



**Council Joint Action in support of the convention on  
prohibition or restriction on the use of certain conventional  
weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or  
to have indiscriminate effects**

**OPENING REMARKS BY**

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**Check against delivery.  
Seul le texte délivré fait foi.  
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort.**

Distinguished participants, dear colleagues,

I am taking part in this opening ceremony on behalf of the Head of my Office, Ms. Annalisa Giannella, who was appointed by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, Mr. Javier Solana, his Personal Representative for non-proliferation issues in 2003.

Let me, as we start our work today, express my gratitude on behalf of the EU High Representative, to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting this seminar within the framework of the EU Joint Action adopted last year to support the CCW (Convention on prohibition or restriction on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects). A Joint Action is an instrument of EU foreign policy. It allows the Union to take action and allocate financial resources to a specific objective.

This is the fourth in a series of regional seminars which like this one, the EU has or will finance for different regions of the world (Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Middle East and the Mediterranean). These regional seminars aim at increasing the membership of the CCW and are organised by the UN-ODA.

Three seminars already took place in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) and Lome (Togo) in March and April earlier this year and

allowed us to exchange views with countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and from Africa.

The EU is very grateful for the support of UNIDIR, UN-MAS and UNDP, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross. I am also pleased to see that two States Parties to the CCW are represented here today (Russia and Tajikistan). One signatory State which has not yet ratified the CCW is also among us, Afghanistan.

Central Asia is an important region for the future of the CCW. States in the region are affected by mines and ERW and their experience and expertise is crucial especially for the effective implementation of Amended Protocol II and Protocol V. Better representation from this region will bring an useful new perspective on these and others issues to the CCW discussions.

This Joint Action was adopted under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council and all the seminars that had already been organised took place under Slovenian Presidency. This is the first seminar under French Presidency. France, which held the Chairmanship of the Review Conference of the CCW in November 2006, was one of the leading forces behind the preparation and adoption of this Joint Action.

The EU is developing a **Common Foreign and Security Policy** and is committed to play a role on the international scene in support of international peace, stability and security. The EU is active in the field of civil and military crisis management (ESDP), and also in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The aim of the EU is to concentrate in the promotion of the CCW as a valid multilateral instrument. The EU Joint Action will also contribute towards its full implementation at national level, though the **Sponsorship Programme**. This part of the Joint Action is implemented by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining which manages the voluntary contributions from States Parties to the **Sponsorship Programme**, including from EU Member States and the EU. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining is also our counterpart in the implementation of a new Joint Action in support of the Ottawa Convention adopted this year.

Today's seminar intends to identify particular areas of difficulty for states not party to the convention. We believe that **national implementation** is not only the result of a political will but it also requires legal and technical expertise. Our experience shows that seminars like this allow to develop a process which allows more countries to see the benefits of acceding to new instruments from the point of view both of their security and in terms of international cooperation.

The EU has made an important effort financial effort to design and implement this project and gather all of us here in Almaty during two days. This will allow us to learn more about the CCW and the work carried out by its States Parties and the opportunities and challenges that it represent for each of your countries. In the EU we believe that this better understanding should lead to an increased number of

ratifications in Central Asia, which will allow your countries to be part of the discussions in Geneva in the framework of the CCW.

Indeed the future accession by your countries to the CCW, a Convention, which aims at minimising the effects of armed conflict on both the civilian population as well as on combatants is the ultimate aim of our efforts. The CCW constitutes a dynamic and evolving legal instrument which has proven its capacity to address the humanitarian challenges posed by advancements in weapons technology.

The adoption of a Plan of Action for CCW universalisation by the Review Conference held in Geneva in November 2006 was a clear call which the European Union was ready to respond to. This seminar is a first step.

As a concluding remark, let me share with you some of my experiences from previous seminars. **Be bold.** Don't be shy and dare to ask. The expertise which is at your disposal is unique and very valuable. More than to the presentations by my colleagues from UN-ODA, UNDIR and ICRC I look forward to listening to your questions and doubts. It is your active participation which will make a difference.

Thank you

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