

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

**Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for  
the 2006 Review Conference**

**Geneva, 26-28 April 2006**

**Statement by  
Ambassador Dorothee Auer, Austria,  
on behalf of the European Union**

**(Check against delivery)**

## EU STATEMENT

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, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.
2. Let me start, Chairman, by congratulating you warmly on your election as Chairman of the 2006 BTWC Preparatory Committee. The EU looks forward to working closely with you and we are confident that your able guidance will lead us to a successful outcome of the Preparatory Committee and subsequently the Review Conference and our work will achieve meaningful progress.

Chairman,

3. The Preparatory Committee will have to agree on a number of important procedural matters in order to pave the way for a substantive and successful Review Conference. Issues to be solved are, amongst others, the date and duration of the Review Conference, the provisional agenda of the Conference, the draft rules of procedure and background information to be used at the Conference, as well as the publicity and final document(s) thereof. The EU considers it of paramount importance that all decisions will be taken by this session of the Preparatory Committee. This would allow maximum time for substantial preparations for the Review Conference.
4. The EU attaches great importance to a thorough and full review of the operation of the BTWC in order to identify, discuss and agree on the measures to be taken to further strengthen the Convention. The EU continues to work towards identifying effective mechanisms to strengthen and verify compliance with the Convention in the longer term.
5. As part of the review of the articles of the Convention States Parties should take account of the work undertaken in the intersessional programme from 2003-2005, as well as relevant international developments outside the BTWC. The agenda for the Review Conference should reflect the need for such a comprehensive approach.
6. In order to facilitate such a full review process, the EU is of the opinion that sufficient time should be allowed for a thorough review. Therefore the Review Conference should have an appropriate and ample schedule of work. Finally, the EU favours decisions related to the other procedural matters to follow the custom developed over past Review Conferences.

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<sup>1</sup> Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Chairman,

7. On 12 December 2003 the European Council adopted a Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction which aims, inter alia, at reinforcing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC). The European Union considers the Convention as a key component of the international non-proliferation and disarmament framework. It is the cornerstone of efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons. As preparation to the 6th Review Conference of the Convention, the European Union has drawn up a Common Position outlining the areas of importance for the EU.
8. To implement the Strategy against proliferation of WMD in the field of biological weapons the EU is focusing on practical measures. On 27 February 2006 the European Union agreed on a Joint Action in respect of the BTWC with the objectives of promoting universality of the Convention and supporting implementation of the Convention by States Parties in order to ensure States Parties translate the international obligations of the Convention into their national legislation and administrative measures. And in parallel the European Union agreed an Action Plan in respect of the BTWC in which EU Member States undertook to submit Confidence Building Measure information to the United Nations and would like to set an example for other States Parties to follow.
9. The EU intends to help building a consensus for a successful outcome to the 6th Review Conference, on the basis of the framework established by previous such Conferences, and will propose specific, practical and feasible proposals for the effective enhancement of the implementation of the Convention for the consideration of all States Parties.

Chairman,

10. The BTWC is now 31 years old. It remains as relevant today as it was in the past. We believe that it is important that States Parties agree a substantive outcome at the Review Conference to strengthen the Convention and build a sound basis for future work. The EU looks forward to a successful Preparatory Committee this week so as to facilitate our Conference later this year. To make clear for everyone the aims of the EU the EU documents referred to (Common Position, EU Joint Action and Action Plan) will be distributed. As to the EU's preparation to the Review Conference, there is work in progress to elaborate working papers on the basis of the Common Position and to submit them at the Review Conference.

Thank you, Chairman.