EU Statement
on
"Other Weapons of Mass Destruction"

By

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at the

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Acceding country Croatia, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland* and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to be a major threat to international peace and security that calls for a global approach. The risk that terrorists acquire biological or chemical weapons adds a further critical dimension. It is vitally important to enhance international cooperation, both in the framework of the United Nations and between all Member States, in order to address these challenges.

The main multilateral instruments relevant to this cluster debate are the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. These legally binding instruments play a key role in reducing the threat from such weapons of mass destruction. Full compliance with their provisions is of critical importance to international peace and security. The European Union calls for the universalisation and effective implementation of these instruments. We also call on all States to consider withdrawing any reservation made upon acceding to the 1925 Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. The BTWC does not only prohibit state sponsored bio-weapons programmes. Full implementation of the Convention's Article III and IV by all its State Parties will also help combat the threat posed by terrorists.

The EU welcomes the outcomes of the 7th BTWC Review Conference, namely the adoption of the new sustained agenda for the inter-sessional process until 2016 and of other decisions facilitating the implementation and strengthening of the Convention. The Implementation Support Unit for the BTWC continues to play a particularly important role in maintaining the link between the States Parties to the BTWC. The EU wishes to express its continued appreciation and support for the work done by the ISU.

Strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is one of the priorities of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. To implement the Strategy in the field of biological weapons the EU is focussing on practical measures. In 2006 and 2008 the EU adopted Joint Actions in support of the BTWC with the aim to increase the membership of the BTWC and to assist States Parties transpose the obligations of the BTWC into appropriate national legislation and administrative measures. The implementation of these Joint Actions was entrusted to the UN Office for

* Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

† Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.
Disarmament Affairs and they met the foreseen results. Since the adoption of the first Joint Action in 2006, ten more states became States Parties to the BTWC and several states benefited from assistance provided by EU Experts in projects co-organized by the BTWC Implementation Support Unit, the last assistance projects were conducted in Uganda, Serbia and Madagascar. Under these two Actions the EU has funded projects in support of the BTW Convention with more than 2 million EUR. After the last year’s Seventh Review Conference the European Union decided to renew its commitment in support of the BTWC and adopted a new Decision in support of the BTWC ensuring financial contribution of 1.7 million EUR for implementation of new projects. The technical implementation of the Decision will be again entrusted to the UN ODA.

The main objectives of the new Action are to help promote universality and national implementation of the BTWC along with the increased capacity for the UN Secretary General’s mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of biological and toxin weapons. The projects which will be organised within the Council Decision will aim among others at promotion of awareness about implementation of the Convention, supporting key regional actors in defining needs and requirements for national implementation through regional workshops, assistance to both non States Parties and to States Parties, in order to transpose their international obligations into their national legislation and support for development of various enabling tools and activities in national implementation including the national CBMs process.

The EU attaches great importance to the full participation by all States Parties in confidence building measures, which is a politically binding mechanism under the Convention. Through our previous Joint Action, we have funded a CBM guide, organised CBM workshops and carried out assistance visits. The question of an evaluation and improvement of the confidence-building measures mechanism and its functioning should be given due consideration as part of the inter-sessional process.

In addition, the EU supports the strengthening of bio-safety and bio-security in third countries through a series of other projects, including through a Joint Action in support of the World Health Organization. Last year the pilot project was successfully conducted in Oman.

Mr Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention - the first international treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under international verification – is a major multilateral achievement. Today, no more than eight United Nations Members have yet to become party to the CWC, including two signatories. The European Union continues to urge those eight States to join in our common endeavour of ridding the world of chemical weapons.

Time bound destruction of chemical weapons remains one of the principles of the Convention, and the European Union is heartened by the fact that three declared possessor States have completed destruction of their stockpiles as provided for in the CWC. At the same time the EU is concerned that the two major possessor States were not able to meet the final extended deadline. We encourage them to take every necessary measure to accelerate their destruction processes with a view to completing destruction in the shortest time possible. Chemical weapons destruction operations should continue to be conducted
in a sincere and transparent fashion, and within the framework of the existing verification regime. We have no doubts about the commitment of both countries to complete destruction of all remaining declared stockpiles as soon as possible.

Syria's admission that it had a stockpile of chemical weapons, made public on 23 July this year, engendered a wave of international condemnation and renewed calls for it to join the Convention. The European Union is seriously concerned about the presence of these weapons in Syria. Their existence shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. The EU urges Syria to act responsibly in relation to these abhorrent weapons, not to use them under any circumstances, and to keep them secure. The use of chemical weapons is prohibited by general international law and by conventions including the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

We are concerned by the information provided last year by Libya about newly discovered stocks of undeclared chemical weapons. We support the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2017 (2011), which recognised the urgent need to secure and destroy chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya, in accordance with its international obligations. We stress the importance of ensuring the security of all stockpiles. We welcome the resumption of the verification activities in Libya by the OPCW and commend the transparency shown by the new Libyan Government. We look forward to the early resumption of destruction operations, and the quick and total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya, under strict verification.

