



European Union
EU Statement on
Fifty-Seventh Session

Preparatory Commission
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)

Vienna, 10-12 November 2021

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Iceland*, Norway*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino.

We thank the Executive Secretary for his reports, and express our support for the recommendations contained in the reports of Working Groups A and B, as well as of the Advisory Group.

The efforts to promote and facilitate signature and ratification of the CTBT remain a top priority for the EU. As this year marks the 25th anniversary of the CTBT's opening for signature, we urge all States to strive for the Treaty's universalisation and entry into force. In particular, we call upon the remaining eight Annex II States: China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the USA who still need to ratify the Treaty and the DPRK, India and Pakistan who still need to sign and ratify it in order to bring it into force, to do so without any preconditions or further delay. In the meantime, it is crucial that all States fully observe the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from any action contrary to the object and purpose of the Treaty.

We appreciate the work of Italy and South Africa as Article XIV Co-ordinators and congratulate them for the successful Article XIV Conference on 23-24 September 2021. In our view, the CTBTO should also play a prominent role at the next Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to keep the CTBT high on the international agenda. Ahead of the next NPT Review

* Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Conference in January 2022, the EU will submit a Working Paper in support of the CTBT and its swift entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

The International Monitoring System (IMS) and the International Data Centre (IDC) have proved their unique ability to provide State Signatories with independent and reliable means to detect nuclear tests. We commend the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) for assuring their uninterrupted service during these difficult times. However, the highly sophisticated CTBT verification system, including the further development of on-site inspection operational capabilities and related capacity-building activities require substantial financial input. It is therefore crucial for the operation of the verification regime of the Treaty, and for the wider organization's financial health, that all States demonstrate their political commitment and honor their legal obligation to pay their assessed contributions, on time and in full.

The EU, in accordance with our continued political and financial commitment to the Organisation, continues to provide significant voluntary contributions to support the verification regime as well as capacity building and outreach, particularly in developing countries. EU Council Decision VII has supported capacity building and training activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, South-East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East, the Middle East and South Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa regions. The latest contribution, through EU Council Decision VIII amounting to 6.3 million EURO, will also benefit the Pilot Project, and cover, inter alia the procurement of six additional Capacity Building Systems (CBSs).

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the PTS and reiterate their support for the revised final 2022-2023 Programme and Budget Proposals.

It is in the interest of the international community to ensure that the verification regime can display its full potential, even prior to the CTBT's entry into force. To this end, mobile monitoring systems are therefore essential for the functioning of the IDC in helping to further understand the global background for all four IMS technologies. Such background studies using mobile monitoring systems not part of the IMS have been going on for years to improve the performance of the verification regime and ensure the correct detection of events. Therefore, this activity is part of, and helps carry out the mandate of the PTS. We would like to express our appreciation to the Ambassadors of Switzerland and South Africa, as facilitators, for their work on this issue, as well as for their updated report and to this session. They have spared no effort to make us progress towards a consensus approach on the guidelines related to the deployment of such

devices. It appears that some work remains to be done but the progress achieved so far can pave the way for a final consensus document. Therefore, we support the continuation of discussions under the guidance of a new team of co-facilitators.

Furthermore, the EU recalls the valuable work of the Philippines together with New Zealand on methods of work and Chile on developing guidelines for holding non-scheduled sessions of the Commission. We encourage further consideration of these issues by the Commission with a view to achieving further progress.

The EU wishes to reiterate its support for the establishment of the position of Chief of Cabinet in the Office of the Executive Secretary in line with the PTS proposal. We believe that the creation of such a post will facilitate the work of the Executive Secretary especially in the area of strategic planning and liaising with the policy-making organs. We note that according to the proposal the new post will be effected in a budget neutral manner. We welcome the revised PTS documents (CTBT/PTS/INF/1600 and REV.2) that provide further necessary details and look forward to taking an early consensus decision.

Regarding appointments and elections, the EU would like to express its appreciation to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for putting forward the candidature of Professor Dr. Láslo G. Evers for the position of Vice-Chairperson of Working Group B and express our full support. We encourage all regional groups to identify and put forward candidacies so that Chairperson of Working Group A and Vice-Chairperson positions in both working groups can be filled accordingly. We would also like to reiterate our support to the nomination of Ms Rashmi Rajyaguru by the UK, as new Chair of the Advisory Group. Regarding appointments to the Advisory Group, we encourage States to ensure that they nominate experts of high recognised standing and experience in financial matters at the international level. We would underline that any discussion of possible procedures for the appointment of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Advisory Group should not delay the appointment of current candidates.

On the appointment of the External Auditor, the EU would like to thank the current External Auditor from Thailand for their work and both candidates for their qualified nominations, as well as for the additional information provided during the informal consultations convened by the Working Group A Chair. According to the CTBTO Financial regulations, the External Auditor should be designated by the 1st of January 2022. Therefore, a swift choice should be made, based on objective criteria. At a time of serious financial constraint, the criterion of the best value for money is one important consideration to take into account. We look forward to a prompt consensus decision on this matter.

Last but not least Mr. Chairman,

The EU wishes to express its great appreciation to you, for your outstanding leadership and steering of the Commission during a challenging year which culminated in the election of the new Executive Secretary for the CTBTO. Your resolve and efforts to find consensual solutions on many issues on our agenda are commendable. We look forward to the appointment of a new Chair for the Preparatory Commission from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), as well as to the appointment of Vice-Chairs from other regional groups.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.