

Information Note¹

- Event:** “Risks, Challenges and Responses: Industry’s Effective Practices in Responding to Biosecurity Risks – A Conference in Support of Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and bilateral discussion at the German Federal Office of Economics and Export Control (BAFA)
- Organiser:** German Federal Government in cooperation with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the European Commission’s Outreach in Export Controls of Dual-Use Items Programme (implemented by the Federal Office of Economics and Export Control, BAFA)
- Date and Venue:** 3-4 December 2013, Wiesbaden, Germany
- Participants:** *States (authorities):* Germany (Federal Foreign Office, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Federal Office of Economics and Export Control), France (Ministry for Economy – Export Control Office on Dual Use Goods), Iraq (National Monitoring Authority – Ministry of Science and Technology), UK (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory), U.S.A. (Department of State)
International Organisations and arrangements: Australia Group Secretariat, Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC-ISU), International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), UNSCR 1540 Group of Experts, World Health Organisation (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
Industry, associations, academia and other entities: AdvoGenConsult (Germany), African Biological Safety Association (AfBSA), Asia-Pacific Biosafety Association (A-PBA), Association of Biosafety Australia and New Zealand, Biosafety Organisation of Central Asia and Caucasus, Cluster Individualisierte Immunintervention (CI3) e.V., Darmstadt University of Technology – IANUS (Germany), Eurofins Medigenomix GmbH (Germany), Evonik Industries AG (Germany), Federation of Asian Biotech Associations (FABA), France Synthetic Biology Forum, German Ethics Council, Hessen Trade & Invest GmbH (Germany), IB Consultancy (Belgium), IDT Biologika GmbH (Germany), International Association for Synthetic Biology (IASB), International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), International Council for the Life Sciences (ICLS), International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA), King’s College London (UK), Landau Network Centro Volta

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.

(Italy), Leibniz-Institute – DSMZ (Germany), Merck KgaA (Germany), MJ Lawrence Consulting (Germany), Moroccan Biosafety Association, Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics (USA), Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (Germany), Republican Research & Practical Centre (Belarus), Robert Koch Institute (Germany), Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, University of Bradford (UK), University of Karachi (Pakistan), University of Hamburg (Germany), World Courier

1. **Background**

The role of the private sector in the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is referred to in operative paragraph 8 of resolution 1540 (2004) and operative paragraph 12 of resolution 1977 (2011). Respectively, these paragraphs call upon all States to develop appropriate ways to work with and inform industry and the public regarding their obligations under the laws relating to the resolutions. Also resolution 1977 (2011), with regard to the identification of effective implementation practices for a compilation and a possible technical reference guide, encourages the 1540 Committee, at its discretion, to draw on relevant expertise in the private sector, with, as appropriate, their State's consent.

In order to facilitate the dialogue between the 1540 Committee and industry in this regard, the Federal Government of Germany in cooperation with UNODA hosted a first industry conference from 23-24 April 2012 in Wiesbaden, Germany. This conference brought together participants from international, regional and sub-regional industry associations representing different industry sectors which are affected by resolution 1540 (2004). The conference report can be found on the website of the 1540 Committee (<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/transparency-and-outreach/outreach-events/events.shtml>)

With a view to continuing the “Wiesbaden process”, Germany organised this second “Wiesbaden conference”. While the 2012 Conference aimed at strengthening partnership between government and industry in general, the 2013 conference focused on detailed aspects of 1540 implementation in the area of bio-security.

2. **Highlights**

The conference was well-timed: while the rapidly developing capabilities in the field of life sciences, in particular the advances in synthetic biology, have opened up promising avenues for major research and beneficial developments relating to public health and broader economic issues, there have also been growing concerns on potential misuses of these new possibilities from a security perspective.

The individual conference panels considered the following topics: effective practices in addressing proliferation risks in biotechnology; current non-proliferation challenges (industry and the advances in science and technology); dual-use knowledge of concern; developments in the international regulatory environments; effective practices in national regulatory frameworks; effective practices: self-regulation, corporate governance and code of conduct initiatives.

The conference helped to identify effective practices, particularly on initiatives by industry and research associations, for example the development of codes of conducts or self-regulation. It also highlighted remaining implementation challenges, such as lack of awareness, lack of coordination, balancing security and freedom of research or economic interests, and specific regional challenges. The conference led to a set of recommendations for the way ahead, also directed at the 1540 Committee.

As intended by the organisers, the conference also provided an important forum for dialogue between the private sector and regulators: on the one hand participants from the private sector (industry and research sector) gained insight into the motivation of regulators and more specifically on the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004), on the other hand representatives from government and international organisations gained a better understanding of the specific challenges and of various examples of voluntary self-regulation by the private sector.

Bilateral discussions at BAFA yielded an update on the various on-going cooperation programmes in the field of export controls that the office is implementing for the European Union.

The statement delivered on behalf of Ambassador Oh Joon, Chair of the 1540 Committee, is available online at: <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/transparency-and-outreach/outreach-events/pdf/ChairStatementBiosecurity2013.pdf>

3. **Additional comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.