

**Formal Consultative Meeting of the States Parties  
to the Convention on the Prohibition of the  
Development, Production and Stockpiling  
of Bacteriological (Biological) and  
Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

Distr.: General  
12 September 2022  
English only

---

**2022 Meeting**

**Geneva, 26 August and 5-9 September 2022**

Item 6 of the agenda

**Respective outstanding questions by the Russian Federation  
to the United States and to Ukraine concerning the fulfilment  
of their respective obligations under the Convention in the context  
of the operation of biological laboratories in Ukraine**

**Formal Consultations under Article V, Biological  
and Toxin Weapons Convention, 5.-8. September  
2022, Statement on behalf of Austria**

**Submitted by Austria**

Mr. Chair,

1. Let me start by thanking you for taking up this office and assure you of Austria's fullest support for the remaining days of these consultations.
2. We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the EU Member states and wish to add some remarks in our national capacity.
3. Austria is strongly attached to the BWC which embodies the norm that the development, production, stockpiling and usage of biological agents and toxins as weapons is unacceptable. It is in our common interest to uphold and to strengthen this norm, the convention as such as well as its individual mechanisms and procedures.
4. This also concerns Article V and the possibility it provides to conduct consultations, seek clarifications and to cooperate with regard to the application of the convention. As outlined by several delegations this is only the second time that Article V of the BWC is in use. Consequently, we rely on the experience and practice generated during its first application in 1997. Future generations of diplomats will look into the way how this week was prepared and conducted. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to tread carefully and with diligence in order to preserve the integrity of the mechanism as such. It should not be misused for other purposes as intended, such as the deliberate spread of disinformation.
5. Our work also builds on previous understandings concerning the conduct of consultations under Article V by several Review Conferences, among them that States Parties should provide a specific and timely response to any compliance concern. We want to thank Ukraine and the United States for fully complying with this request and the transparency and openness they have demonstrated. In addition to the extensive information received this week, we also want to recall several relevant working papers by the US on their technical cooperation under the "Biological Threat Reduction Program" provided in the past as well as the side event organized by Ukraine, the United States and Germany in April.

Mr. Chair,

6. With regard to our current considerations, we carefully studied the documents prepared and disseminated and listened with interest to the presentations during the past two



days. We received detailed and credible information by the United States and Ukraine on their cooperation for the benefit of biosecurity and biosafety. As a result we concluded that the allegations by the Russian Federation are unfounded. They are based on a selective and misrepresenting set of documents, which in several cases do not even substantiate the respective allegations.

7. We consider the cooperation between the United States and Ukraine as a peaceful cooperation fully in line and supporting Article X of the Convention. The conduct of these programs appears to be consistent with standards, aims and safeguards within the life sciences. We recall that international cooperation with the aim to strengthen biosafety and biosecurity is encouraged by Article X of the convention. Not only the US but also other stakeholders have undertaken similar efforts in Ukraine, among them the European Union.

8. At the same time we acknowledge the historical dimensions of the “Cooperative Threat Reduction Program” which provided for an important safeguard in the field of biological weapons during a time of change. False claims and allegations risk to undermine legitimate biosafety and biosecurity research and above all the cooperation in this field which ultimately serves to implement the Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chair,

9. The global community just recently has lived through a worldwide health crisis which has created a new sense for biological threats and their impact. It is extremely unfortunate that the Russian Federation misuses this situation as a stage for unfounded allegations and disinformation, which we see in clear relation to their illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

---