



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Sixteenth Session
28 November – 2 December 2011

C-16/NAT.25
28 November 2011
ENGLISH only

POLAND

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
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OF THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE AT
THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Mr Chairperson,

At the outset, let me firstly thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Julio Roberto Palomo Silva of Guatemala, for the efficient way in which he handled last year's Conference. Let me also welcome you, Ambassador Paul Arkwright, as the new Chair of this Conference. You can count on our full cooperation to make this Session of the Conference, with an agenda full of important issues, a success. We hope that the spirit of consensus will prevail once again, confirming the OPCW being an excellent example of effective multilateralism in the domain of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The European Union strongly believes that a multilateral approach to security, disarmament and non-proliferation is the best means of maintaining international peace and security. We also recognise that today's global security problems require co-operative and multilateral solutions.

We express our ongoing support for the OPCW by our active participation in the work of the policy-making organs, our cooperation with the Technical Secretariat, as well as building

¹ Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.



partnerships with other delegations and all stakeholders, including the chemical industry, academia and NGOs. Furthermore, the European Union has provided a substantial financial backing to the OPCW through the EU Joint Actions, and most recently through the 2009 EU Council Decision, adopted in the framework of the European Union Strategy against weapons of mass destruction. To date around EUR 7 million was allocated by the EU to the OPCW to implement projects put forward by the Technical Secretariat. The EU financed numerous Secretariat activities in particular in the areas of universality, national implementation and international cooperation and assistance, a number of which were conducted in Africa.

Preparations of the next European Union Council Decision in support of the OPCW activities are at their final stage.

This Conference has multiple issues to discuss and decide upon. We all—the States Parties to this Convention—have to renew our commitment to all the core objectives of the Convention and discuss the achievements of the Organisation on the way to a chemical weapons free world. This Conference has to agree and adopt a new programme and budget for the year 2012. We should also continue discussions on the future dimensions of work and priorities for our Organisation.

Until all chemical weapons are disposed of, their destruction remains a key objective of this Convention. The EU is concerned that the two major possessor States have indicated that they will not be able to meet the final extended deadline. We encourage them to take every necessary measure to accelerate their destruction processes with a view to completing destruction as soon as possible. Chemical weapons destruction should continue to be conducted in a sincere and transparent fashion, and within the framework of the existing verification regime. We have no doubts about the commitment of both countries to destroy as soon as possible all remaining stockpiles. We consider it essential that political agreement be reached at this session on the issue of the final extended deadline, based on the constructive, pragmatic and consensual approach, which is customary for this Organisation. This will ensure that the situation after 29 April 2012 is absolutely beyond doubt, avoid unnecessary expense for States Parties of a special conference, and demonstrate that the policy-making organs are capable of making major and timely decision on key issues.

We are concerned by the recent information provided by Libya about newly discovered stocks of undeclared chemical weapons. We support the recent United Nations Security Council Resolution 2017 (2011), which recognised the urgent need to secure and destroy chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya, in accordance with their international obligations. We stress the importance of ensuring the security of all stockpiles. We welcome the resumption of the verification activities in Libya by the OPCW and commend the transparency shown by the new Libyan Government. We look forward to the early resumption of destruction operations, and the quick and total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya, under strict verification. We also urge this Organisation, working with the OPCW States Parties and the United Nations, to provide support to Libya in meeting its obligations.

Furthermore, we hope that after the initial mission of the Technical Secretariat to Iraq conducted in early May, the Iraqi Authorities will make rapid progress with developing their plans for destroying their residual chemical weapons, and putting these plans into effect. We commend the achievements in the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China and hope for further progress in this process.

The European Union considers that for the purposes of international peace and security, it is of paramount importance to prevent toxic chemicals from being misused. Therefore, particular attention needs to be given to the non-proliferation aspects of the Convention to pave the way towards ensuring that the chemical weapons will never reappear and to build effective barriers against misuse of toxic chemicals.

We should continue to work towards achieving the full universality of the Convention, which is crucial for its ultimate success. We welcome the substantial progress made to date with only eight States, including the newly born South Sudan, remaining outside the Convention. We appreciate that several of these States not Party have shown increased interest in the work of the OPCW, but we also recognise that some of them have been less cooperative. We commend all the efforts undertaken by the Technical Secretariat and States Parties in this regard.

