



**Réunion des Etats parties à la
Convention d'Interdiction des armes biologiques**

(Genève, 1 - 5 décembre 2008)

Intervention de

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auprès de la Conférence du désarmement**

au nom de l'Union européenne

Genève, le 1er décembre 2008

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

TRADUCTION NON OFFICIELLE

Address by France on behalf of the European Union to the Meeting of the States Parties to the BWC (Geneva, 1 to 5 December 2008).

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour of addressing, for the first time, the annual meeting of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. I speak on behalf of the 27 Member States of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*², the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Iceland, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to start by taking this opportunity to highlight the work you have done as Chairman of the Convention during this year. The European Union welcomes the meeting of experts that took place here from 18 to 22 August. This Meeting of Experts enabled the State Parties to the Convention to focus on two topics: national, regional and international measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity; and oversight, education and awareness raising with the aim of preventing misuse of research results.

The diversity of the players, the number and quality of the presentations, and the poster session showed how these two areas of activity constitute significant axes for the concrete implementation of the Convention.

The Chairmanship also made a special effort to involve scientists, professionals, academics and representatives of the sector of industry, who made a constructive contribution to the discussions and found here a unique opportunity to exchange experience and analyses from various professional fields and distinct areas of expertise.

The European Union hopes that the conclusions from the Meeting of Experts will allow us to make further progress in our understanding of the issues associated with implementing the Convention and the challenges that it faces.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union wishes to reaffirm its commitment to this intersessional process, which helps to maintain a regular dialogue among the States Parties to the Convention, and to strive for constant improvement of national practices.

But this intersessional process should not simply allow us to exchange opinions; it should also enable us to take specific steps to improve compliance with the Convention by the States Parties, as we move towards the Review Conference in 2011.

² Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Mr Chairman,

The concrete implementation of the Convention is both an imperative and a challenge for all the States Parties.

A challenge first of all because of the possibilities for diversion of technological developments in the field of life sciences, and the risk of biological weapons being acquired, developed or used by a State or a terrorist organisation.

And also an imperative: the international community has rallied to support Resolution 1540, adopted by the Security Council on 28 April 2004 and re-affirmed by Resolutions 1673 and 1810. These Resolutions affirm that the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as well as their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security. They also affirm the determination of the States to fully implement the relevant multilateral treaties.

These annual meetings should therefore be occasions for discussion, but also occasions to take stock. These conferences should create the impetus to strengthen, where necessary, national implementation measures, including penal legislation. The European Union is convinced that this can be achieved by way of interaction between lawmakers and the private sector, with a view to promoting the national ownership of measures provided by the BTWC.

The European Union believes that these moves to strengthen national legislation should fully encompass the two topics on which we have focussed our attention in 2008, particularly the measures concerning biosafety and biosecurity, and measures aimed at preventing the misuse of research results. The European Union also believes that the States Parties to the Convention should play a major role in supporting scientific, professional, industrial and other organisations in developing and implementing oversight, education and awareness-raising programmes to help preventing diversion of research developments.

Mr Chairman,

As part of the European Union Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the European Security Strategy, the European Union has adopted two joint actions in support of the BTWC, in 2006 and 2008, and a joint action in support of WHO.

In the new joint action in support of the BTWC, the European Union wishes to

- promote the universalisation of the Convention;
- support the implementation of the Convention by providing legal assistance to States Parties or States not yet Parties to the Convention, including by way of training programmes directed at the national authorities;
- promote the submission of confidence-building measures returns, especially by encouraging the designation of national points of contact;
- support the intersessional process of the Convention

The technical realisation of the activities within this joint action will be handled by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva.

In the joint action in support of WHO, the European Union proposes to provide concrete assistance to the effective implementation of biological safety and security measures in laboratories, and to help to draw up and implement an action plan to reduce biological risks, particularly with regard to laboratory activities and security. This joint action is just now being launched.

At this meeting, the European Union will present two working documents, one on the 7th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and demonstration activities (2007-2013), which is the main research policy instrument of the European Union, and the other on the joint actions in support of the BWC and WHO.

Mr Chairman,

The Implementation Support Unit was created two years ago. It was one of the main outcome of the 2006 Review Conference. It plays an essential role in linking together the States party to the Convention, in providing administrative support, compiling confidence-building measures and preparing decisions for the various annual meetings. You can rely on the full support of the European Union for the ISU.

It is important to emphasise at this point the extent to which the confidence in the future expressed by the States Parties by investing funds in the establishment of this flexible structure has been rewarded. The lessons that we can draw from this for the future go beyond the Convention we are concerned with here.

Mr Chairman,

You know how committed the EU is to the mechanism of transparency of the Convention. The confidence-building measures are a key instrument for creating transparency and mutual trust among the States party to the Convention. The European Union calls upon all States Parties to submit their confidence-building measures on a regular basis, and regrets that many States still remain outside this mechanism.

Achieving universal participation in these confidence-building measures is a strong priority for the EU. This confidence is the basis on which the European Union wishes to deepen the discussions on the implementation of the Convention, as we move towards the 7th Review Conference of the BTWC in 2011.

The European Union also regrets that 33 States still don't have acceded to or ratified the BTWC, and calls upon all the states parties to support its efforts to progress towards universalisation of the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

In 2009, we will focus on the topic of international assistance. As you know, the European Union is very active in this field. Apart from the joint actions in support of the BTWC and the WHO, the European Union is establishing initiatives to assist third countries through technical visits and project funding, and also through the stability instrument.

These new joint actions will enable us to increase the assistance provided by the EU with a view to reinforcing universalisation and national implementation of the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union considers that the Meeting of Experts was a success. It is now up to us to translate the conclusion of this meeting into practical and realistic policy guidelines.

Be assured of the full support of the European Union for the consensual adoption of a substantial and constructive final document, and for promoting a favourable outcome of this conference.
