

**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**

**Council Joint Action 2007/528/CFSP**

**Almaty, Kazakhstan, 24-25 September 2008**

**Speech by the EU presidency**

I take the floor this morning to say a few introductory words in the name of the French Presidency the Council of EU.

Let me first start to express my gratitude on behalf of the European Union, to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting, and to the Un-ODA for organising, this seminar which is financed by the EU 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).

This EU Joint Action is a direct response to the adoption of a Plan of Action for the CCW universalisation by the [III] Review Conference held in Geneva in November 2006. This seminar is an important step in the implementation of this EU Joint action.

As a matter of fact, this seminar is the second in a series of regional seminars which like this one, the EU will or has already financed in Latin America, Africa, Asia (South East Asia, the Pacific Islands), the Middle East and the Mediterranean. These regional seminars aim at increasing the membership of the CCW and will be organised, as this one, by the UN-ODA.

The EU approach to security is based on the principles of effective multilateralism, prevention and international cooperation. As you know, universality is a major requirement for treaties and conventions banning an entire category of weapons or regulating a certain type of activity.

This requirement holds true in the conventional arms area if we want this process to be effective. Consequently, we shall promote instruments at our disposal in the conventional weapons area and we shall support their full national implementation by providing technical assistance in a targeted manner through international cooperation.

The 1980 UN CCW [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have discriminate effects] is a Convention which has attracted the attention of the EU Member States because it has the potential to respond to advancements in weapons technology and developments in the nature and conduct of armed conflict with a special emphasis on humanitarian considerations. The entry into force of Protocol V last year on Explosive Remnants of War can be seen as a good example of this potential. The current negotiations of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in Geneva to set up in the framework of the CCW a proposal for a protocole that address urgently the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, while striking a balance between militray and humanitarian considerations, is also very promising.

Today's seminar aims at identifying 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. In that respect it is very important that two States Parties to the CCW, the Russian Federation and Tadjukistan, have been invited. Their experiences and views on this important Convention would be most useful during these two days.

I am confident that during this seminar in Almaty, we shall all learn more about the CCW and the work carried out by its States Parties. The measure of our success will be your future accession to this Convention, which aims at minimising the effects of armed conflict on both the civilian population as well as on combatants.

I Thank you

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