

# Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

8 December 2023

English only

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## Third Session

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Agenda item 6

**Identifying, examining and developing specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures, and making recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention in all its aspects within the mandate of the Working Group**

## Position of the European Union on Transparency and Confidence-Building within the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

### Submitted by the European Union

1. The EU views transparency as a key principle upon which the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) hinges. The EU believes that transparency and confidence-building are crucial for a robust framework for compliance and the effective implementation of the BTWC in all its aspects, including according to a One-Health approach. Through promoting openness, cooperation, and building trust among States Parties, we can strengthen the collective commitment to prevent the misuse of biological agents and promote peaceful uses of biological research and technology for benefit of all, and according to a One-Health approach.
2. Furthermore, transparency reduces the risks of misinterpretation or misunderstandings. Moreover, it improves accountability and Convention's credibility.
3. Regular and accurate reporting and information exchange on research, outbreaks, and capabilities are vital to mitigate risks associated with accidental disease outbreaks, bioterrorism, and other potential threats. The EU encourages States Parties to provide regular, updated, and accurate information regarding their biological research, facilities, and activities related to the BTWC.
4. Submitting CBM reports is an important part of the exchange of information among States Parties and contributes to enhancing transparency and building confidence. Such submission of CBM report constitutes a political obligation for States Parties. The EU supports the establishment of an exchange platform for voluntary transparency exercises in this regard.
5. It is encouraging to see steady increase of CBMs submissions in recent years. The EU hopes to further strengthen this trend and encourages all States Parties to submit comprehensive CBMs.
6. States Parties can use EU-funded assistance tools such as the CBM guide and the electronic CBM facility to submit their annual CBM reports to the ISU.
7. The EU stresses that further confidence building measures, such as voluntary visits, management systems for biosafety and biosecurity, peer reviews, and other initiatives, strengthen confidence between States Parties. Such measures as well as sharing best practices



for national implementation can enhance cooperation between States Parties and life science institutions.

8. The EU sees merit in the establishment of an exchange platform for voluntary transparency exercises as it was proposed by a cross-regional group of States including several EU-MS during the Ninth Review Conference.

9. The EU supports and sponsors projects aimed at enhancing capacity of States Parties to implement the BTWC effectively, including providing technical assistance and training to strengthen their biosafety and biosecurity as well as at enhancing their preparedness through advancing their abilities to prevent, detect, and respond to potential biological threats.

10. The EU is a strong advocate for promoting public awareness and understanding of the BTWC's objectives. Engaging civil society, academia, and the private sector in discussions about biosecurity and non-proliferation can help build broader support for the Convention.

11. By embracing transparency as a guiding principle and by implementing confidence-building measures effectively, we can collectively build trust, enhance compliance, and pave the way for the strengthening of the Convention.

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