



**European Union**  
**Statement by**

**Mr Andras Kos, Minister Counsellor,  
Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

**First Preparatory Committee for the Eighth Review Conference of the  
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)**

**(Geneva, 26-27 April 2016)**

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for the Eighth Review Conference of the BTWC  
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EU statement**

Mr Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr Chairman, for taking up this important post and pledge our full support. It gives us great pleasure to see a representative of an EU Member State presiding over our proceedings. We are sure that you will help us pave the way for a successful Review Conference later this year.

The EU considers the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) as a key component of the international non-proliferation and disarmament framework and the cornerstone of efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons.

In line with our consistent support for the full implementation and strengthening of the BTWC the European Union adopted a Council Decision laying down our common position relating to the Eighth Review Conference. We have submitted a Working Paper to the meeting that reflects the Decision's content.

In the run up to and during the Review Conference, the EU will work, in particular, to ensure that the States Parties address the following priorities: building and sustaining confidence in compliance; supporting national implementation; supporting the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of biological weapons and agents, and promoting the universality of the Convention.

The EU's objective is to contribute to a full review of the operations of the BTWC at the Eighth Review Conference, to support a new substantive work programme that addresses the limitations of the previous intersessional programmes as well as to support a Ninth Review Conference of the BTWC to be held no later than 2021.

With a view to building consensus for a successful outcome of the Review Conference, we will promote, in particular, the following key issues:

- While recognising that there is no consensus regarding verification at this stage, that remains a central element of a complete and effective disarmament and non-proliferation regime, we will work towards identifying options that contribute to an increase in confidence in compliance and to the effective implementation of the object and purpose of the BTWC. States Parties should be able to demonstrate compliance, inter alia, by means of interactive information exchanges (such as mandatory or

voluntary declarations) and enhanced transparency about their capabilities, activities and actions, including voluntary and other onsite measures as agreed.

- Support national implementation, including by engaging more with non-governmental stakeholders.
- Support universal adherence of all States to the Convention, including by calling on all States not party to the Convention to adhere thereto without further delay and to commit legally to disarmament with regard to, and non-proliferation of, biological and toxin weapons. Pending adherence of such States to the BTWC, we encourage them to participate as observers in the meetings of the States Parties to the Convention and to implement, on a voluntary basis, its provisions. We welcome the recent accession of Cote d'Ivoire to the BTWC.
- Work towards the ban on biological and toxin weapons being declared a universally binding rule of international law, including through universalisation of the BTWC.
- Continue efforts to enhance transparency and build confidence in compliance, including through necessary and achievable revisions to the current Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs): we are willing to work on the enhancement of the CBMs by identifying measures to increase their direct relevance to the core objective of transparency and the avoidance of suspicions and concerns. We support voluntary measures to increase transparency between States Parties to enhance confidence in compliance with the BTWC, strengthening national implementation. In this regard, we continue to support a voluntary peer review process as a valuable tool. An essential part of this will be the timely submission of CBMs by all States Parties within deadlines to signal the importance we attach to the Convention.
- Support strengthening operational capabilities of the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons, including through expanding the cadre of trained experts, training, and the conduct of table-top and field exercises.
- With respect to Article VII, we advocate taking decisions on the provision of assistance and coordination with relevant organisations upon request by any State Party in the case of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons, including improving national capabilities for disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis and public health systems as the first line of defence.
- Commit to enhancing transparency about cooperation and assistance related to Article X, taking into account the mandates, work and the expertise of other international organisations. We will continue to support the concrete implementation of Article X of the BTWC through various national and international assistance programmes. The EU is willing to further elaborate common understandings, which forms the basis for

effective action with regard to cooperation for peaceful purposes in the framework of the BTWC.

- Support more frequent and focused assessments of relevant scientific and technological developments, which may have implications for the BTWC. We are open to discuss ideas concerning the review of developments in life sciences.
- In addition, the EU will support the strengthening of the role of the ISU, including prolongation of its mandate, inclusion of further activities to support the implementation of a revised and strengthened intersessional work programme and adequate expansion of its current staff to assist effective delivery of core responsibilities and meet new objectives.

The EU, building upon the positive outcome of its previous programme in support of the BTWC has now started the implementation of new projects in order to continue its concrete and tangible support to the better implementation and universalisation of the BTWC. This will be presented at a side event co-organised with the Implementation Support Unit, tomorrow at lunch time.

The European Union and its Member States have a vested interest in a well-prepared and successful Eighth Review Conference. We will support all efforts aimed at establishing structures that would enable a better functioning of the Convention, including the ability of States Parties to formally take collective action between Review Conferences. We stand ready to cooperate with all State Parties to this effect.

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