UNITED NATIONS

62nd Session of the General Assembly

First Committee
Thematic Discussion on
Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Statement by
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on behalf of the European Union

New York, 19 October, 2007

Please check against delivery
1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\(^1\) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\(^1\), the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

2. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remains a growing threat to international peace and security which requires a global approach. Moreover, the risk that terrorists may acquire chemical or biological weapons as well as their means of delivery has added a new critical dimension to this threat. Appropriate cooperation with the UN and other international organisations and regimes as well as amongst all States will assist in ensuring a successful outcome to the global fight against proliferation.

3. The European Security Strategy and the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, both adopted by the European Council in 2003, made clear that the EU does not ignore these dangers. The adoption of these documents has underscored our common goal to use all instruments and policies at our disposal to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern worldwide. We are also committed to implementing our Common Position of 17 November 2003 on the universalisation and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

4. The commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation of biological, toxin and chemical weapons is the necessary foundation from which we can exploit the potential of science and technological development for peaceful purposes. That requires us to manage the risks associated with the inherent dual-use nature of biological or chemical agents, materials, equipment and knowledge. The management of those risks in the complex world of today requires a multifaceted approach.

5. The multilateral instruments adopted in the field of weapons of mass destruction, namely the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the 1925 Geneva Protocol, play an essential role in countering the proliferation threat, together with other key multilateral agreements they provide a basis for the international community’s disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and decisively contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism. The EU urges all States which have not yet adhered to these important instruments to do so without further delay and to fully implement the obligations established therein. The EU also calls on those that are not yet Party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to adhere to it and on all States Parties to lift their remaining reservations to this topical instrument at the crossroads of humanitarian demands and disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

6. The EU will continue to provide assistance when requested to other countries in the fulfilment of their obligations under multilateral conventions and regimes.

7. At the UN level the EU supports the work carried out by the 1540 Committee in outreach to those regions where the implementation of Resolution 1540 is most urgent. We continue to be available to provide assistance, in particular in building legal and administrative infrastructure, sharing our experience of implementation and training the respective national authorities. In our view, Resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006) are fundamental for the development of an effective mechanism to prevent and counter the proliferation of WMD, their means of production and delivery to or from states and non-state actors worldwide. We urge all

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\(^1\) Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
countries to fully implement these legally binding resolutions. The EU remains committed to the G8 Global Partnership initiative and underlines its relevance for WMD disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

8. The EU welcomes the successful outcome of the 6th Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in Geneva in December 2006 as reflected in its Final Document. The conference reaffirmed the importance of the BTWC as a normative and legal cornerstone and core multilateral agreement in the disarmament and non-proliferation framework. We all now have the responsibility to implement the decisions contained in the Final Document, at the national, regional and international levels.

9. Given the rate of scientific and technological change in areas relevant to the Convention, coupled with the potential threat posed by bio-terrorism, the need for the international community to discuss and promote common understandings and to take effective action to strengthen and further implement the BTWC is all the greater. The European Union remains committed to the development, in the longer term, of measures to verify compliance with the Convention.

10. The adoption of a new intersessional work programme, leading to the Seventh Review Conference not later than 2011, is a significant achievement. We are sure that the intersessional work will contribute to the effective implementation and strengthening of the Convention.

11. The EU welcomes the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for the BTWC within the Office for Disarmament Affairs. We note with satisfaction that the ISU is already performing its tasks. The European Union also welcomes the decisions made by the 6th Review Conference aimed at facilitating States Parties access to information exchanged in the framework of Confidence Building Measures within the Convention.

12. The protection of populations is another important challenge. The EU is also active in this field. The European Commission has adopted in July a "Green Paper on Bio-preparedness", with a view to launch a process of consultation at the European Union level on how to reduce biological risks and to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.

13. The EU is taking practical measures to support the universalisation and effective implementation of the BTWC. This is done through a Joint Action adopted last year, which intends to promote two major objectives: firstly to increase the membership of the BTWC and secondly to assist States Parties to transpose their obligations into appropriate national legislation and administrative measures. We urge all States to adhere to the BTWC.

14. The EU has also adopted an Action Plan with the purpose of promoting the increased effectiveness of the Secretary-General's mechanism for investigating cases of alleged use of (chemical) biological and toxin weapons by contributing to the update of the list of experts and laboratories. We agreed in the same Action Plan to revitalise interest in and use of BTWC Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) ensuring the annual submissions of returns by all EU Member States. The EU strongly urges all States Party to the BTWC to further enhance transparency through the annual submission of CBM returns.