Destruction of the weapons of the past must be accompanied by preventing the making of new chemical weapons in the future. In particular the provisions on industry verification, national implementation and challenge inspections are vital for pursuing the non-proliferation goals of the Convention. We also strongly support efforts to strengthen Article X on assistance and protection against chemical weapons. The third exercise on the delivery of assistance (ASSISTEX 3) is a clear example of the sort of crucial activity in this area that is essential. The European Union recognizes that the implementation of all articles of the Convention can prevent toxic chemicals from falling into the hands of terrorists – this applies in particular to measures that lead to enhanced national implementation. The European Union calls on all concerned States to ensure that the necessary legislation and infrastructure are in place to implement the CWC in a full and effective manner.

One expression of the European Union’s commitment to the aims of the CWC is our continued support to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Since 2005, the EU has provided more than seven million euro to support OPCW projects with the aim of promoting the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its full implementation by States Parties. In March 2012 the European Union adopted a new Council Decision with a budget of more than 2 million EUR with objectives to enhance the capacities of States Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and to enhance international cooperation in the field of chemical activities, including the support to OPCW to adapt to developments in the field of science and technology.

The EU welcomes the outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting on Chemical Weapons Convention on 1 October 2012 at the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Convention and looks forward to achieving substantial progress during the 3rd CWC Review Conference in April 2013.
Mr Chairman,

We continue to fully support the actions taken under UN Security Council Resolution 1540. This resolution is fundamental to the development of effective mechanisms to prevent and counter proliferation to non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We urge all States to comply with and fully implement the legally binding obligations of this resolution, and resolutions 1673, 1810 and 1977. Resolution 1540 requires that all States shall take and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, including controls over related materials. To this end, the States shall also establish transit and brokering controls. In this context, the EU dual-use export control regime has been strengthened through the revised Council Regulation setting up a Community regime that now covers the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual use items. Since its entry into force on 27 August 2009, this regulation has been applied in all 27 EU Member States.

We and will continue to provide significant support to third countries to ensure the full implementation of UNSCR 1540. We have been assisting several countries in complying with their obligations under UNSCR 1540, including through several regional outreach activities. When providing assistance, the EU collaborates with the 1540 Committee, the UNODA and other major donors to ensure efficiency and avoid overlapping. We are currently in the process of elaborating a new Council Decision that would continue to provide support to the 1540 Committee in promoting the full implementation of the resolution.

We continue to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of WMD, such as the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The EU constructively contributed to the discussion within the G8 about the necessary evolution and update of the Global Partnership and welcomes its extension beyond 2012, based on the areas of focus enunciated at the G8 Summit in Muskoka in 2010. The EU is helping build capacities for the mitigation of risks related to proliferation of WMD by supporting the creation of regional CBRN Centres of Excellence and through its Instrument for Stability.

Export controls are very important tools to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. The EU considers that the Australia Group plays an essential role to this end.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU is very concerned by the risks posed by the proliferation of missiles that could be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction, including ballistic missiles of increasingly great range and sophisticated technologies. A number of tests of medium and intermediate-range missiles conducted over the last years outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes and in violation of UNSC-resolutions, especially by the DPRK and Iran, deepen our concern.

The European Union continues to consider that the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missiles proliferation, as a confidence building measure, and the Missiles
Technology Control Regime are the best existing tools to address the problem of missile proliferation.

The EU reaffirms the clear multilateral and universal purpose of the HCOC. We welcome the fact that, as of 2012 – the 10th anniversary year of the HCOC – 134 states have subscribed to the HCOC. The EU calls on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to it as soon as possible and thus to join regional and international efforts to prevent and curb comprehensively the proliferation of ballistic missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, as a contribution to international peace and security. We also welcome the strong relationship between the United Nations and the Code, and strongly hope that this year’s resolution of the United Nations General Assembly and the ministerial statement in support of the HCoC will further contribute to its development. The EU welcomes the significant progress towards the full implementation of the Code. Let me recall that the EU, through a Council Decision, which has been recently renewed, has supported several projects aimed at promoting universality, better implementation and strengthening of the HCOC. The most recent EU activities include a visit at the European Spaceport of Kourou, in French Guyana, in coordination with the French Presidency of the Code in May 2011. For the future, also in view of the Code’s 10th anniversary this year, the EU plans to organize various events including targeted outreach and broader seminars to raise awareness on missiles proliferation and the role of the Code, and invites other countries to complement these efforts with their ideas and initiatives.

Export controls are also essential to prevent missile proliferation. We consider that the Missile Technology Control Regime plays a key role and continue to promote EU Member States membership in export control regimes.

The EU is also in favour of examining further multilateral steps to prevent the threat of missile proliferation and to promote disarmament efforts in the missile field. Our proposal to start consultations on a treaty banning short and intermediate range ground to ground ballistic missiles capable of delivering WMD remains valid.

Mr Chairman,

International legal provisions are essential but not enough by themselves: they must be effectively implemented. Each State must comply with its non-proliferation obligations. Operational cooperation is required to prevent and disrupt illicit transfers, to control exports even more effectively, to counter illegal networks of diversion and trafficking, and to combat proliferation financing.

Thank you.