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