



European Union

Statement by

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Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

**Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)
Annual Meeting of States Parties**

(Geneva, 10 - 14 December 2012)

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EU Statement

Mr Chairman,

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

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland† and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

Let me begin by congratulating you on the assumption of your duties and thank you for your commitment. You can count on our full support.

The European Union wishes to thank you for the synthesis paper on the issues discussed at the Meeting of Experts last July. It is a very useful document which has highlighted key points that emerged during the Experts' Meeting and which will help focus our work at the Meeting of States Parties.

We would also like to acknowledge the hard work undertaken by the Implementation Support Unit in support of the BTWC.

Mr Chairman,

The BTWC is a cornerstone of international efforts to prevent biological agents or toxins from ever being developed, produced or otherwise acquired and used as weapons. It constitutes a key element of our collective security. The European Union is committed to fulfilling the goals set at the 7th Review Conference and looks forward to being actively engaged in this new inter-sessional process.

In its Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction the EU has identified the increasing threat emanating from biological weapons. We actively promote the universality, national implementation of and full compliance with the Convention. We remain committed in the long term towards identifying effective ways to strengthen and verify compliance with the Convention.

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

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

The European Union welcomes the accession of Marshal Islands, bringing the current number of States Parties to the BTWC to 166.

The EU and its member States remain engaged in cooperation with and providing support to third countries. Since 2006, the EU has funded projects in support of the BTWC's objectives and purpose with more than 2 million Euros. Building on the successful implementation of our previous Joint Action of 2008, a new Council Decision was adopted on 23 July 2012, which will ensure continued support and a financial contribution of 1.7 Million Euros.

This Council Decision set the following objectives: promoting universality of the Convention, supporting the national implementation of the BTWC and supporting the work of the 2012-2015 inter-sessional programme with a view to strengthening the Convention's implementation and effectiveness. For us, it is important to make best use of previous experience, to reflect the specific needs expressed both by States Parties and States non-Parties to the Convention and to encourage local and regional ownership of the projects in order to ensure long-term sustainability. The technical implementation of the projects will be entrusted to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs / BWC –ISU.

We will further elaborate on our goals and the specific projects under this Council Decision at our side event tomorrow during lunch time, organized together with the ISU.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU is also actively engaged in supporting improvements in biosafety and biosecurity: we have supported several WHO activities in this regard with 2.1 million Euros. We intend to continue to do so and are working on a new Council Decision in this regard.

The EU has also launched the CBRN Centres of Excellence Initiative. This initiative aims at enhancing the capacity of partner countries to mitigate CBRN risks, whether they are criminal, accidental or natural in origin. Nineteen projects amounting to 16 million Euros were recently launched. We are currently reviewing proposals for funding additional projects in the amount of 8 million Euros. The Center of Excellence Initiative should reach a total budget of nearly 100 million by 2013.

Facilitating exchange in biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material for peaceful purposes, is a legitimate goal under the BTWC. Appropriate export controls are necessary in order to ensure that only activities for purposes not prohibited by the Convention are undertaken in accordance with Article III, and export controls are compatible with the provisions of Article X of the BTWC. We all have collective responsibility to ensure that we are not inadvertently assisting in developing biological weapons under the guise of cooperation in biological sciences or in the economic and technological fields.

The Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention is an issue of great and continuing importance for the European Union. We will contribute to discussions here and we consider that it is essential to establish stronger and sustained links between the scientific and the diplomatic communities. We also believe it is important that the CWC and BTWC communities work together more closely as issues such

as biology and chemistry convergence clearly have implications for both Conventions. Let me recall the European Union Working Paper, on Measures for Mitigation of risks due to new science and technology developments of relevance to the BWC submitted at the Experts Meeting last July.

National implementation of the BWC is also an issue of great importance for the EU. Our common aim should be supporting and strengthening, where necessary, national implementation measures, including criminal legislation, biosafety- and biosecurity measures in life science institutions control over pathogenic micro- organisms and toxins export control for dual-use agents and technologies. This new intersessional process offers us the opportunity to consider ways and means, including innovative approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information and the sharing of best practices among State parties."

Mr. Chairman,

We note that the discussion on CBMs at the Experts' Meeting earlier this year was not as far reaching as it could have been; we hope that the final sessions devoted to this topic next year will be more substantive and include consideration of some rather more fundamental questions on the purpose of CBMs as these too have a bearing on the level and nature of annual participation. It is not too early to be thinking about how we approach the CBM issue at the Eighth Review Conference.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the European Union remains fully engaged in fulfilling the goals of the 7th Review Conference and is looking forward to a productive week here in Geneva.

Thank you.

