



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Seventeenth Session
26 – 29 November 2012

C-17/NAT.16
26 November 2012
ENGLISH only

CYPRUS

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY MS JOELLE JENNY, DIRECTOR FOR SECURITY POLICY AND
CONFLICT PREVENTION OF THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE AT
THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson
Mr Director-General
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen

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 Andorra, Georgia, Monaco, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me express the appreciation of the European Union for the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Paul Arkwright, for the most efficient and effective manner in which he has handled the work of the Conference in the last year. Let me also welcome you, Ambassador Peter Goosen, as the new Chair of the Conference and assure you of the European Union's full cooperation and support throughout your tenure.

We would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Mr Mark Albon on his appointment as Director of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division and assure him of our continuing close cooperation.

This year we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Such anniversaries serve to remind us of the essence of the OPCW's work: to achieve a world free of chemical weapons, by destroying existing chemical weapons and preventing their re-emergence. We are also reminded that this endeavour is a collective one and that it can only be achieved through a cooperative and multilateral approach. As highlighted by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms Catherine Ashton, in her statement of 3 September to mark the Organisation's

* 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 the European Economic Area.



15th anniversary, the OPCW “continues to be a remarkable success and an inspiring example for effective multilateralism”.

At the same time, in order to remain effective, the OPCW will need to adapt to its changing security environment as well as to developments in science and technology. The European Union believes that the Third Review Conference should provide political support and broad guidance for the work to be undertaken on the future priorities of the OPCW. The open-ended working group for the Third Review Conference has now completed the first phase of its work. We commend the efforts of its Chair, Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria, and in particular the transparency and inclusiveness she has exhibited as well as the constructive atmosphere that has prevailed. The European Union has recently submitted in writing its views on the main topics under discussion and looks forward to further engaging with all delegations, with a view to a successful Review Conference.

To verify destruction of declared stockpiles will of course remain the key priority for the Organisation. Whilst we are concerned that the final extended deadline was not met, we are of the view that the Possessor States are committed to completing destruction in the shortest time possible in accordance with the decision of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the State Parties on the issue of the final extended deadlines. Nonetheless, we urge the possessor States to continue with their efforts to achieve this objective.

Events earlier this year reminded us yet again of the importance of universal adherence to the Convention. The admission by Syria on 23 July that it has a stockpile of chemical weapons shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. The European Union is seriously concerned about the presence of chemical weapons in Syria and is highly alarmed by the fact that Syria did not completely rule out the use of these weapons. The European Union urges Syria to act responsibly in relation to these abhorrent weapons, not to use them under any circumstances, keep them secure and arrange for their independently verified destruction as soon as possible, and thus accede to the Convention at the earliest possible date. We recall that the use of chemical weapons is prohibited by customary international law and conventions, including the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and stress that the use of chemical weapons by Syria would be a flagrant violation of international law. The situation in Syria shows that hard work is still ahead of us in order to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention, namely to achieve a world free of chemical weapons and prevent their re-emergence.

The European Union calls upon all States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to continue its efforts in this direction in a targeted and tailor-made manner, and reiterate our willingness to actively contribute to this common objective with concrete action.

Whilst we underline the importance of cooperation amongst States Parties, we also wish to highlight the need for cooperation, and the coordination that this requires, more broadly. Through cooperation and coordination, effectiveness is maximised and efficiencies are achieved by avoiding duplication. The European Union believes in the importance of the OPCW’s cooperation with other relevant international organisations and, in this respect, welcomes the recent conclusion of a Supplementary Arrangement to the Relationship Agreement between the UN and the OPCW. Moreover, the added value of regular engagement and cooperation with all stakeholders, including the chemical industry and civil society ought to be fully utilised. We therefore welcome the informal meeting between

chemical industry and States Parties which took place on 27 September 2012. We are convinced that substantive engagement with civil society, including during the sessions of the Conference of the States Parties as well as in the run-up to and during the Third Review Conference, would enrich the work of the OPCW. It would also contribute to improving the transparency of the Organisation, something to which the European Union attaches great importance. Opportunities for cooperation exist also at the regional and subregional levels. In this regard, coordination is necessary between work carried out on the basis of various articles of the Convention.

