

Information Note¹

- Event:** *Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) National Implementation Guide-Working Meeting*
- Organizers:** The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) - Geneva, through the European Union's Action in Support of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC Action)
- Date and venue:** 11 August 2013, Geneva, Switzerland
- Participants:** Members of the Working Group (representatives of Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, VERTIC, and UNODA-Geneva) and Advisory Group (representatives of the 1540 Committee Group of Experts, Georgia, Kenya, UK, US, and independent consultants from Belgium and Germany)

1. Objectives of the Working Meeting

Discuss the structure and content of the draft BWC National Implementation Guide in order to have a simple, straight-forward and concise document in its structure, without losing necessary information, to make it user-friendly to the States as a tool to facilitate BWC implementation. The Working Group also aimed to establish a timeline for project completion.

2. Background

The BWC National Implementation Guide is an initiative undertaken under the auspices of the European Union Council's Decision in Support of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC Action) by the UNODA-Geneva (acting as the implementing agency) and national partners, under Project 3: Enabling Tools and Activities (to enable and support effective national implementation of the BWC; promote wider participation in BWC meetings; and enhance the preparedness, detection, and response capabilities of States Parties and the UN Secretary General). BWC Action was mandated by the Council decision 2012/421/CFSP, adopted on 23 July 2012 by the Council of the European Union. It is broadly anchored in the European Union's Common Position for the Seventh Review Conference of the BWC (Council Decision 2011/429/CFSP of 18 July 2011; available online at:

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/FB77EE84B5729118C1257AC3003D9A5D/\\$file/Council+Decision+2011-429-CFSP+EU+Position+7RC.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/FB77EE84B5729118C1257AC3003D9A5D/$file/Council+Decision+2011-429-CFSP+EU+Position+7RC.pdf)) and focuses in particular on those aspects on which consensus was reached at the Seventh Review Conference held in 2011.

BWC Action aims to support the BWC on the international, regional and national levels through three major projects: universality and national implementation; confidence in compliance; and strengthening international cooperation and encouraging international discussion on the future of the BWC.

¹ For information –not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

In a letter to the Chair of the 1540 Committee, dated 30 March 2011, UNODA-Geneva noted that “*the guide will be drafted by the BWC Implementation Support unit and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, together with a group of European Union national experts and an Advisory Group composed of National Points of Contact, NGOs and international experts*”, and invited the 1540 Group of Experts to participate in this project “*in order to ensure that the guide will cover all necessary aspects of national implementation*”. In his reply, dated 16 August 2011, the 1540 Committee Chair noted based on the draft outline “*that the guide would reference obligations stemming from other initiatives such as UNSCR 1540 (2004) and where they overlap those from the BWC. This complementarity would be a practical contribution when working with States on their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) as well as of the BTWC*”.

3. **Highlights**

At the 11 August 2013 meeting, participants agreed on the general (revised) structure of the BWC National Implementation Guide. It was decided that, when completed, the draft BWC National Implementation Guide should be distributed (as a Working Document) to BWC national focal points, WHO, OPCW and INTERPOL and other parties interested for comments. Further, the possibility of the 2013 BWC Chairman to forward the Working Document to all States Parties for comments on behalf of the EU Action/UNODA, eventually through the BWC website, should be explored.

The 1540 Group of Experts will continue to review intermediary drafts and provide comments relevant to resolution 1540 (2004) obligations.

4. **Additional comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee’s Group of Experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.