



Joint Action in support of the universalisation and implementation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, in the framework of the European Security Strategy

Council Joint Action 2008/487/CFSP

***Managua Workshop on Progress and Challenges in Achieving a Mine-Free Americas
Managua, 24-26 February 2009***

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

Honourable Minister, Excellencies, 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, Mr. Javier Solana, to all those who have made possible this seminar today and in particular to the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua, and the Organisation of American States, within the framework of the **EU Joint Action adopted last year to support the Ottawa Convention** (Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction). The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining merits a particular mention for the energy, enthusiasm and professionalism with which they have undertaken the implementation of this EU project. Very much in line, with the way they ensure the ISU functions to the Ottawa Convention.

As the Representative of the EU Presidency has just explained a **Joint Action** is an instrument of EU foreign policy. It allows the European Union to take action and allocate financial resources to a specific objective. For most of you the European Commission programmes, with its own Delegation in Managua, are certainly better known.

Through community programmes the EU has contributed substantially to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and towards the zero-victims target. In 2007 the EU, through its Common Foreign and Security Policy, has chosen to make a contribution in support of the Ottawa Convention, using another of the instruments at its disposal, in this year which will lead us to the Review Conference of the Convention. The workshop also intends to create important synergies with the community programmes and to serve as platform to inform participants about them. I thank our colleague from the European Commission who will elaborate tomorrow on EC support for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

I. But why is the EU interested in promoting the Ottawa Convention from a security perspective?

The Joint Action in support of the Ottawa Convention falls within the framework of our Security Strategy adopted by the Council in 2003. The European Security Strategy enshrines the principles of **effective multilateralism, prevention and international cooperation** which are also at the basis of the WMD and SALW Strategies, also adopted by the European Council.

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. Security is a condition for development.

In the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, **effective multilateralism** consists in strengthening the treaty based system: strengthening by expansion of membership and **ensuring its full national compliance**.

At the outset of our work in this area, the EU turned its attention towards multilateral instruments in the WMD area, by providing support for instance to the OPCW, the IAEA, the CTBTO, the BTWC and UNSCR 1540. This support materialised in a series of Joint Actions which established a particular scheme of work, based on **universality, full national implementation and international cooperation**.

Universality is a major requirement for treaties and conventions banning an entire category of weapons or regulating a certain type of activity. Universality is particularly important in order for a treaty to be fully credible and to fully achieve its objective. Parties will enjoy the benefit of the Treaty and feel protected if all other countries are also bound by the same rules and comply with them. The progress made by the Ottawa Convention is remarkable but there is still work to be done.

National implementation and international cooperation are the focus of our work in Managua during the two days ahead. I am very impressed by the thorough preparation of the workshop. The hands-on approach. The series of questions to assist participants in preparing the workshop which have been distributed ahead of the seminar should lead our work.

II. EU action in the promotion of multilateral instruments

This scheme, based on those three elements proved to be successful in the WMD field, a particular example being the CWC, and we started to replicate it in the conventional field. The EU is committed to **promote** instruments at our disposal in the conventional weapons area.

I have had the pleasure to participate in a series of regional seminars to promote the **International Marking and Tracing**, organised by the UNODA and co-sponsored by the EU. Also, last year the EU has been very active in the promotion of the **1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**, through a similar Joint Action to this one, implemented by the UNODA. I can recognise among participants in this workshop some of those with whom I shared intense days of work in Santo Domingo (CCW) and Rio de Janeiro (IMI). I am glad to see them here today. The support of the UN Regional Centre in Lima in the organisation of those events has to be acknowledged. The support of **UNMAS** has also been instrumental for the success of the regional seminars in support of the CCW. Finally today in Geneva the EU is organising an event to launch a series of regional seminars in order to promote the **Arms Trade Treaty** process. One of the regional seminars, which will be organised by UNIDIR, will target this region.

The work of the EU in this area is expanding and I have been a privileged witness to the development of its activities. I am also very privileged to be here today as we start a new adventure, in order to promote in a comprehensive and global manner, under the wise

guidance of the GICHD, an instrument of the importance and relevance of the Ottawa Convention. In times of financial difficulties, the donor community must exercise an exquisite control over its programmes. If the promotion of the Ottawa Convention, in the manner which we inaugurate today, has attracted the attention of the EU Member States and of the EU as a whole, all stakeholders must be responsible and take full advantage of the opportunities presented. I am sure we can rely on you. In particular with the horizon of a successful and meaningful Review Conference this year in Colombia.

III. Conclusion

This Joint Action was defined and firstly discussed by the Member States of the European Union under **Portuguese Presidency**. Being a Spanish national myself I could not think of a better way to start this series of regional seminars than in the Americas. En la tierra del poeta Rubén Darío.

Es esta además la última vez que ejerzo mis funciones como representante de la Oficina del Representante Personal en un acto de estas características. No quiero dejar pasar esta oportunidad sin agradecer a todos aquellos con los que he trabajado durante los cuatro últimos años, algunos de los cuales se encuentran entre nosotros esta tarde, su apoyo, su paciencia y su esfuerzo. También desearles a los que se quedan y a los que me sustituirán la mejor de las suertes. Ha sido un verdadero honor y un privilegio poder trabajar en este área fascinante y espero haber contribuido de alguna manera a establecer y a consolidar relaciones sólidas y duraderas entre la

Unión Europea, a través de su Política Exterior, y las organizaciones encargadas de la salvaguarda de los Tratados y las Convenciones internacionales en el área de desarme, no-prolifерación y control de armas.

Europa no ha sido nunca tan próspera, tan segura ni tan libre. La violencia de la primera mitad del siglo XX ha dado paso a un periodo de paz y estabilidad sin precedentes en la historia europea. Así comienza la Estrategia de Seguridad Europea en cuyo marco se inscriben las actividades de la Unión en temas de seguridad y defensa y en concreto la Acción Común del Consejo adoptada en Julio del año pasado gracias a la cual nos podemos reunir en Managua durante este seminario. Me gustaría que esta frase inspirara del alguna manera el trabajo de los ilustres delegados durante los próximos dos días.

Dos días, durante los cuales, confío en que podamos responder con claridad a las preguntas relativas a temas tan importantes como la del despeje de zonas minadas, la asistencia a las víctimas y la cooperación y la asistencia. La primera medida de nuestro éxito será la participación activa de todos vosotros en las sesiones de trabajo, el que se establezca un verdadero diálogo, de manera que podamos comenzar a resolver cuestiones que sirvan para contribuir a la Segunda Conferencia de Examen de la Convención. Y que se refuercen las redes regionales gracias al trabajo de la Organización de Estados Americanos. El presente seminario no es, ni pretende ser, un punto de llegada. En realidad el trabajo deberá de continuar, con mayor fuerza y conocimiento si cabe, una vez que el taller haya concluido. Constituye, nada más y nada menos, un paso firme y

decidido hacia la consecución de los objetivos que inspiraron la Convención sobre la Prohibición del Empleo, Almacenamiento, Producción y Transferencia de Minas Antipersonal y sobre su Destrucción. La de construir un mundo libre de minas antipersonal. Un mundo mas seguro y mejor que pueda enfrentarse en las mejores condiciones posibles a los nuevos retos que le esperan.
