



Statement of the European Union

Delivered by Ambassador Júlio Mascarenhas
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OPCW

At the Twelfth Session of the Conference of States Parties
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

The Hague, 5-9 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia^{1*} and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia , as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU warmly congratulates you on your election as the Chairperson of the 12th Conference of States Parties and we express our full support for your leadership in chairing this Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

2007 marks the 10th Anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC – and the EU recognises the significance of this milestone. The Convention is an essential component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation framework. It remains unique in providing strict and effective international control of the prohibition and elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

The obligation of chemical weapons possessors states to declare and verifiably destroy all their chemical weapons within specified time periods is a central provision of the Convention. In this regard, the EU welcomes the efforts of possessor countries to destroy their chemical weapons and notes that Albania has become the first possessor to complete destruction. The EU recalls that possessors states have full responsibility for the complete and irreversible destruction of their chemical weapons and urges them to intensify their destruction efforts in order to meet their destruction deadlines under full verification.

¹ Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process

Mr. Chairman,

The EU attaches high importance to the further strengthening of the verification regime with regard to activities not prohibited under the Convention, with a view to enhancing confidence in the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. It also stresses the importance of further promoting cooperation with industry.

The EU emphasizes the need to increase the number of inspections in Other Chemical Production Facilities and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the regime, where necessary, giving priority to those sites which are of high relevance to the Convention, and to the improvement of the declarations by States Parties on OCPF sites.

The EU recalls that the challenge inspection mechanism remains an indispensable instrument of the OPCW's verification regime. The EU welcomes the Secretariat's work to maintain its readiness to conduct a challenge inspection, if requested, in particular its involvement in regular exercises, both internally and with States Parties. In this regard, the challenge inspection exercise, organized by the Netherlands at an industrial site in Delft, was a useful opportunity for the Technical Secretariat and member states to see how an inspection of this kind would operate. The EU hopes its findings will be used as valuable lessons for the future.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU notes with satisfaction the progress towards achieving the universality of the Convention, resulting in a total of 182 States Parties who are now members and welcomes the recent ratification of the CWC by the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). We believe the Action Plan on Universality has clearly helped generate new membership. However, 13 states remain to join the Convention and the EU urges those that have not yet joined the Convention to do so without delay. The EU continues to stand ready to continue to work towards achieving universal adherence to the Convention. The EU also commends the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for their continued efforts to promote the universality of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU also believes that full national implementation of all the Convention obligations by all States Parties makes a significant contribution towards enhancing global security and stability, including in the fight against terrorism.

Full compliance with Article VII is, therefore, a vital factor for the present and future efficiency of the CWC regime. While welcoming the results achieved so far in the implementation of Article VII obligations, the EU also notes that almost four years after the establishment of the Action Plan overall progress remains slow. Further efforts are needed in this regard, in particular in the number of States Parties that have yet to enact legislation and adopt administrative measures to comprehensively implement the CWC. The EU and its Member States remain committed to offering assistance to those countries requesting or needing assistance with implementing or improving national measures. The EU also encourages all States Parties that have yet to fulfill their article VII obligations to do so without delay. The EU also pays special tribute to the Technical Secretariat for its untiring and continuing efforts to assist States Parties with their national implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU welcomes the OPCW Programme and Budget for 2008, which has already achieved consensus in the Executive Council. However, the EU notes that the OPCW will not be able to implement its programme of work in full unless contributions are paid in a timely manner by all States Parties. The EU once again voices its concern over the number of States Parties not paying their assessed contributions in full and on time and calls upon these States to do so in future.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU would like to inform the Conference that, in the context of its Strategy against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Javier Solana, is convening a Minister-level symposium in 2008 aiming at addressing strategic challenges on WMD issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU is ready to contribute to a full review of the operation of the CWC during the second Review Conference in 2008. This is an important opportunity to identify areas in which further progress should be sought in the future. In this regard, the EU adopted in June a Common Position related to the 2008 Review Conference which defines the approach that will guide the EU member states in the run up to and during the RevCon. This Review Conference will demonstrate to the outside world that the Convention is a clear example of the success of the multilateral process and will guide the future work in the field of non-proliferation in chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

As I mentioned earlier, the EU recognises the achievements made in the 10 years since the Convention came into force and, as we approach the end of the year, we would like to recall events conducted throughout 2007, in particular the High Level Meeting in New York jointly organized by two EU Member States, Poland and The Netherlands, the Berlin symposium, the Academic Forum, sponsored by The Netherlands, and the Industry and Protection Forum, sponsored by the EU Joint Action, which provided opportunities to renew our commitment to multilateralism and to the object and purpose of the Convention, to take stock of achievements and identify future challenges for the implementation of the Convention. The EU also hopes these occasions raised wider awareness of OPCW activities.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union is looking forward to a productive session of the Conference of States Parties in the days ahead under your able chairmanship.

Thank You.