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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. JACEK BYLICA
PRINCIPLE ADVISER AND SPECIAL ENVOY FOR NON-PROLIFERATION
AND DISARMAMENT OF THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The acceding country Croatia¹, the candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland², Serbia, the countries of the stabilisation and association process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Andorra, Georgia, Monaco, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, Mr Chairman, allow me to offer my congratulations to you on your election as Chair of this important Review Conference, and to the other Bureau members. This Conference is an important opportunity to engage in a dialogue on the functioning of the Convention and on ways to improve it. The EU looks forward to working closely with you and with all States Parties over the coming two weeks to bring this meeting to a successful conclusion. I also wish to express my appreciation for the excellent way in which Ambassador Baghli of Algeria conducted the work of the Open-Ended Working Group in preparation for this meeting. The texts produced under her guidance form an excellent basis for the work of this Conference.

May I also express the EU's appreciation to His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for making the time to attend this Conference and thank him for his constructive statement.

The Chemical Weapons Convention represents a major success for the international community's efforts to bring about a world free of weapons of mass destruction. It has outlawed an entire class of weapons of mass destruction under effective international and independent verification, and is still the only agreement to achieve this. With this instrument, we have given a clear statement to the world of our shared determination "for the sake of all

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

² Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.



mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons through the implementation of this Convention". We must never forget that this Convention's aims and our responsibilities are to address real and immediate threats, now and in the future.

As we take our work forward over the next two weeks, it is important that we bear this in mind. We all share in this conviction, that chemical weapons must be forever removed from the world's arsenals. Our differences are differences of approach, not of fundamental principle.

In this context, I must refer to the situation in Syria. The existence of chemical weapons is a severe threat to the population of any country and a serious threat to regional peace and security. The EU is gravely concerned about the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria. We emphasise that any use of chemical weapons, whether by a State or by a non-State actor, is abhorrent and must be unreservedly condemned. The Syrian authorities bear a particular responsibility to ensure that their chemical weapons are stored securely pending independently verified destruction and are not permitted to fall into the hands of any other State or non-State actor. The EU expresses its full support for the decision of the United Nations Secretary-General to determine the facts in relation to the allegations of the use of chemical weapons. It is important that all parties cooperate fully with the investigation and permit unfettered access to the investigation team. We also express our appreciation to the Director-General and his staff for the measures they have taken to support the investigation. The EU looks forward to discussing with all States Parties how best to reflect this threat to our shared goal of a world free of chemical weapons in the outcome of this Review Conference.

Mr Chairman, I see a number of challenges facing us over the two weeks of this Conference and over the coming years.

First of all, we must continue to work towards the full universalisation of the Convention. Since the last Review Conference, we have welcomed the Dominican Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Lebanon and the Bahamas as States Parties to the Convention, leaving only eight States outside the Convention today. This success reflects the international abhorrence of chemical weapons.

However, we still have work to do to bring the remaining eight States within the Convention. The EU is deeply supportive of efforts to achieve that goal, and we have provided substantial financial support to the Technical Secretariat's efforts to that end over a period of more than a decade. We will continue to support these efforts.

The EU calls on all States not Party to accede to the Convention without delay while at the same time recalling that the obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of chemical weapons and customary international law apply to all States.

Secondly, we must also recall that the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons remains at the core of the Convention. The EU congratulates those States which have completed their destruction processes, but we are concerned that some were unable to meet the destruction deadlines. We welcome the decision taken at the Sixteenth Conference of the States Parties on a process to continue destruction in accordance with the established verification mechanisms by which the States concerned committed themselves to make every effort to achieve complete destruction within the shortest time possible.

Thirdly, for States Parties to the Convention the main concern is to ensure its effective implementation. The first duty of a State Party is to ensure that it has taken the necessary steps to comply with the Convention's provisions. It is a matter of concern that only half of the States Parties to the Convention have comprehensive implementing legislation in place. We recognise that this poses a legislative and administrative challenge—the Convention, after all, involves a substantial and comprehensive commitment and its implementation is a complex undertaking. Nonetheless, it is essential that all States Parties meet their obligations if the Convention is to fully achieve its goals.

