



FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF  
THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES  
TO REVIEW THE OPERATION  
OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Statement by the Head of the Delegation of Greece

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On behalf of

The European Union

The Hague, April 28, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to address the Conference on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the countries associated with the EU - Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey - as well as the EFTA countries of Iceland and Norway align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The European Union would like to welcome you to the Chair of this First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which constitutes a unique event in many respects.

3. Today, within one year following the expiry of the fifth year after the entry into force of this Convention, in accordance with paragraph 22 of Article VIII of the CWC, this Review Conference has been convened and the European Union feels that the following key aspects of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention should be addressed as a matter of priority:

Universality, national implementation, compliance, verification and destruction of chemical weapon stocks.

4. The first is Universality of the Convention.

151 States are now party to the CWC. This is a remarkable achievement, which proves its validity as a standard in international law. However universality is of fundamental importance in ensuring that the CWC remains a credible instrument in the future. The European Union, on numerous occasions, since the entry into force, has made strenuous efforts to encourage non parties to ratify or accede to the Convention and will continue to do so in the future.

5. Secondly, it is of utmost importance for the credibility of the Convention, that the States Parties, fully meet their implementation obligations. Too many States have not yet taken legislative and administrative measures, including an effective penal legislation, necessary to implement the Convention. Without this, the Convention will not have its full effect. Comprehensive legislation can also provide safeguards for Governments and citizens in the face of threats, such as chemical terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Convention is a de facto standard in international law on chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. We must ensure compliance with the Convention and we reserve the right to denounce states parties that do not comply with the Convention. Challenge inspections must remain a credible instrument of the Convention. In addition to the Technical Secretariat, which has a major responsibility in this area as it ensures that the Organization is always ready to launch a clarification procedure or to implement a challenge inspection, the States Parties should discuss generalization of the challenge inspection mechanism so that this non-proliferation instrument does not fall into disuse. The E.U. has submitted a conference paper highlighting the importance of this provision of the convention.

7. This Review Conference provides us with an opportunity to uphold the prohibition on use of chemical weapons, as defined by the combination of Convention Articles 1 and 2.

This prohibition is the very basis of the Convention and there can be no room for compromise in this area. This means that monitoring consistency with this fundamental norm, even by countries that are not States Parties, is a key and irreplaceable task and we would like to take part in it.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman,

8. to remind the Conference that the European Union has a common policy on the many issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical and other weapons, including export control. Efforts to address threats posed by weapons of mass destruction are among the priorities of this Presidency. We also are concerned to see the Convention's provisions in respect of conversion fully met.

9. In working closely with other states parties to the CWC, the E.U. collectively and individually, has provided financial and technical assistance to chemical weapon destruction, as well as facility conversion, programmes in the Russian Federation.

10. The Union therefore, while regretting the delay in commencing destruction of declared Russian CW stockpiles, nevertheless welcomes the successful start of the Gorny project. The E.U. urges the Russian Federation to make every effort to meet the further revised deadlines for destruction and expects that the progress should continue towards the total destruction of all chemical weapons in all possessor states, within the time framework set by the Convention.

11. Verification is a very important instrument in ensuring compliance with the CWC. It seems likely that developing a cost efficient regime is going to be an important issue in our discussions. We should be realistic in our approach to this topic, but we also need to be inventive so that all of the 0 verification measures contained in the Convention are applied.

12. One of the challenges for the CWC is the rapid scientific and industrial development in the area of chemistry and life sciences. New chemical compounds are developed at an increased pace. However, the definition contained in article II ensures that the Convention will stay relevant. While reviewing the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention the conference shall take into account any relevant scientific and technological developments.

13. In the industrial field, where complete declarations are awaited from all States Parties, we want to strengthen the verification regime that must be credible and cost-efficient in order to contribute to the non proliferation of CW. We feel this is important, at a moment when we are close to acknowledge that an extended DOC/PSF facility inspection regime would play a key role in the fight against chemical weapons proliferation.

14. We would also like to point out that international assistance and cooperation is aimed solely at enhancing the security of the States Parties. It is not an end in itself. It must also help the States Parties honour their obligations and this is the criterion that we shall use to examine the various projects submitted to us under the terms of Article X.

15. Recently, the States Parties on the Executive Council have worked hard to make the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons more effective. We have only to remind our action last year on the 2003 budget as well as our sustained efforts on tenure policy, which had remained unresolved since 1999 and which is expected to be adopted by the Second Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on April 30th. Some of the

European Union member states are substantial contributors to the Organisation; moreover the total regular contribution of the member states of the enlarged E.U. surpasses 37% of the Organizations Budget. The E.U. extends its gratitude to the Director General and the Technical Secretariat for the marked improvement in the functioning of the OPCW and the E.U. will continue its dialogue with the Organization on how to further increase cost-effectiveness.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

17. The European Union Member States are strongly committed to this exemplary multilateral instrument, which is the Chemical Weapons Convention. We would like to assure you of our full support so that to ensure that this First Review Conference will be a success.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.