



## **Key EU Messages**

### **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)**

#### **Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation (MX3)**

**Geneva, 3 September 2021**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>\*</sup>, Montenegro<sup>\*</sup>, Serbia<sup>\*</sup> and Albania<sup>\*</sup>, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

We are pleased to see you chairing this important Meeting of Experts and would like to assure you of the EU's and its Member States' full support for your efforts to strengthen national implementation of the BTWC in a comprehensive way. We equally thank all the guests for their interesting technical presentations

Effective implementation of the BTWC provisions on the national level is of fundamental importance and a key factor for the Convention to achieve its goal. Indeed, it encompasses wide range of issues and requires a great effort of many actors at the national level.

We encourage all BTWC States Parties to adopt and sustain robust national\_implementation measures, including appropriate administrative, judicial and criminal legislation; to exercise

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<sup>\*</sup> The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

effective export controls; as well as to ensure control over pathogenic microorganisms and toxins in the framework of the BTWC.

The EU continues to provide dedicated support to States Parties at their request, in particular by funding national implementation activities carried out by the BTWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) under the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). In spite of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ISU has in the past year managed to launch National Preparedness Programmes for Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Sudan in order to assist these countries in capacity building to improve their implementation of the Convention.

We are grateful to the ISU for the continued professional implementation of the projects under the EU Council Decision. These efforts will continue to be supported by experts nominated by EU Member States. The ISU will also continue to partner with the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence as well as non-governmental organisations such as VERTIC and think tanks including within the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium.

The EU strongly encourages all States Parties to use earlier EU-funded assistance tools such as the CBM guide and the electronic CBM facility to submit their annual CBMs to the ISU. I would like to mention in this context the fact that in the past year Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Sudan have received CBM training under BWC Extended Assistance Programme that was organised by the ISU and funded under the EU Council Decision 2019/97. Similar training is expected to take place also for Fiji in the near future.

We furthermore encourage States Parties to share with others their best practices on their CBM declarations, just as Kenya and South Africa recently did with Sudan. We also encourage States Parties to increase transparency about their capabilities, activities and actions, including through peer review activities and voluntary on-site visits.

As national ownership is essential for any implementation measures to be successful, we continue supporting the elaboration of well-coordinated National Action Plans to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks within the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence Initiative which already involves 62 States.

At the same time, we encourage all States Parties to consider conducting or participating in peer review exercises, other voluntary visits and transparency and confidence-building initiatives. We also welcome and support the creation of a dedicated exchange platform for voluntary transparency exercises as proposed by France. These types of exercises assist awareness raising with States Parties and help transfer best practices and refine structures to meet the Convention's obligations. The EU remains ready to continue cooperation with States Parties in this regard and provide capacity building assistance for effective national implementation. I note that both the EU Council Decision in support of the BTWC as well as the Decision in support of the strengthening of biosafety and biosecurity in Latin America in line with the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004) include support for peer reviews.

Thank you, Mr. Chair