

**Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical
Weapons
11th Conference of the States Parties**

The Hague, 5 December- 8 December 2006

**Statement by
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on behalf of the European Union**

(Check against delivery)

**Statement of the European Union
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
Conference of the States Parties
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Let me open, Mr. Chairman, by expressing the European Union's full support for your leadership in chairing this Conference. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the representatives of those six States Parties that have joined the Convention since CSP-10.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU Strategy Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction underlines the crucial role of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of this Organisation in creating a world free of chemical weapons. As part of this strategy, the EU has committed itself to working towards the universal adherence to key disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements, among which is the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The CWC can be considered a cornerstone in efforts to prevent chemical weapons from ever being obtained or used in the future.

The European Union attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which not only prohibits an entire class of WMD, but also provides for the irreversible destruction of existing weapons and stockpiles under international verification within specified deadlines laid down in the Convention and decisions of the Conference. The EU reminds all possessor states that the obligation under the Convention to complete destruction of all chemical weapons by 2007, or, if granted an extension, in any case by 2012, is binding on all State Parties without exception.

In this respect, the EU once again urges all possessor states to redouble their efforts, be they administrative, financial or technological, to destroy their stockpiles within the agreed timelines. The EU is encouraged by the progress being made by the relevant possessor states to meet these deadlines, and in particular welcomes the

greatly increased pace of destruction in the Russian Federation, which has now completed destruction of some 7% of its stockpile.

The European Union considers Council visits to CW possessor states to be a valuable and useful transparency measure for the OPCW to assess the progress of these states towards meeting their obligation under Convention. Therefore, the EU strongly supports regular Council visits to destruction facilities and construction sites for such facilities in those States Parties that are requesting 2012 as the final deadline for the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles. The visits will enable all States Parties to satisfy themselves that all possible efforts are being undertaken by the relevant possessor states to meet the final deadline of the Convention. To facilitate an adequate geographical representation of the Council in the visiting group, the EU hopes to be in a position to offer financial support for these visits on a case by case basis.

The European Union also recalls that after the destruction of chemical weapons, the elimination of the capacity to produce is one of the biggest priorities under the convention. We therefore renew our call on all possessor states to redouble their efforts to meet CWPF conversion deadlines.

Mr Chairman,

As the Director General already highlighted in his statement, the current year has been full of important developments in our area of responsibility, and full of tasks to be accomplished.

The EU welcomes the proposed zero-growth budget for 2007 and supports the proposal for increased verification of OCPF's. Given that the OPCW has inspected only a tiny fraction of these facilities, it is essential that the proportion of the facilities that are inspected should be increased.

The European Union remains concerned about the growing number of States Parties not paying their assessed contributions and the number of State Parties paying in instalments or only towards the end of the financial year. The EU therefore urges all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

The European Union supports the establishment of a mechanism to encourage States Parties that are in arrears and have no voting right in the policy-making organs of the OPCW to regularise the payment of their outstanding annual contributions. This will allow States Parties to demonstrate their commitment to pay their arrears, and to meet their financial obligations under the Convention. It also facilitates the consideration of applications to permit a State Party that is in arrears to vote. This would contribute to strengthening the work and credibility of the policy-making organs of the OPCW.

Mr. Chairman,

The effectiveness of the Convention depends greatly on universal adherence and national implementation by all States Parties. The European Union wishes to commend the efforts of the Technical Secretariat and of the existing and new existing States Parties in the area of universalisation, especially the achievement of the goal of 180 States Parties by the end of this year. We should not, however, forget that the

task of completing the full universalisation still requires special efforts from all stakeholders, given the difficulties and specific issues related to the 15 countries which remain outside the Convention. The EU encourages States Parties to continue their efforts towards universalisation and also to use their bilateral contacts in this context. The EU notes with satisfaction the progress made at the workshop on universality in the Mediterranean Basin and Middle East, which was held in Rome, Italy, from 25 to 27 October this year, and underlines the significance of the workshop as a key step in achieving the universal adherence.

Universal adherence to, and national implementation of, the CWC must both be seen as critical elements in spreading the security benefits of the Convention. National Implementation of CWC controls goes hand in hand with the requirement of responsible governance of activities in chemical industries, and there is therefore a benefit for each State in complying fully with the Convention.

The EU wishes to highlight the positive developments in the area of national implementation and to thank all stakeholders for their valuable contribution in this process. During this year, the EU has, both through its Joint Action and through tailored demarches in selected capitals, contributed towards these efforts of universalisation and national implementation. The EU urges States Parties not having provided information about the designation of their National Authorities and about the steps taken to enact legislation, to do so as a matter of urgency. I would like to remind the States Parties that EU assistance is available through the OPCW in the form of an EU Joint Action.

In this connection, I am glad to announce that the European Union is currently finalising a third Joint Action in support of the OPCW, to be implemented next year. It will again benefit the core programmes of the OPCW. I hope that States Parties will see this voluntary contribution as a constructive input to the achievement of the goals of the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

As we look ahead to 2007, it is worth highlighting two important issues ahead of us - the Tenth Anniversary of the Convention and the preparation of the Second Review Conference. The EU is preparing to play a full part in the process of the preparation of this Review Conference. The preparation must be results-oriented, keeping in mind the huge challenges which our organisation will face during forthcoming years and even beyond 2012. The Second Review Conference is a unique opportunity to give a positive signal to the outside world, showing that the Convention remains an example of the success of the multilateral process in promoting international peace and security, and to set the scene for our future work.

The EU stresses the importance of the Tenth Anniversary next year, and is ready to support and co-operate in the preparation of this event. This event must be utilized to highlight both the achievements of the Convention in the area of global disarmament and the challenges which we will face in the near future. The Anniversary should be used to increase the visibility and publicity of this Organisation and of its valuable work in outlawing CW. In this context, the EU would like to draw attention to the proposed unveiling in The Hague, on 9 May 2007, of a Permanent Memorial to All Victims of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU welcomes the UN “Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy” adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2006, in which the OPCW and the IAEA are encouraged to continue their efforts, within their respective mandates, in helping States to build capacity to prevent terrorists from accessing nuclear, chemical and radiological materials, to ensure security at related facilities and to respond effectively in the event of an attack using such materials. Furthermore, the EU wishes to express its continuing support for the facilitation process at the OPCW on this matter based on the mandate given by the Executive Council on 7 December 2001, particularly with regard to the developing assistance and protection capabilities. The OPCW must also continue to bring added value to the fight against terrorism by making appropriate international contacts in line with resolution 1540 of the Security Council.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by noting that we are leaving behind us a year which was full of hard work and not without achievements. The EU wishes to thank all stakeholders, especially those involved in this process as facilitators, for their valuable work in sometimes difficult decision-making. Furthermore, the EU wishes to pay a special tribute to Mr. Pfirter, Director General of this organisation. Under his capable and competent guidance, our organisation has been able to address numerous difficult tasks and in particular, the call from the outside world for concrete actions. I am sure that, in a spirit of constructive cooperation, we can work to ensure that the OPCW is also seen as having the best instruments to address the current threats and challenges to peace and security in the world.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

** Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*