



OPCW

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SLOVENIA

**STATEMENT BY MS ANITA PIPAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLICY
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA ON BEHALF OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES, TO THE SECOND
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO
REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process, and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman for the Second Review Conference. I wish you every success in your stewardship of the Conference and I assure you that you will have the full cooperation of the European Union delegations and our commitment to your efforts to guide this Conference to a successful conclusion. I should also like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the EU delegations to H.E. Mr Lyn Parker, Permanent Representative of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group, for his valuable and fruitful efforts in preparation of this Conference.

At this point in time, eleven years after the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, (hereinafter “the Convention”), the Convention has become a cornerstone in the international efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, and prevent the proliferation of such weapons. The Convention has reached near universal adherence, and substantial progress has been made in the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, as well as in the destruction and conversion of former chemical weapons production facilities. Nevertheless,

¹ Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.



substantial challenges remain for some possessor States. The EU believes that the Second Review Conference should provide strategic guidance for addressing the current and future challenges to the Convention, bearing in mind that, following the completion of the destruction of all chemical weapons, the OPCW needs to be well prepared to focus on the next phase of the implementation of the Convention, in particular its non-proliferation role.

In this context it is important to emphasise the contribution of complete chemical disarmament to international security, the growing trend towards the globalisation of the chemical industry and, with this, the ever more important requirements for the universal adherence to the Convention, full national implementation by all States Parties and strengthening of the OPCW verification regime, combined with the protection and assistance capacity building in the case of attack by chemical weapons and the fostering of international cooperation and capacity building activities in States Parties developing their chemical industry and trade. The European Union adopted a Common Position relating to this Review Conference in June 2007 and in my statement I would like to highlight those issues to which the EU attaches high importance.

Reaffirmation of the general purpose criterion

Mr Chairman,

One of the challenges of the Convention regime is the rapid scientific and technological development in the field of chemistry and biology and the growing interaction between the two. The Scientific Advisory Board plays a vital role in reporting on these challenges and its views and specialised advice merit increasing attention. The definition contained in Article II ensures that the Convention remains fully relevant to address any issue that may be raised in the future. In pursuing the goals of the Convention on non-proliferation, in addition to the destruction of the existing chemical weapons stockpiles, it is particularly important that all States Parties have comprehensive national implementing legislation in force, including on the transfer of chemicals, and that they ensure that their national legislation is framed to take account of the general purpose criterion, that is, that all activities prohibited by the Convention involving the use of any toxic chemicals or their precursors are proscribed and penalised.

The EU also recalls that riot control agents are only permitted for purposes not prohibited under the Convention and in types and quantities that are consistent with such purposes. Their use as a method of warfare is prohibited by the Convention.

Destruction

Last year the first possessor State Party, Albania, completed the destruction of its entire chemical weapons stockpiles. This was a historical event for the Convention and contributed greatly to its success and credibility. The EU continues to attach great importance to the destruction of chemical weapons by the possessor States, as well as the destruction or conversion of all chemical weapons production facilities within the established timelines in order to ensure the success of this unique disarmament and non-proliferation treaty. The EU therefore urges the remaining possessor States Parties to make every possible effort to destroy their stockpiles by the agreed deadlines. In order to strengthen confidence among States Parties, the EU recalls the requirement for full transparency in destruction activities.

Systematic verification through continuous on-site inspection of chemical weapons destruction continues to be one of the core activities of the OPCW in this respect.

The European Union also strongly supports the implementation of additional measures such as the continuation of the visits by representatives of the Executive Council in accordance with the decision of the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties, as one of the means of assessing progress in the destruction process, as well as a very valuable transparency and confidence-building measure. Reporting on these visits is intended to help produce and maintain in the relevant capitals the sense of urgency required for achieving the Convention's final destruction deadline of 2012.

Verification

Mr Chairman,

The European Union believes that it is important to maintain the high standards achieved in the implementation of the verification regime under the Convention, and to further enhance it, where necessary, with a view to reinforcing assurance of destruction and increasing confidence in its capacity to prevent proliferation of chemical weapons. In doing so, new scientific, technological, and industrial developments need to be taken into account. Today's risks and challenges are not necessarily the same as those that existed when the Convention's negotiations were concluded in September 1992. In this context it is the view of the EU that the verification regime has to reflect this rapidly evolving environment in the field of chemistry.

With regard to Article VI activities, the European Union believes that we should be taking advantage of more than ten years of experience of the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") in this field, and that the use of inspection resources has to be optimised. In this respect, the EU attaches great importance to the accurate and timely submissions of declarations by States Parties under Article VI of the Convention and according to the decision of the Fifty-First Session of the Executive Council, as well as to further progress towards harmonised implementation modalities.

Mr Chairman,

It is also the conviction of the EU that other chemical production facilities (OCPF's), among the different site categories, are those where the impact of scientific, technological and industrial developments is the most significant. Taking this into account, the number of OCPF inspections should be increased where necessary and the OCPF inspection regime should be made more relevant and more focused through a better baseline for selection by the Secretariat, as verification resources should be used in accordance with the risk posed to the Convention. In this context, the EU welcomes the Director-General's initiative on equitable geographical distribution and looks forward to the resumption of consultations on the mechanism for selecting OCPF plant sites for inspection.

