Mr. Chair,

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

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by expressing our appreciation to Ambassador Dr. Cleopa K. Mailu, Permanent Representative of Kenya for his chairmanship of the current Meeting of States Parties (MSP) and for steering our efforts despite the challenging circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The European Union reaffirms its strong support for the BTWC. We recall our longstanding efforts to strengthen this important Convention, promote its universalisation and enhance its implementation.

The EU’s priorities within the BTWC are well known. They include enhancing national implementation and compliance, promoting confidence-building and transparency measures such as peer-reviews, voluntary visits and other initiatives, facilitating cooperation on science and technology, operationalising Article V consultative provisions and Article VII provisions on assistance, response and preparedness, as well as promoting universal adherence to the Convention.

¹ The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
We are pleased that this year a record amount of annual reports on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) have been submitted. We recall that, where needed, assistance in preparing the annual reports is available from the ISU, also supported under the EU Council Decision.

We also encourage States Parties to participate in peer review initiatives and voluntary visits to relevant facilities and other transparency and confidence-building initiatives. They are not designed to be substitutes for a legally-binding verification mechanism, but to strengthen national implementation and thereby the BTWC.

The assistance the ISU provides to States Parties for the implementation of their Treaty obligations and to the intersessional work programme is invaluable. The EU continues to support the strengthening of the ISU’s role.

Timely and full contributions to the BTWC budget are the essential requirement for the functioning and strengthening of the Convention, including for convening regular meetings and sustaining the ISU. We call on all States to fulfil their financial obligations and to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

The EU is also fully committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective into all non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control work in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, including through promoting the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and men, and providing integrated support where appropriate.

Mr. Chair,

The summary reports by the Chairs of the five Meetings of Experts (MX) include a number of proposals and initiatives that should be considered for submission to the Ninth Review Conference for decision. We encourage the Meeting of States Parties to endorse in its final report the MX summary reports.

The EU supports such practical initiatives as a database for assistance under Article VII, related guidelines for applying for assistance, the establishment of a systematic and structured science and technology review process, the promotion of biorisk management standards, a Code of Conduct for scientists and the creation of a dedicated exchange platform for voluntary transparency exercises as well as the proposal by France to develop a new platform called ‘SecBio’ in support of capacity building under Article X. Many of these initiatives have been on the table for years in the BTWC and they enjoy broad cross-regional support. We encourage the Chair to strive for consensus on these proposals.

Mr. Chair,

The implementation of the projects under the fifth consecutive EU Council Decision in support of the BTWC that provides for a budget of 3 million EUR and is implemented by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), has continued while its implementation period has been extended until February 2023. This Decision funds six projects in support of universalisation; capacity building for national implementation including three peer review exercises; fostering biosecurity in the Global South; developing tools for outreach, education and engagement; as well
as increasing preparedness to respond to biological attacks. It will also support the BTWC intersessional programme and the preparation of the Ninth Review Conference.

Since the Meeting of States Parties of 2019, the following activities have been carried out under the EU Council Decision in support of the BTWC:

- The second Biosecurity Diplomacy Workshop for Young Scientists from the Global South.
- A Regional Universalisation Workshop for Africa.
- The EU’s financial support to the BTWC sponsorship programme, which enabled 5 experts from developing countries to attend the 2021 Meetings of Experts and another 11 experts this year’s Meeting of States Parties.
- Extended Assistance Programmes for Botswana and Palestine\textsuperscript{ii} and the National Preparedness Programmes for Fiji, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Sudan have been launched through virtual events.

EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium together with Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique organised a virtual seminar under the title “Considering potential lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic to strengthen the BTWC”. The seminar provided a platform for reflections on both expert and diplomatic levels pertaining to the implementation of Article X on cooperation and assistance as well as Article VII on emergency assistance in case of a violation of the Convention.

In addition, the EU provides funding for efforts to improve biosafety and biosecurity globally through the four other Decisions.

We would also like to highlight once more the achievements of the cooperation developed in the framework of the EU CBRN risk mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative. The initiative is driven by the demand and needs expressed by members of the network and aims at strengthening an all-hazards security governance, both at national and regional levels. It offers support for CBRN capacity building, including through real-time large-scale cross-border exercises to 62 countries. We encourage all partner countries to carry out CBRN risk and needs assessments, based on the proven methodology, and prepare national and regional CBRN action plans, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and other relevant international instruments. We also mitigate CBRN risks through the EU P2P Export Control Programme for Dual-Use Goods.

Thank you, Mr. Chair

\textsuperscript{i} CD (CFSP) 2019/97
\textsuperscript{ii} This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the EU Member States on this issue.