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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of, with a view to enhancing international  
cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological  
sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, promoting  
capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance,  
detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases**

## **EU COOPERATIVE INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE BIO-SAFETY AND BIO-SECURITY**

Submitted by the Sweden on behalf of the European Union

### **I. EU Strategy against the proliferation of WMD**

1. The EU Strategy against the proliferation of WMD, which was adopted by the European Council (EU Heads of States and Governments) on 12 December 2003, in parallel to the European Security Strategy, provides overall guidance on the approaches, policy tools and specific actions to be taken to counter the WMD threat.

2. Embedded in the logic of prevention and support to the multilateral treaty system, the EU Strategy pursues non-proliferation objectives through:

- (i) Promotion of universalisation and strict implementation of and compliance with existing non-proliferation treaties, instruments and obligations;
- (ii) Cooperation with partners and assistance;
- (iii) Support to regional stability and regional activities to prevent and combat proliferation.

3. While the EU's assistance and cooperation projects address a wide range of WMD proliferation risks and threats<sup>1</sup>, the priorities related to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), including bio-security and bio-safety aspects, are defined in the Common Position 2006/242/CFSP relating to the 2006 Review Conference of the BTWC<sup>2</sup>.

## **II. New Lines of Action**

4. In view of further enhancing the implementation of the EU WMD strategy, the EU Council (Foreign Ministers), adopted in December 2008, a plan called "New lines for Action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems". This ambitious action plan, to be implemented by the end of 2010, contains a number of concrete measures to enhance effectiveness in the implementation of the WMD strategy and in particular contains measures to reinforce security culture in the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) area. Intensifying cooperation with third countries and increasing support for multilateral treaties, including the BTWC, and institutions will remain high on our agenda.

## **III. EU CBRN Action Plan**

5. On 24 June 2009, the European Commission adopted a Communication (COM(2009) 273) on strengthening chemical, biological radiological and nuclear security, which includes a proposal for an EU CBRN Action Plan. The draft EU CBRN Action Plan consists of more than 130 different recommendations across the strands of chemical, biological and radiological/nuclear materials, as well as across the topics of prevention, detection and response. The draft Action Plan proposes a wide range of measures on bio-safety and bio-security across these different strands. Discussions on the Action Plan in the EU Council started in July. The stated intention of the EU Presidency is to finish these discussions by November in order to have the EU CBRN Action Plan approved by the Council (Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs) in December 2009. Implementation of this work will be supported through financial means made available through the Commission's different funding programmes.

## **IV. Joint Action in support of WHO activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and bio-security**

6. To implement the Strategy against the proliferation of WMD in the field of biological weapons and to give life to decisions of the BTWC States Parties at the 2006 Review Conference, the European Union developed practical cooperative projects. In particular, on 14 April 2008 the Council of the European Union adopted the Joint Action 2008/307/CFSP in support of WHO activities in the area of laboratory bio-safety and bio-security<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Council of the EU adopted for example Joint Actions in support of the IAEA, OPCW, CTBTO activities, as well as Joint Actions in support of multilateral instruments such as UN SCR 1540 and BTWC.

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:088:0065:0067:EN:PDF>

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:106:0017:0023:EN:PDF>

7. The projects under this Joint Action pursue two main objectives:
  - (i) Promoting bio-risk reduction practices and awareness, including bio-safety, bio-security, bio-ethics and preparedness against intentional misuse of biological agents and toxins, through international cooperation and networking in this area,
  - (ii) Ensuring the safety and security of microbial or other biological agents or toxins in laboratories and other facilities, including during transportation, in order to prevent unauthorised access to and removal of such agents and toxins.
  
8. The project "Promotion of bio-risk reduction management through regional and national outreach" creates a framework for three different approaches to enhance bio-risk management practices around the world:
  - (i) Five regional workshops are planned for raising awareness about the risks associated with the misuse or accidental exposure to or release of dangerous biological agents and toxins and bio-risk management practices with the aim of initiating concrete country-focused operational initiatives in the field of bio-safety and bio-security;
  - (ii) At least four country visits focus on consultations with relevant national competent authorities sharing experience on different aspects of existing bio-risk management practices and raising commitment to bio-risk reduction management in the health sector;
  - (iii) At least two regional topic-specific workshops with health policy makers as well as laboratory managers and staff shall help to deepen the understanding of the elements of bio-risk reduction practices (e.g. legislation, biosafety and biosecurity measures, safe and secure transportation, etc.) with the view how to plan for sustainability of programmes through networks, seminars and professional societies.
  
