

Working Group B, Thirty-Sixth Session
Vienna, 14 February – 4 March 2011

Hungary

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Iceland¹, the Countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, associate themselves with this statement.
2. At the outset, the EU wishes to thank the Executive Secretary for his written and oral reports and commends the PTS, the Working Group B Chair and the Task Leaders for their dedicated work in preparation of this meeting.

Mr Chairperson,

3. The EU remains firmly committed to advancing global efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, including through its continuing support for the CTBTO. The past twelve months have seen real progress, with a successful NPT Review Conference reaffirming the vital importance of the CTBT's early entry into force, as well as with the entry into force of the new START Treaty between Russia and the United States. Equally, we have seen an enhanced political momentum behind the CTBT, where promoting entry into force of the Treaty remains a priority. We again urgently call on the remaining Annex 2 States to ratify this Treaty without delay and bring about its entry into force. The support expressed at the 5th Ministerial Meeting in New York 2010 by over 70 participating States has laid the groundwork for a productive Article XIV Conference later this year. Universalization is a key element of our endeavours that can be achieved through working for further signatures and ratifications in a year when we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of this important Treaty.

¹ Croatia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process. Iceland remains an EFTA country and member of the European Economic Area.

4. In the context of this work, the Commission should continue to carry out its mandate, including the completion of a fully credible and operational verification regime. The effectiveness of the verification regime can help to promote the entry into force of the Treaty. Working Group B has a critical role in the continued strengthening and sustainment of the verification regime. We fully support this work, including through the four ongoing EU projects representing a voluntary contribution of €5.3 million.
5. In addressing the strategic priorities of the PTS, it is important to maintain a balance between the elements of the verification regime, and to examine the distribution of financial and human resources across the PTS. Accordingly, key issues like the elaboration of the draft OSI Operational Manual as well as the planning and preparation of the next Integrated Field Exercise (IFE), should be duly reflected in relevant deliberations of this working group session, providing guidance for the 2012 budget exercise.

Mr Chairperson,

6. The EU expresses its general support of the PTS planning concept in preparation for and conduct of the next Integrated Field Exercise as issued in CTBT/PTS/INF.1105. We further commend the PTS for its effort in harmonizing this concept with the adjustment of the OSI action plan as set out in CTBT/PTS/INF.1106 and note with appreciation that the vast majority of sub-projects are on schedule. The EU believes that the PTS should press ahead on the basis of its IFE planning concept paper and continue to operate on the basis of the OSI action plan. The clear objective before the PMOs and the PTS is to develop an initial OSI capability.
7. We remain committed to the early conclusion of the near final version of the draft OSI Operational Manual and express our appreciation for Task Leader Paper CTBT/WGB/TL-18/45. We believe it should be possible to meet the goals set out by the Task Leader. It is crucial for the training programmes for surrogate inspectors for the IFE and would be a major step towards an initial OSI capability. In order for the near final version of the draft OSI Operational Manual to be tested during the upcoming exercises, we need to finalize our deliberations early in 2013. This ambitious but realistic work plan not only requires full commitment from all States Signatories, but also sufficient time, which is another reason for the EU to underline that three regular sessions of WGB are necessary.
8. A careful evaluation of the build-up exercises, including identifying lessons learned and implementing them will be crucial for a fruitful IFE, especially as they will bind the limited resources of the OSI Division over the coming years. Any augmentation of OSI budget and personnel resources as sketched out in the planning concept needs to be addressed by PMOs soon while taking into account the needs of the other Divisions in the current budgetary context and all possible inter-Division synergy actions. In this context, we welcome the possible cost saving effects through the use of the Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility (ESMF) for equipment familiarization as well as exercise areas close to Vienna for the IFE's run-up exercises. We would appreciate information on the current status of ESMF including calendar of use and staff issues.
9. The EU also welcomes PTS efforts to promote synergies between OSI and other Divisions. The EU supports the PTS in finding an OSI capable noble gas detection

system which is key to strengthening the CTBT's OSI capabilities. In this regard, the EU Commission and the PTS signed a contract in November 2010 to permit the delivery of a refined, complete and operational prototype of OSI noble gas capable detection system by the end of 2012.