Challenge Inspections

The EU further believes that the mechanism of challenge inspections is a cornerstone for deterring non-compliance with the Convention and increasing transparency, confidence, and international security. The challenge inspection mechanism remains an indispensable and

readily available tool for the OPCW's verification regime, if circumstances require it. The EU wishes to stress that States Parties have the legal right to request a challenge inspection without prior consultation, and that the OPCW should continue to maintain its readiness to conduct a challenge inspection, should it be requested to do so.

Universality

The First Review Conference approved a Plan of Action for the Universality of the Convention. Its implementation successfully brought 28 States to join the Convention, bringing the total to 183 States. The near-universal character of the Convention is a remarkable success. The European Union has always strongly supported the universal adherence to the Convention. In the past five years it has carried out demarches to most States not Party to the Convention. These demarches gave the opportunity to stress the fact that today chemical weapons are globally rejected by the international community as being particularly inhumane. The EU also recalled at these occasions the advantages for the states to join the Convention in terms of security, international and regional confidence building, economic benefits and access to international cooperation. However, the European Union believes that in future a tailored approach is needed for the 12 States that remain outside the Convention, particularly for those in the Middle East. With this in mind, the EU will continue to carry out demarches in the future, intensifying its efforts for the universality of the Convention in the course of all relevant contacts and formal agreements entered into with these states.

National implementation

Mr Chairman,

Full compliance with Article VII is vital for the present and future credibility of the Convention. Due to the scientific and technological development the national implementation measures require continuous improvement and updating. This should remain a priority for all States Parties and the Secretariat. The adoption of comprehensive national legislation by all States Parties contributes to prevention of the proliferation of chemical weapons, for example through strengthening of national export controls. It is also a prerequisite for the implementation of international cooperation under Article XI. Full national implementation is an essential contribution to improved conditions for investment and trade in the chemical sectors. The EU calls upon States Parties that have not done so to fulfil their obligations regarding national implementation without delay.

The European Union has also carried out demarches to States Parties that have not notified the OPCW of the designation of a National Authority or provided the Secretariat with draft national legislation, and is committed to continuing this practice in the future until these shortfalls are no longer an obstacle to reaching the Convention's objectives by all States Parties.

The European Union appreciates the positive results achieved so far in the Article VII Action Plan. Even if substantial progress has been made since the First Review Conference in implementing Article VII, there is still much to be done before achieving full and effective national implementation of the Convention by all States Parties. The EU will continue to stand ready to provide assistance and support, as it has in the past, to those States Parties that may need it in this field.

Fight against terrorism

The EU is convinced that the OPCW can, in its own sphere of competence, make a useful contribution to the fight against international terrorism. The fight against terrorism is most efficiently supported by universal adherence to the Convention, effective national implementation, building protection capacity, and by the timely completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. Compliance with obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1673 is of the utmost importance, as well as practical cooperation between the OPCW and the UN 1540 Committee, and other relevant international and regional fora. Contacts with industry and academia are also important in this regard, especially for awareness raising purposes. The EU shares the aim of eliminating the risk of chemical weapons being acquired or used for terrorist purposes, including possible terrorist access to materials, equipment, and knowledge that could be used in the development and production of chemical weapons.

Cooperation with the Convention's non-state stakeholders

Mr Chairman,

The EU considers that comprehensive implementation of the Convention requires that all stakeholders, including the chemical industry and the scientific community, involve themselves and support national implementation. A more informed environment helps full implementation of the Convention. That is why the European Union encourages outreach by the OPCW towards wider public opinion, training institutions, research and industry. In particular, the EU expresses its appreciation for the cooperation of the chemical industry and the support which it extends to the OPCW. The EU looks forward to the OPCW further promoting cooperation with industry. The Secretariat should build upon the 2007 tenth anniversary experience and develop cooperation with these stakeholders on the broadest possible geographical basis.

Multilateralism

The Convention is, moreover, a unique standard-setting instrument, with the transparency of its verification regime combined with cooperation in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes. Its implementing international agency, the OPCW, is part of broader international efforts to make multilateral disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation mechanisms more responsive and effective, and consequently has the full support of the European Union.

EU as a partner to OPCW

Mr Chairman,

The European Union is a strong partner to the OPCW. The EU collectively contributes well over one third of the OPCW budget in terms of assessed contributions. In addition, many EU Member States make voluntary contributions to the Organisation and to destruction activities in some possessor States. As one of the largest contributors to the OPCW, the EU attaches great importance to sound and cost efficient budgeting, a zero-nominal growth budget to the extent possible, and a results-based budgeting format that makes reporting on and assessing of impact achievable.

The EU Strategy Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction recognises the crucial role of the Convention and of this Organisation in creating a world free of chemical weapons. The EU's commitment to the Convention and to the OPCW is also reflected in our Joint Actions in support of the OPCW. During the time since the First Review Conference, the EU has provided direct support to the OPCW through its Joint Actions to a total amount exceeding Euro 5 million. The European Union is committed to continuing its support to the OPCW and will be assessing results so far and the way ahead for future cooperation with the Secretariat of the OPCW shortly after the Review Conference. I am pleased to invite all the participants to this Conference to attend a presentation of some of the projects and results of the past Joint Actions, entitled: EU Action in Support of OPCW activities 2005 – 2008: Effective Multilateralism in Practice, which will take place next Monday, 14 April, at 13:15 hrs in the Ieper room.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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