The European Union believes that the various provisions of the Convention, including in particular provisions under Articles VI, VII, X and XI, and efforts to promote universality, form an organic whole, all contributing to promoting the overall prohibition on chemical weapons. Therefore, the European Union recognises that synergies between these provisions can be fruitfully identified and looks forward to further discussion on this issue in the run-up to the Third Review Conference.

The European Union's commitment to the implementation of all provisions of the Convention is exemplified, *inter alia*, through its voluntary financial contributions. Through its latest contribution of over EUR 2.1 million, now under implementation, it continues to support activities in all areas of the Convention, including national implementation, assistance and protection and international cooperation. These activities take place in, and are directed to, States Parties from all regional groups whilst particular emphasis is placed on support to the OPCW's Programme for Africa. We encourage States Parties to take advantage of the assistance provided through the funded activities, by participating in them according to their own needs.

The European Union underlines the importance of 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. The European Union remains concerned that 15 years on, a relatively high number of States Parties have yet to do so. We welcome the Technical Secretariat's efforts to explore new ways of achieving progress in this area. We also recognise the often very serious competing challenges some States Parties are facing, and therefore wish to highlight the relevant assistance available through the activities organised by the Technical Secretariat. The European Union stands ready to continue assisting in this process, not only through its voluntary financial contributions, but also through further concrete action.

Referring in particular to assistance available to African States Parties, we would like to take this opportunity to invite all delegations to a briefing, organised jointly by the European Union and the Technical Secretariat, on the OPCW programme to strengthen cooperation with Africa which will take place on Thursday, 29 November at 13:45 in the Ieper room.

Moreover, in our efforts to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, all provisions of the Convention are important, including in particular provisions on challenge inspections and investigations of alleged use and verification according to Article VI. We need to further strengthen the Article VI verification regime in accordance with the agreed guidelines, by amongst other things, increasing the relevance of Article VI inspections to the object and purpose of the Convention and ensuring effective site selection. In this respect, we look forward to the evaluation of the results of the interim OCPF site-selection methodology.

The European Union also attaches great importance to the work carried out under Article X. We therefore express our appreciation to the Technical Secretariat and the Polish authorities for the organisation of the “International Meeting on Chemical Safety and Security” in Tarnow, Poland on 8 and 9 November 2012, which was financially supported by the European Union. We also stand ready to discuss concrete proposals put forward under Article XI, in accordance with the relevant decision taken by the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Last but not least, we recognise that the implementation of all articles of the Convention constitutes a tangible contribution to the Organisation’s effort to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism in the chemical field.

The Executive Council, under the leadership of Ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee of India, has helped prepare the issues on the agenda of this Conference of the States Parties. The European Union therefore wishes to thank the Chair of the Council as well as the Vice-Chairs, the Facilitators and the Technical Secretariat for their dedicated work. We are pleased with the fact that it has been possible for States Parties to agree on the OPCW Programme and Budget for 2013, to be adopted during this session of the Conference.

The working methods of the Executive Council have important implications for the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole Organisation. We encourage the Chair of the Council to continue focusing on achieving progress in this area. The efficiency and effectiveness of the Council depends, inter alia, on the good preparation of its sessions and in this respect there is scope for improvement for example, by holding consultations and circulating Council papers in good time to enable proper examination of the issues. Moreover, report drafting and procedural issues should not take up a disproportionately large part of the Council’s time at the expense of discussion on substantive issues.

Mr Chairperson,

We are looking forward to working with all delegations in a constructive and open manner and we trust that this session of the Conference will be a success. I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the Conference.

Thank you for your attention.

--- 0 ---