Seminar on the OPCW’s Contribution in the Sphere of Security and Non-Proliferation

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1 Disclaimer - These remarks should not be considered as an official statement by the European Union External Action Service. The views taken by the author are not intended to bind EU institutions.
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank the OPCW for organising this international seminar.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was identified by Europeans Heads of States and governments in 2003 as the greatest threat to EU’s and international security. This assessment was at the heart of the adoption of the European Security Strategy in December that year.

In parallel to the adoption of this Strategy, the European Council adopted a specific WMD Strategy which can be seen as a set of instructions for the implementation of the European Security Strategy in the field of non-proliferation.

What are these strategic choices for EU action? Our choice is guided by the global nature of the threat coming from WMD. Our analysis is that it does not make sense to act in isolation to deal with global challenges. Acting bilaterally or in small groups is often not sufficient. As a consequence, the EU strongly believes in multilateral action and cooperation with the widest possible numbers of countries. In addition, the EU wants to act before the threat materialises, we want to "prevent".

For us, effective multilateralism in the area of WMD means two things:
(1) Widen the membership to multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament instruments;
(2) Enhance the efficiency of these instruments by ensuring that they are fully implemented at national level.

Against this background, the principle of effective multilateralism has been translated into very tangible EU initiatives in support of all the existing multilateral non-proliferation / disarmament instruments and of relevant international agencies, in addition of course to major support to the UN.

The European Union has adopted a substantial number of Decisions aimed at promoting the universalisation of the multilateral instruments and their effective national implementation.
These Decisions have produced considerable results. Let me give a few examples:

- Since the adoption of the EU WMD Strategy the Council of the European Union has adopted four Decisions in support of the OPCW. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime recognised by the EU WMD Strategy, the only international treaty which bans an entire category of WMD. In financial terms we have allocated since 2005 around € 7 million to the OPCW Technical Secretariat to implement projects, in particular in the areas of universalisation, national implementation and international cooperation.

This targeted action complements the more political/diplomatic action carried out by the EU in the form of demarches to individual countries to encourage them to ratify the CWC and to implement it fully.

We believe that major results were achieved under the three axis of our current cooperation: universalisation, national implementation and international cooperation.

Regarding universalisation, the EU's support to the OPCW has allowed for the organisation of a number of regional seminars for the promotion of universalisation in countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The CWC has nearly reached universality and we feel that in a way also our support to the activities of the OPCW which has contributed to strengthen this trend. Since the adoption of the first Decision, 21 new States have ratified the CWC, bringing the total number of OPCW Member States up to 188.

Regarding national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the EU support contributed to the improvement of the effective functioning of National Authorities and the adoption of adequate implementation measures. This was achieved through assistance visits by legal experts to States Parties that were still to fulfil their National Implementation measures and meet the objectives established by the Plan of Action on its implementation.

Our cooperation with the OPCW also includes projects in areas such as assistance and protection, the development of databases for scheduled chemicals, transfer of equipment to laboratories under the supervision of the National Authorities, support for industry outreach activities and support for visits to chemical weapons
destruction facilities in possessor states. In connection with the 10th anniversary of the OPCW, the EU co-sponsored, through one of its Decisions, the OPCW Industry and Protection Forum in The Hague, proving that industry must be our partner in efforts against proliferation.

Regarding finally international cooperation in the field of chemical activities, the EU, through its support to the OPCW, has provided office equipment to 50 national authorities and some essential analytical equipment to 8 laboratories engaged in the analysis of chemicals. The current Council decision of July 2009 is financing several projects pertaining to bilateral assistance visits, together with training of customs officials or national authorities.

*The future*

The EU stands ready to continue its support to the OPCW and to play a leading role in the discussions on the shaping of the future of the organisation. As destruction activities are approaching conclusion, it is time to focus also on how the OPCW can enhance its contribution to global security.

