

EU joint reply related to UNGA 2019: A/ RES/73/32 entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament"

The European Union is mindful of the rapid development of life sciences and biotechnology and their impact, both positive and negative, on all aspects of the effective implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC). In order to manage the risks and benefits and ensure a more coordinated approach, there is a need to better involve non-governmental experts, notably scientists, professional associations and industry in the BTWC implementation as well as in relevant discussions within its framework. For this reason, the European Union has consistently supported, including at the 2016 BTWC Review Conference and during the 2017 BTWC Meeting of States Parties, the inclusion of a structured science and technology review process in the intersessional programme of work and the strengthening of the relevant capacities of the BTWC Implementation Support unit (ISU). EU Council Decision 2016/51/CFSP in support of the BTWC includes a project to foster better informed and more efficient interactions on science and technology among non-governmental experts at national and regional levels. In this framework, five EU-funded regional workshops have been organised by the BTWC ISU: in Ukraine on 21-22 September 2017 for Eastern Europe and Central Asia; in Mexico on 16-17 April 2018 for Latin America and the Caribbean; in Jordan on 11-12 July 2018 for the Middle East and North Africa; in South Africa on 25-26 July 2018 for Sub-Saharan Africa; and, in the Philippines on 21-22 November 2018 for Asia.

On 21 January 2019, the Council of the European Union adopted Decision 2019/97/CFSP in support of the BTWC to provide essential follow-up to the activities undertaken throughout 2016-2018 in the framework of Decision 2016/51/CFSP, including in the field of science and technology. The Decision foresees the organisation of an international science and technology conference, to be held in Geneva, targeting governmental experts, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and members of industry to incorporate their views into the discussions that will feed into the programme of the Ninth Review Conference of the BTWC.

The European Union supports substantially and consistently the activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) promoting the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (the Chemical Weapons Convention or CWC), including the ability of the OPCW to adapt to developments in the field of science and technology. One of the projects financed through the EU Council Decision 2015/259/CFSP in support of the OPCW was dedicated to enabling the Director-General of the OPCW to provide advice and make recommendations to the Conference of State Parties, the Executive Council of the OPCW or the State Parties on areas of science and technology relevant to the CWC. For this purpose, the EU provided targeted financial support to relevant OPCW activities in the areas of chemical informatics for facilitating international collaboration; assessment of developments in science and technology, including a series of expert workshops; multiple uses of chemistry: understanding the security aspects of technology developments, including a series of workshops for regional centres of excellence and university departments which are involved in weapons of mass destruction-related security issues; the development of standardised analytical methods for the analysis of biological toxins; as well as support to the Temporary Working Groups of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board.

On 1 April 2019, the Council of the European Union extended its support to the OPCW over the following three-year period by adopting Decision 2019/538/CFSP. The Decision renews

the EU support to the ability of the OPCW to adapt to developments in the field of science and technology and foresees funding of relevant projects such as the Plant biomarker challenge as well as continued support to the Temporary Working Groups of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board. The Decision provides substantial financial support to the upgrading of the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store into a new Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The Centre will play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the CWC, in particular by helping the OPCW to keep pace with current threats and relevant scientific and technological developments.

The EU supports the International Atomic Energy Agency in enabling the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology. The EU acknowledges the strong contribution of the IAEA's work to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Agency's work on nuclear science, technology and applications underpins the right of States Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. The responsible use of nuclear science and technologies and their applications for peaceful purposes can only be widely acceptable if they are carried out at the highest standards in safeguards, nuclear and radiation safety as well as nuclear security.

The long-standing and successful collaboration between the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and the IAEA has been reinforced by a practical arrangement on cooperation in nuclear science and applications for sustainable development. The IAEA Technical Cooperation programme, as well as its other delivery mechanisms, play a key role in the delivery and transfer of nuclear technologies. In this regard, the EU and its Member States continue to be strong supporters of the TCP, including through the TC Fund and other extra-budgetary contributions such as the Peaceful Uses Initiative. The effective application of IAEA safety standards and security guidance in the course of the implementation of Technical Cooperation projects that involve the peaceful uses of nuclear and other radiological material is necessary for ensuring that they are used safely and remain secure and thereby contribute to building the required public trust and confidence in the use of nuclear energy applications.

The European Union and its Member States continue to promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space. The EU recognises outer space as a global common good, to be used for the benefit of all. Strengthening the safety, security, sustainability and peaceful nature of outer space activities is best achieved through a multilateral approach and international cooperation. Space is the important driver of economic growth, innovation and development for the benefit of all people. Space science, activities and technologies contribute to tackling major challenges such as climate change, disaster management, food security, transport development, and the protection of the environment and of scarce resources. The EU and its Member States stress the importance of Transparency and Confidence Building Measures, providing an important contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space, and the importance of promoting principles of responsible behaviour in outer space in the framework of the United Nations and other appropriate multilateral fora.

The EU and its Member States remain strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Preventing an arms race in outer space and preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential for the strengthening of strategic stability and for safeguarding the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes. The European Union underlines that the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and other international law as developed in the framework of the United Nations constitute the cornerstone of the global governance of outer space. The EU remains concerned about the continued development of all anti-satellite

weapons and capabilities, particularly terrestrially based, and underlines the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent the threat to objects in outer space.

Technological innovation, including advancements in Artificial Intelligence, is likely to have an impact on the future battlefield. This underscores the importance of processes and structures to ensure that any weapon system is developed, deployed and used in compliance with international humanitarian law. The new technologies have given rise to a broad debate in our societies as to the ethical and legal questions that arise with regard to the possible military applications of emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), including artificial intelligence (AI). The European Union and its Member States actively participate in the work of the open ended Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS within the Convention on the prohibition or restriction on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects (CCW). The EU welcomes the progress made during the 2018 meetings of the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, notably the agreement on the ten Possible Guiding Principles which reaffirm that international law, in particular International Humanitarian Law, fully applies to existing and emerging weapons systems and that States remain responsible and accountable for their development, deployment and use in situations of armed conflict. The Guiding Principles provide a good basis to strive for further progress in 2019. At EU level, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with the support of the European Commission, is continuing her consultations with the UN, with the Global Tech Panel that she has set up, and with other multilateral actors to help find solutions to these complex security challenges.