Swedish Presidency
of the European Union

To the Permanent Representatives in Geneva of the States Parties, Signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, Observer Delegations, and the Member States of the World Health Organisation

Excellency,

The Presidency of the European Union together with the World Health Organization, implementing Agency, are pleased to invite Delegations to a launching event.

Under a strategy adopted by the European Council (Heads of State and Government), the European Union is committed to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to effective multilateralism. As part of this strategy, the EU Council has adopted a Joint Action in support of World Health Organisation activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and biosecurity. On behalf of the EU, I have the honour to invite you, your mission colleagues and BWC experts from capital, to the

Official Launch of the European Union Joint Action in support of World Health Organisation activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and biosecurity

Tuesday 25 August 2009, 8:30 -10:00 (Morning coffee included)

Room XXIII, Palais des Nations
(1st floor, Building E, Door 40)

The European Union Joint Action in support of World Health Organisation activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and biosecurity was adopted on 14 April 2008, and is implemented by the World Health Organisation over the period November 2008 to December 2010.
The overall objectives of the Joint Action are twofold. Firstly, the promotion of bio-risk reduction management by ensuring the safety and security of microbial or other biological agents or toxins in laboratories and other facilities in order to prevent unauthorised access to and removal of such agents and toxins; Secondly, the strengthening of the security and laboratory management practices against biological risks by promoting bio-risk reduction practices and awareness, including bio-safety, bio-security, bioethics and preparedness against intentional misuse of biological agents and toxins.

The Joint Action comprises two specific projects:

- Organising outreach workshops, consultations and training for competent authorities in the relevant sectors and for laboratory managers/staff at the national, subregional and regional levels.

- Assisting a selected country to review public health response capacity in the context of enhancing national biological preparedness, to develop and implement a biorisk reduction management plan.

The launch will be an opportunity to learn more about the Joint Action, including the ways in which states outside the European Union can benefit from the activities to be conducted by the World Health Organization under the project areas. Following the brief presentations about the Joint Action, there will be time for questions and discussion. The programme for the launch is attached.

I hope you and your colleagues will be able to join us for the launch of this important initiative, and to continue to work with the European Union in our common endeavour to strengthen the International Health Regulations and reduce the risks posed to global security in increasing biosecurity and biosafety.

For logistical purposes, I would be grateful if you would confirm your attendance via e-mail to the WHOJA@consilium.europa.eu by 24 August.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Magnus Hellgren
Ambassador

encl: Programme for the launch of the EU Joint Action in support of the World Health Organisation activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and biosecurity
Launch of the European Union Joint Action in Support of the World Health Organisation activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and biosecurity

08:30 - 10:00, Tuesday 25 August 2009
Room XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

PROGRAMME

08:30
Morning coffee served outside the room

09:00
Introduction and welcome
H.E. Mr. Magnus Hellgren, Ambassador of Sweden for Disarmament, representing the Presidency of the European Union

Outline of the European Union Joint Action in support of the World Health Organisation activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and biosecurity
Dr. Andreas Strub, Deputy to the Personal Representative of the High-Representative on non-proliferation of WMD, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

Implementing the Joint Action projects
Dr May Chu, Coordinator, Laboratory Alliance and biosafety, International Health Regulations, World Health Organization

Opportunities and challenges: the EU Joint Action in context
H.E. Mr. Marius Grinius, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada, Chairman of the 2009 meetings of the BWC

09:15
Questions and discussion

10:00
Close