10. In our work on the IMS, we believe priority should be given to: expanding global coverage, where we would be particularly interested to hear of further news on efforts to certify IMS stations, as presented in a previous WGB session; the installation and certification of noble gas systems and laboratory activities in support of these systems; ensuring support for the operation and maintenance of the network, through effective logistics and other sustainment activities, which we note requires us to ensure sufficient funds are programmed in the CIF-S, and is critical if we are to meet the required levels of data availability and quality. States Signatories need data if they are to develop their own NDCs and their ability to analyse and understand it. We welcome therefore the recent upswing in data availability.
11. The EU welcomes the installation so far of 85% of IMS stations, and the certification of 79%. For 2011, the EU emphasises the importance of the installation of the further 25 planned stations. As part of the International Noble Gas Experiment (INGE), systems of measurement of noble gases are now installed on the sites of radionuclide stations. Today, 65% of these facilities are in place and the EU welcomes the certification of three noble gas systems in 2010. These systems are an essential element of the verification regime as they will be used to verify that an underground explosion is nuclear in nature.
12. The PTS needs our help in the development and sustainment of the IMS. This means working with the PTS to remove any obstacles to the installation and certification of IMS facilities, whether political, legal, administrative or technical. It also means concluding and implementing facility agreements, to minimize delays caused by customs clearance and thus sustain data availability
13. The EU commends the work done to improve the network detection capability and in this context fully supports the proposed change of coordinates for infrasound station IS25. The EU welcomes the continued progress towards the commissioning of the IMS stations and would like to thank the States and the PTS for this progress
14. Nevertheless, the distribution of certified facilities continues to show a strong geographic disparity, with rates of certification varying by region from 91% to 48%. The goal of 22 stations to be certified in 2011 will be reached only if all States respect their commitment to facilitate the installation and certification of stations on their territory.
15. We also attach importance to a review of the PTS's QA/QC programme for noble gas systems and the certification requirements for noble gas measurements at certified laboratories, in order to perform a test certification this year. The EU firmly supports evaluation activities and commends the PTS for the recent development of the quality management system. Evaluation is a key part of the verification system testing and performance assessment in which NDCs, in particular through NDC preparedness exercises, play an essential role.

16. We should be clear about the responsibility taken on by States Signatories hosting auxiliary seismic stations, where the EU has supported a project aimed at improving the operation and the sustainability of the auxiliary seismic station network.
17. We commend the PTS for its work in the introduction of infrasound and noble gas data into IDC operations. This makes all the more important the PTS's training of new data analysts, its hard work to develop new analysis software tools, and its efforts to place analyst availability and capability on a sound long term footing. As far as the tenure policy is concerned, flexibility should be combined with effective knowledge transfer.
18. The EU would like to commend the PTS staff that organized the calibration exercise of infrasound equipments in the eastern Mediterranean in collaboration with 21 States Signatories. The successful detection of the explosions that took place in the Negev Desert by three of the IMS stations demonstrated the effectiveness of the infrasound network, and will promote a better understanding of the propagation of infrasonic waves produced by explosive sources. The EU supports such exercises, which help calibrate infrasound sensors and enhance the processing algorithms used by the IDC.
19. We look forward to further progress in the IDC commissioning plan and on a timetable for moving to phase 5b and phase 6. We emphasize the need to give priority in major programmes to continuous operation, interactive analysis tools, event screening, ATM software, regional calibration and product development and delivery.
20. We welcome the efforts of the PTS to expand IDC capacity building projects to new regions of the world and to develop additional e-learning modules. The EU encourages the widening of the scope of civilian uses of the data provided by the IDC and takes an active part in further promoting the CTBTO's capabilities in the field of tsunami warning in order to strengthen support for the Treaty.
21. The EU continues to believe that Working Group B requires an assessment of the tasks to bring the IMS and IDC from provisional operations to full operations. This would include identifying the financial and personnel resources needed to achieve this during the 180 days between the deposit of the final Annex 2 ratification and entry into force, as well as identifying tasks that cannot be completed in such a time frame.

Finally, Mr Chairperson,

22. The EU attaches great importance to the widest possible involvement of the scientific and technical community in support of the CTBT, including in developing further beneficial scientific applications of the CTBT verification infrastructure. This would contribute not only to the continuous testing of and improvement in the capabilities and sustainability of the verification regime, but would also provide greater benefits to States. With this in mind, we look forward to the coming Science and Technology 2011 conference and welcome the progress in the implementation of the virtual data exploitation centre. The EU calls upon all signatory States to mobilize their scientific and technical communities to constructively address this issue.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.