least in its large part along the border between NATO and Russia, including their possible distribution in countries situated geographically between NATO and Russia.
2. Development of a system of verification of the declared data on the number and location of these weapons.
3. Exchange of information regarding systems of security and protection of weapon depots in order to improve their impregnability to terrorist or criminal groups.
4. Based on the openness of the information on the location of tactical nuclear weapons, commencement of negotiations aimed at removing depots containing these armaments from Central and Eastern Europe, at least partly including the European part of the Russian Federation. Of course, any such agreement would not apply to strategic weapons covered by the START treaty.

The START treaty is considered an important trust-building factor. An agreement concerning tactical nuclear weapons could be its natural and politically highly significant extension. Establishing a zone free of tactical nuclear weapons between NATO and Russia could become yet another step towards reducing mutual distrust. A treaty of this type would place Russia even stronger in the context of European security and could be an important element of the new regulation pertaining to a wider treaty on the European arms control system and trust-building measures, currently under consideration, which would replace the largely obsolete CEF treaty. Possible inclusion of Germany in the aforementioned zone would also meet the postulate put forward by the Germans to remove nuclear weapons from the territory of that country. However, any such move would have to be compensated by including a relatively large part of the Russian Federation in that zone.