In that regard, the EU fully supports the tailor-made approach, grounded in local realities, taken by the Technical Secretariat to assist States to understand and meet their obligations. It enables States to identify the steps necessary to achieve the comprehensive implementation which is the goal for all States Parties. We urge positive engagement with this process.

Looking beyond these challenges, Mr Chairman, we must also reflect on how the mechanisms of the Convention can prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and enhance the trust and confidence which forms the basis for our shared commitment to a world free of chemical weapons. This is particularly important as we approach the completion of destruction. Indeed, the EU is of the view that reaching the goals of the Convention can be ensured only by both the destruction of all stockpiles and reliable measures to ensure the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons. We need, for instance, to think about how the Convention can be strengthened to ensure no chemical weapons are developed or produced under the guise of purposes not prohibited under the Convention. We highlight the importance of the General Purpose criterion, according to which all toxic chemicals are chemical weapons except when developed, produced, stockpiled or used for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as long as the types and quantities are consistent with such purposes. Such purposes not prohibited are industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical or other peaceful purposes, protective purposes, military purposes not connected with the use of chemical weapons and law enforcement purposes.

This Review Conference must discuss changes in science and technology such as the increasing blurring of lines between chemistry and biology. We need to reflect on how those changes can affect the functioning and efficiency of the Convention and on how to prevent such changes from undermining it. In this respect, the expertise of the Scientific Advisory Board is of great value. We must also reflect on how the dialogue between the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention can be enhanced.

Civil society makes an increasingly important contribution to international discussion and the EU values the contribution non-governmental organisations and industry make to our work.

At the same time we should reflect on the security situation as it is today. Some valuable work has already been undertaken in the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism on threats stemming from the possible use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. That work should be continued.

The EU welcomes the progress made in implementing the assistance and protection provisions of the Convention and the building of capacity in States Parties. It is important the Technical Secretariat continues to develop its ability to respond, in co-operation with other international organisations, where assistance or investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons is required.

I therefore note the EU's satisfaction at the steps taken by the Director-General to ensure that the OPCW is in a position to respond effectively to a request from the United Nations Secretary-General in the case of an allegation of use of chemical weapons by a State not Party.

International cooperation and assistance is an integral part of the Convention. In the past decade the European Union has contributed over EUR twelve million to help achieve its goals, in addition to the many individual voluntary contributions made by its Member States. We are now working with the Technical Secretariat to implement projects under our most recent voluntary contribution, worth more than EUR two million over two years. We look forward to hearing ideas on how international cooperation and assistance efforts can be made more focussed and effective, and we look forward to developing further actions in support of our shared goals in the coming years.

The EU welcomes the initiative by the Technical Secretariat to promote, within its mandate, activities within States Parties in the area of chemical safety and security. It is an important area of engagement, which supports the promotion of best practices in the enhancement of safety and security at chemical facilities.

The implementation of the Convention requires an Organisation which is capable of undertaking its duties effectively. It is in our collective interest that the Technical Secretariat is well equipped with the necessary tools and has the capacity to fulfil the verification regime, including maintaining and developing its capabilities, expertise and preparedness to conduct challenge inspections and investigations of alleged use. The EU welcomes initiatives taken by the Director-General and within the policy-making organs to enhance the management and work practices of the OPCW. We encourage the continuation and systematisation of these initiatives.

We bear a significant burden of responsibility at this Review Conference. Together, we must not only examine the developments of the past five years, but also develop an ambitious agenda for the next five years to bring us closer to fulfilling the Convention's goals. My sincere hope is that before the next Review Conference we will have achieved universal adherence to the Convention, will be much closer to the complete destruction of all chemical weapons and will have built further on preventing their re-emergence. That is our shared goal and the EU will remain fully and constructively engaged to achieve it.

Thank you Mr Chairman and I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the Conference.

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