9. The project "Strengthening the security and laboratory management practices against biological risks" is designed to assist an interested country to enhance overall national bio-preparedness plans and to further develop bio-risk management practices in laboratories and other facilities and during transport. The envisaged activities include overall evaluation and review of relevant authorities and national public health response capabilities and plans, extensive training tailored to the needs of laboratory staff at national and regional level, exercises to test the operation of public health response system, etc.
  
10. While the EU pre-defined priority regions with which it wishes to engage in cooperation through this Joint Action, a strong focus on regional and local ownership of concrete projects remains one of the main features of EU's initiative. **Therefore, the EU actively seeks the involvement and the partnership of BTWC States Parties in this initiative.**
  
11. To achieve sustainability of proposed activities, the EU will promote:
  - (i) Networking among all national stakeholders, including the public health sector, justice, police, foreign affairs, and other relevant sectors;

- (ii) The involvement of relevant international and regional organisations;
- (iii) The membership of countries' stakeholders in regional professional bio-security and bio-safety associations;
- (iv) Networking, especially in the regional context, among reference laboratories to promote transparency and to build confidence.

12. Implementation of the Joint Action has started. In June 2009, Oman was selected as recipient country for the in-country project "Strengthening the security and laboratory management practices against biological risks". The project manager who will oversee the implementation of the project in Oman will be deployed shortly. - A workshop was organized from 23 to 25 June 2009 in Bali, Indonesia by the WHO for countries from South East Asia and the West Pacific. The main objective of the workshop was to promote strengthening of health laboratories with a special focus on improving quality.

#### **V. Joint Action in Support of the BTWC**

13. The EU is committing considerable financial resources to support the BTWC. In 2006, the EU Council adopted its first Joint Action in support of the BTWC which ran from 2006 to 2008. In the course of the implementation of the Joint Action, the EU carried out regional outreach to almost all those States which are not parties to the BTWC. It organised five regional seminars to promote the universality of the BTWC. The EU provided assistance to Peru and Nigeria where EU experts were actively involved in the drafting of national legislation implementing the BTWC. Following the implementation of this Joint Action, 7 States have acceded to the Convention.

14. Based on the positive experience of the first Joint Action, the second Joint Action was adopted on 10 November 2008. It encourages local and regional ownership of the projects. Similarly to the Joint Action in support of the WHO, the EU wants to build a partnership with the recipient countries. The Joint Action focuses on activities that bring concrete results in the view of the 2011 BTWC Review Process. This programme is implemented by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) within the Geneva Branch of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) - the modalities for implementation are set out in the Joint Action. Two persons are recruited for a limited period of time and financed by the EU, helping the UNODA/ISU to implement this EU initiative.

15. The four areas of support, on which the EU will spend EUR 1 400 000 are:

- (i) **Universalisation:** This project provides for **outreach** in States not Parties to the Convention by organising **regional workshops** which explain the benefits and consequences of acceding to the Convention and contribute to understanding the assistance needs of the States in the region. **Legal assistance** related to ratification of or accession to the Convention can be provided as well as means to raise awareness among stakeholders, in particular the authorities responsible for the ratification and implementation of the Convention. The Joint Action also provides **financial grants for training and awareness-raising visits of national**

**stakeholders** to the authorities of EU Member States responsible for the implementation of the Convention.

- (ii) **National implementation:** The goal is to ensure that State implement their obligations under the Convention by means of national legislation and administrative measures and enforce them effectively, to prevent violations of the BTWC. The Joint Action will provide **legal advice** to a maximum of seven interested State Parties. Assistance can be related to the drafting of appropriate legislative or administrative measures, including criminal law provisions. Assistance can also include awareness-raising and training **workshops** relating to the national implementation of the BTWC and enforcement of relevant measures, and would target decision making authorities and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.
- (iii) **Promotion of Regular Submission of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs):** The purpose is to promote and increase the submission of CBM declarations on a regular basis. The EU Joint Action also includes a contribution to the UNODA to facilitate the improvement and the maintenance of the existing secure CBM website and to improve the technical aspects of the electronic submission of CBM declarations.
- (iv) **Support to the BTWC intersessional process:** The second Joint Action supports discussions on intersessional topics within and outside the EU. This support will take the form of workshops bringing together representatives of government, industry, universities, research institutes and NGOs. For example, the EU supports the launching of a discussion between the private and the public sectors in the EU on the security challenges associated with the progress in bio-sciences and bio-technology research, and on the measures to adopt at national, regional or global levels, such as the development of codes of conduct. The EU would also encourage a discussion on international cooperation in the area of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment of infectious diseases with the objective to identify concrete needs.