15. This year we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The CWC is a unique disarmament and non-proliferation treaty whose integrity and strict application must be fully guaranteed. Its uniqueness arises from the fact that the CWC is the only Convention to ban completely and without exception an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and to require the destruction of all existing weapons and stockpiles under international verification within specified deadlines. In this light, we welcome the High Level Meeting, held on 27 September 2007, which underlined the importance we attach to the objectives and purpose of the CWC and our commitment to the multilateral treaty system.
We recognize that the CWC has come close to universal membership with an increase of States Parties from 88 to 182 in the last decade and therefore we call on those States that have not yet adhered to this important multilateral instrument to do so without further delay.

16. The EU takes this opportunity, once more, to congratulate the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on its remarkable success in the effective discharge of the functions entrusted to it under the terms of the Convention. In this respect, the EU considers the OPCW to be an inspiring example for effective multilateralism in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament.

17. We are looking forward to contributing to a successful outcome to the Second Review Conference of the CWC in 2008 and willing to continue to work for the achievement of all the Convention’s objectives in the coming years, with a view to further strengthening the CWC disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

18. The EU attaches great importance to the full and effective implementation of the Convention, to the comprehensive nature of the prohibition of chemical weapons and to the obligation to destroy existing stockpiles as well as production capacities, within the agreed time limits, under systematic verification according to articles IV and V of the Convention. The destruction of existing stocks and the prevention of future development, production or stockpiling of chemical weapons both represent not only a multilateral commitment, but also a contribution against terrorism. To achieve these objectives, we believe that further strengthening of the verification regime under article VI is required. Furthermore, we encourage States Parties to make full use of the provisions on consultations, co-operation and fact-finding, including the challenge-inspection mechanism, wherever required, as stipulated in Art. IX of the Convention.

19. Through its successive Joint Actions in support of the OPCW, the EU has supported the objectives of the Convention, in particular by assisting in and promoting chemical weapons destruction, universality, national implementation and international cooperation. The EU urges States Parties which have not yet provided information about the designation of their National Authorities and on the steps taken to enact legislation to do so as a matter of urgency.

The EU also believes that effective implementation of the Convention’s industry verification regime is instrumental in further enhancing confidence in the non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

20. The problem of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction needs to be properly addressed. Missile proliferation puts at risk the security of our States and our peoples.

21. We view with growing concern the development of ballistic programmes by several countries. The missile tests conducted last year by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) constitute troubling cases condemned by Security Council Resolutions. The Iranian missile programme also gives reason for deep concern.

22. The EU believes that the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and a fundamental step in addressing the problem of missile proliferation. 126 States have subscribed to the Code and the EU urges all States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Code as soon as possible.

It goes without saying that the authority and effectiveness of the Code depends not only on the sheer number of its Subscribing States but also on our determination to remain committed to implementing the HCoC, inter alia by the submission of pre-launch notifications and of the annual declarations. We take this opportunity to urge all Subscribing States to do so.
We stress that continued disregard for obligations accepted upon subscribing to the HCoC threatens the functioning and thus the viability of the Code as a whole.

23. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signature and entry into force of the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies (generally known as the Outer Space Treaty), which declares the use of outer space to be the province of all mankind, thus not subject to claims of national sovereignty.

24. The EU recognizes the growing involvement of the international community in outer space activities for development and progress and of increasing dependence by States on outer space for their economic and industrial development as well as their security. In this context we are very concerned about a test of an Anti-Satellite weapon early this year and the amount of dangerous space debris caused by it. Space activities should be conducted in a peaceful environment. The more the international community is dependent on outer space for its economic and scientific development and security the more important it is to ensure that space is a safe and secure environment.

25. The EU recognizes the need for the development and implementation of Confidence Building Measures to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space. The EU has unanimously voted in favour of General Assembly Resolutions on Transparency and Confidence Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (UNGA Res 61/75) and on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (UNGA Res 61/58) and the European Union recently forwarded its joint reply to 61/75 Resolution, which contains concrete proposals in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promote international cooperation on space issues.

26. The almost universal support for these resolutions clearly shows the willingness to develop confidence building measures based on the principle of non-interference with non-aggressive activities in space and drawing up a "code of conduct" and "rules of behaviour" in space.

27. We continue to attach importance to the consideration of the issue of the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and we look forward to the technical work carried out by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), including on space debris and the proposed agenda item on preservation of the space environment, which contributes to space security and will be relevant to the CD's deliberations. Complementarity between the work in the CD and COPUOS as well as communication between these two bodies will be essential to ensuring a coherent approach and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.