



**Meeting of The States Parties
To**

**The Convention on The Prohibition of
The Development, Production and Stockpiling of
Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and
on Their Destruction
(BTWC)**

Geneva, 5 - 9 December 2005

Statement by

**Deputy Permanent Representative to
the Conference on Disarmament**

Fiona Paterson,

United Kingdom,

on behalf of the European Union

Geneva, 5 December 2005

(Check against delivery)



EU STATEMENT AT THE MEETING OF STATE PARTIES TO THE BTWC

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. *The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.*

Mr Chairman,

2. The European Union continues to attach high priority to the strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). The Convention remains the fundamental legal and normative foundation of our individual and collective obligation to biological disarmament, our efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons, and the means to counter the threat of biological agents and toxins being developed as weapons. The EU remains committed to developing measures to verify compliance with the BTWC.

3. As a demonstration of our support, the EU hopes to finalise soon a Joint Action to enhance the universality of the Convention through outreach and to help States Parties improve their national implementation through the provision of assistance.

4. This year we have witnessed both the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the BTWC and the 80th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Geneva Protocol. Experience has shown that we must be constantly attentive to the commitments and obligations under the BTWC and the Geneva Protocol.

Mr Chairman,

5. The need for such attention and for a continued effort to enhance implementation of the BTWC is the rationale for the Meetings of Experts and the Meetings of States Parties over the last three years. It is necessary to focus on specific and concrete issues to ensure that the BTWC remains relevant to existing and emerging threats posed by biological weapons. The European Union is fully supportive of the current work programme and its success is an important step in our common endeavour to strengthen the Convention.

6. Our specific task at this Meeting of States Parties is to consider the work of the Meeting of Experts on the content, promulgation and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists. The European Union believes that the Meeting of Experts in June this year was very successful. We were particularly satisfied with the comprehensive exchange of information and ideas about codes of conduct for scientists during the meeting. We believe that the interaction between States Parties, International Governmental Organisations, and guests of the meeting was invaluable. And once again the input made by NGOs was beneficial, given the importance of the issue under discussion to civil society. The views expressed by States Parties and beyond taken

together can contribute to our work. Consequently we believe that our deliberations this week will be enhanced by the broader knowledge and insights that we have all gained.

7. In this context, the European Union considers that our task this week is to make recommendations for the way forward. We welcome the Chair's synthesis paper as a basis for our work. In broad terms the EU supports an outcome that recognises the value of codes of conduct related to the legal, ethical, and normative elements of the prohibition on biological and toxin weapons and the potential usefulness of the instrument for supplementing national implementing measures. We support an outcome which recognises that continued further work at the national, regional, and international levels would be beneficial. And further, we support an outcome which recognises that codes of conduct require collective and co-ordinated action with implications that go beyond governments to have their fullest impact. The EU believes we should leave this Meeting of States Parties with a clear commitment to further work in this area, to be undertaken at the most appropriate levels.

Mr Chairman,

8. This is the final meeting of the intersessional work programme agreed by consensus in 2002 at the Fifth Review Conference. We believe that the three-year work programme has been very successful. The agreed topics were directly relevant to States Parties' obligations under the BTWC. And we have achieved a wide degree of information exchange on the full list of topics. States Parties now have a better understanding of the range of approaches that have been taken, and can be taken, with a view to implementing fully our obligations under the Convention. We have all had an opportunity to learn from these meetings and to improve national approaches on the topics where appropriate.

9. Next year's Review Conference will not only review the operation of the Convention in accordance with Article XII of the BTWC, it was also tasked by the last Review Conference to consider the work of the intersessional meetings and decide on any further action. The European Union has already begun its planning for the Review Conference. Without losing sight of our long-term objectives for the Convention, the EU believes that the Review Conference must contribute actively to continued enhancement of the implementation of the BTWC and that our efforts should focus on specific, feasible, and practical enhancements to strengthen the Convention and its implementation. To that end, and building on the success and the lessons of the current work programme, we believe that there should be a further intersessional work programme and are currently considering the topics that could usefully be covered in such a programme.

Mr Chairman,

10. The EU reiterates that States Parties to the BTWC must be fully alert to the challenges posed by biological and toxin weapons and their potential use. We cannot shirk our responsibilities and we must address the threat by whatever means we can. The Review Conference in 2006 is a good opportunity to take this important work forward.

Mr Chairman,

11. We welcome your efforts so far to work towards a positive outcome. Let me assure you that in carrying out your task this week you can rely on the full and consistent support of the European Union.

Thank you

* *Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*