Therefore, we look forward to receiving the expert panel’s findings. The European Union also stresses the importance of such forward-thinking to be the starting point for the preparation and planning of the forthcoming budget for the year 2012 and in the medium-term planning, both of which should contain elements of transformation of the OPCW after 2012 and indicate the resources for issues building the future shape of the Organisation.

The EU will first of all support the continued implementation and completion of current key activities such as *Chemical Weapons destruction*, which should remains a priority of the Convention. We encourage all possessor states to take every necessary measure to accelerate their destruction processes, which should continue to be conducted in sincere and transparent fashion, and within the framework of the existing verification regime.

We support the OPCW Chair in conducting important facilitations on “how and when to start discussions by the Council on issues related to meeting the final extended deadlines for destruction of chemical weapons”. In this context the European Union considers it important that the relevant possessors regularly provide information about their plans for completing destruction, including
progress against schedule, significant difficulties encountered, and measures taken to accelerate planned destruction.

Second, we reiterate the need for the **enhancement of the industry verification regime**. We are of the view that selection of Other Chemical Production Facilities to be inspected should be done on the basis of directing verification efforts towards those sites of greatest relevance to the object and purpose of the Convention, while at the same time ensuring an equitable geographic distribution. We commend the efforts undertaken so far to facilitate discussions in this field. We welcome too, the start of facilitations on inspection numbers.

We are concerned with the lack of results in discussions on reaching a decision on the verification of chemical weapons production facilities which have been converted for more than ten years. The absence of verification at a growing number of these sites must be resolved as soon as possible. We support the ongoing discussions and consider that the proposals by the facilitator offer all parties a reasonable compromise.

Third, we continue to stress the importance of the development of the **OPCW central analytical database** (OCAD) in order to improve the OPCW preparedness for investigation of alleged use and challenge inspections and to increase the amount of information available to laboratories in States Parties. The European Union believes that the development of the OCAD with adding the new validated data, including the addition of data relating to non-scheduled derivatives of scheduled chemicals, is essential in order to enhance the verification regime.

Fourth, we should continue to work towards achieving **universality** of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Great progress has already been accomplished; only seven States remain outside the Convention. We appreciate that several of these Non-States Parties have shown increased interest in the work of the OPCW, but we also recognise that some Non-States Parties have been less cooperative. We commend the Technical Secretariat’s efforts in engaging all States not party to the Convention and in bringing their attention to the importance of universal adherence to the CWC on every possible occasion.

Besides striving for universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, **States Parties must make every effort to fully implement all the provisions of the CWC**. The European Union considers of utmost importance the full national
implementation of the Convention and urges all States Parties to put in place and enforce all the necessary legislative and administrative measures in accordance with Article VII.

Now if I come to the new axis of possible OPCW action, we consider that for the purposes of international peace and security, it is of paramount importance to prevent toxic chemicals from being acquired by terrorists. Therefore, particular attention will have be given in the future to the non-proliferation aspects of the CWC. Full implementation of all provisions of the Convention, as well as the strengthening of the verification regime and the fostering of universal adherence to the Convention together with assistance and protection and international cooperation, pave the way forward.

The European Union remains supportive of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism. We welcome ongoing consultations within the OEWG on Terrorism, aimed at discussing the merits of each article of the Convention to anti-terrorism efforts. The Group has an important role to play as a forum within which fruitful exchange of information and views takes place, eventually leading to the forging of common approaches.

Along the same lines, the European Union attaches great importance to the implementation of Article X, which provides for assistance and protection against chemical weapons. We emphasise the importance of national programmes related to protective purposes and the importance of capacity building promoted by the OPCW and the European Union. We also underline the value of maintaining the highest level of readiness of OPCW to provide timely and effective assistance and protection to deal with chemical incidents.

We welcome the Technical Secretariat’s report on the Table-Top Exercise on the preparedness of States Parties to prevent terrorist attacks involving chemicals. We support further development of the program of such exercises to establish a more regular dialogue among relevant agencies of States Parties, enhance effectiveness of non-proliferation and counter-terrorism efforts, increase chemical security and strengthen national controls of toxic chemicals.

I thank you for your attention.