The European Union considers of utmost importance the full national implementation of the Convention and urges all States Parties to put in place and enforce all the necessary legislative and administrative measures in accordance with Article VII. We encourage the Technical Secretariat and States Parties in a position to do so, to continue to provide, upon request, the necessary assistance.

As industry verification will remain a core activity of the Organisation in the years ahead, we believe that the strengthening of the industry verification regime is of the prime importance. We hope that implementation of the modifications to the interim other chemical production facilities site-selection methodology, recently approved by the Executive Council, will lead to better targeting of the OCPF inspections towards sites of greatest relevance to the object and purpose of the Convention, while ensuring at the same time an equitable geographic distribution. In this respect we note that the OCPF site-selection methodology is of an interim nature and that this issue will have to be revisited in the future. We continue to stress the importance of the development of the OPCW central analytical database (OCAD) in order to improve the OPCW preparedness for investigations of alleged use and challenge inspections and to increase the amount of information available to laboratories in States Parties. We also welcome the work of the Secretariat to maintain and further develop its capacity to conduct challenge inspections, which constitute an important element of the credibility of the verification regime of the Convention.

We attach great importance to the implementation of Article X. We emphasise the importance of national protective programmes and the States Parties' capacity building. As the threat of use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors remains, Article X continues to keep its validity as a mechanism to meet growing needs of the OPCW States Parties in the sphere of prevention, preparedness and response to the threats related to chemical weapons and misuse of toxic chemicals. We also underline the value of maintaining the highest level of readiness of the OPCW to facilitate timely and effective assistance and protection. We welcome the Technical Secretariat's activities and programmes on the preparedness of States Parties to prevent terrorist attacks involving chemicals. We hope that the Annual Assistance Coordination Workshop held last week in The Hague will serve us as a source of inspiration for the future work on the Article X.

We continue to support and promote the international cooperation as enshrined in Article XI. Taking into account a broad range of proposals that were put forward during the November 2010 Workshop and the September Conference on International Cooperation and

Chemical Safety and Security, we welcome progress made in the informal consultations aiming at identification, exploration and development of concrete and achievable measures to strengthen Article XI implementation.

As the threat of use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors is real, we support the ongoing work of the Organisation in the promotion of international cooperation in peaceful uses of chemistry, enhancement of security at chemical plants, and of prevention, preparedness and response against misuse of toxic chemicals. We believe that the OPCW is an appropriate platform for active cooperation on these important issues. We welcome the ongoing work within the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and by the Secretariat in the area of global efforts against terrorism. The Group has an important role to play as a forum of fruitful exchange of information and views, leading to forging of common approaches. In this context we strongly support the work undertaken by the new Chair of the Group.

Looking into the future we believe that it is now timely to focus on ways in which the OPCW can further develop its contribution to our global collective security. The comprehensive report by the Advisory Panel established by the Director-General on the future priorities of the OPCW provided an independent expert assessment of the functioning of the OPCW. The Non-Proliferation Seminar and the OPCW Conference on International Cooperation and Chemical Safety and Security, which I attended, both financially supported by the European Union, offered us the opportunities to discuss challenges before the Organisation related to the rapid growth of the chemical industry worldwide, advances in science and technology which progress exponentially, including in the area of convergence between chemistry and biology, and the growing threat of misuse of toxic chemicals. These developments add to the unpredictability of the future security landscape and relate directly to the implementation of the Convention and the work of the OPCW. Those challenges should be addressed promptly and be taken into due consideration in the ongoing process of reform of the Organisation so that its future activities are adequately re-directed.

What are the strategic choices for the OPCW? The European Union strongly believes that multilateral action and cooperation with the widest possible number of countries is the best response to meet these challenges and threats. The Chemical Weapons Convention, the only international treaty which bans and requires the destruction under international verification of an entire category of WMD, together with the OPCW are cornerstones of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We strongly support the OPCW as a global platform for multilateral action and cooperation to eliminate chemical weapons and ensure that they will never reappear. We are fully committed to maintaining and strengthening the effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention and to the work of the OPCW.

Mr Chairperson,

We are looking forward to working with all delegations in a constructive and open manner, and we trust that this session of the Conference will be a success. I would like to request that this document is issued as an official document of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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