## VI. Instrument for Stability

16. The European Parliament and the Council of the EU adopted in 2006 the Regulation<sup>4</sup> (EC) No 1717/2006 establishing an Instrument for Stability. The Regulations shall be applied in the period 2007-2013. It sets the objectives and the scope for the activities to be undertaken under the Community's development, financial, economic and technical cooperation projects with third countries in addition to existing Community instruments for external assistance. The Instrument for Stability shall be consistent with the EU Foreign and Security Policy measures, such as those adopted under the EU Strategy against the proliferation of WMD and may complement those measures.

17. In particular, technical and financial assistance shall be provided to mitigate risks and enhance preparedness relating to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials and agents, and in this context to support the measures which enhance safety practices related to

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<sup>4</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l\\_327/l\\_32720061124en00010011.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_327/l_32720061124en00010011.pdf)

facilities, where sensitive chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials or agents are stored, or are handled in the context of civilian research programmes.

18. According to the Instrument for Stability Strategy paper 2007-2011<sup>5</sup>, actions under the Instrument for Stability should form a significant part of the implementation of the Commission's overall G8 Global Partnership Kananaskis commitment. The European Commission is currently developing its response to assistance needs in different world regions, paying particular attention to regions and countries where CBRN stockpiles still exist and to those routes along which there is a risk of proliferation of such materials. Under the Instrument for Stability specific projects are currently being developed:

- (i) to strengthen bio-safety and bio-security capabilities in Russia and Central Asia
- (ii) through the creation of a CBRN Centre of Excellence, to improve national bio-safety and bio-security policies in third countries and to define comprehensive tailored packages of assistance
- (iii) to control health and security threats and other bio-security risks in the Mediterranean region and the Balkans

The role of these future projects in reinforcing the capacity of the target countries in mitigating the proliferation risks in the bio sector will be essential. It is envisaged to extend the investigation to African countries. Such an evolution will require a reinforced coordination with the initiatives of the other international donors and the role of the international organisations.

## **VI. Seventh Framework Programme of the EC for research, technological development and demonstration activities (FP7)**

19. The Council decided (2006/971/EC)<sup>6</sup>, for the period 2007-2013, to support cooperative trans-national research activities in ten thematic areas, security being one of them. The programme is open to all third States, although States which are not contributing directly to the budget, can not become project coordinators.

20. The objectives of the research in the security theme of FP7 are, among others, to develop technologies and knowledge for building capabilities needed to ensure the security of citizens from threats such as terrorism, natural disasters and crime, and/ or to deliver mission oriented research results to reduce security gaps. The mentioned mission areas also include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Security of citizens: The ambition is to avoid a CBRN incident and to mitigate its potential consequences. To build up the required capabilities with the aim of providing civil protection, including bio-security and protection against risks from crime and terrorist attacks, emphasis will be on issues such as CBRN threat assessment, awareness raising, detection, access-control measures (including financial aspects), etc;

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<sup>5</sup> [ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/stability-instrument/documents/ifs\\_strategy\\_2007-2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/stability-instrument/documents/ifs_strategy_2007-2011_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:400:0086:0242:EN:PDF> (p216) and its corrigendum (p70) on <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:054:0030:0080:EN:PDF>

- (ii) Security of infrastructures and utilities;
- (iii) Restoring security and safety in case of crisis.

21. Nine bio-security related research projects were funded under the Sixth Framework Programme<sup>7</sup>, contributing to better networking among the EU's reference laboratories for specific agents and toxins, and promoting coordination and exchange of bio-security practices within a pan-European network, etc. Five current projects related to bio-security have been funded by the Preparatory Action on Security Research (PASR)<sup>8</sup>

## **VII. Contact points for further information:**

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<sup>7</sup> The descriptions of most of the projects are available under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/ssp/themes\\_en.htm#205](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/ssp/themes_en.htm#205) and <http://www15.bni-hamburg.de/bni/others/riviene>

<sup>8</sup> Aerobatics, BODE, Biotesting Europe, BIO3R and IMPACT: Abstracts can be found under the following address:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/security/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/security/index_en.htm)

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