

COMMON POSITION

of 25 June 1996

defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, relating to preparation for the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction (BTWC)

(96/408/CFSP)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article J.2 thereof,

HAS DEFINED THE FOLLOWING COMMON POSITION:

Article 1

The objective of this common position shall be to strengthen compliance with the international system of non-proliferation of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons by promoting the universality of the Convention on the Prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction (BTWC) and a successful conclusion of the negotiations aimed at reinforcing the BTWC with a legally binding and effective verification regime.

Article 2

1. For the purposes laid down in Article 1, Member States shall, in preparation for and on the occasion of the Fourth Review Conference of the BTWC, actively promote progress in the work of the *ad hoc* Group which was established by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the BTWC (Geneva, 19 to 30 September 1994) with the objective of considering appropriate measures, including verification measures, and of drafting proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included in a legally binding instrument, to be submitted for the consideration of the States Parties.

2. Member States will accordingly seek maximum progress on verification measures in the context of the *ad hoc* Group and at the Review Conference. In particular, at the Review Conference they will seek:

— endorsement of the main results achieved by that time by the *ad hoc* Group,

— a decision to intensify the work of the *ad hoc* Group in order to complete the negotiations on a BTWC verification protocol as soon as possible, before a further special conference of BTWC States Parties to take place no later than the middle of 1998. In this context, the time allocated to BTWC work in 1997 and 1998 should be substantially increased, irrespective of other priorities in the international disarmament agenda.

Article 3

The action taken in support of the objectives set out in Articles 1 and 2 above shall comprise:

- démarches by the Presidency, under the conditions laid down in Article J.5 (3) of the Treaty, with regard to States Parties,
- démarches by the Presidency, under the conditions laid down in Article J.5 (3) of the Treaty, with regard to States which have not yet signed the BTWC and States which have signed, but not yet ratified the BTWC, to promote the universality of the BTWC.

Article 4

This common position shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

This common position shall be published in the Official Journal.

Done at Luxembourg, 25 June 1996.

For the Council
The President
M. PINTO