

OPCW Industry and Protection Forum  
Intervention by Ana Gomes, MEP

"The role of the EU in support of CWC and OPCW"

- I would like to thank the OPCW for inviting me to be here today;
- I have to admit right from the start that I am not a specialist in the domain of the chemical industry and the ways to control and protect it in the context of the Chemical Weapon Convention;
- What I do know, however, is that the EU sees the CWC and the OPCW as fundamental in the fight for disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and it is precisely about the EU's role in all this that I want to talk about;
- The EU doesn't just support the OPCW and CWC because it wants to avoid proliferation and because it cares about its security in a narrow sense;
- The EU is all about multilateralism in action; it is in our interest to see effective multilateralism - one of the key concepts of the EU's external action - actually work;
- And it is obvious that, despite some imperfections, delays and the sheer complexity of the task, **the CWC and the OPCW are great examples of multilateralism that works**: after 10 years, 25% of global stockpiles have been destroyed and chemical weapons are seen as taboo - that is a great achievement;
- The major, overarching document of the Union's security policy - the European Security Strategy, approved in 2003 - mentions the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as one of the top five threats facing Europe at the moment;
- It says a lot about the importance of this threat, and the EU's willingness to tackle it, that the first document it approved to

implement the EU Security Strategy was the *'Strategy against proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction'*:

- Both documents were born in December 2003, in a political context marked by the tensions caused by the Iraq invasion, and where the EU needed to show that it was able to act collectively on issues of global concern, namely WMD;
- The WMD Strategy's main objective was to improve the coherence of EU actions in this field and to add value to the efforts of Member States;
- The EU is following through its commitment with specific Joint Actions to support the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (the first one was adopted in November of 2004 and the latest one in March of this year);
- The goal of the current Joint Action, as of previous ones, is to promote the universalization of the CWC, support its full and effective implementation, and enhance international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry; this year's Joint Action included a €1.7 million grant to the OPCW;
- Of course we have to keep in mind that the EU tries to add value to what is already done by its Member States and two of them, Germany and the UK, come right after the US and Japan as the biggest contributors to the OPCW's modest budget;
- I am very proud to tell you that one practical result of the latest Joint Action, the third one of its kind, is this OPCW Industry and Protection Forum, which was explicitly mentioned as one of the projects to be financed; I call that money put to good use!;
- Another area where the EU and its Member States have been very supportive is disarmament;
- Through the work of the European Commission in the framework of the G8 Global Partnership, the EU is working to ensure Russia gets closer to meeting the 2012 deadline under the Chemical Weapons Convention to destroy its substantial stocks of chemical weapons;

- Also, the EU has developed WMD Clauses to be included into agreements with third countries; these can be used to help achieve universalization by making states not yet party to the CWC join; the clauses can also contribute to compliance, by helping states implement national legislation and export controls and thus meet commitments to the CWC;
- It is essential for the EU to use all its available instruments and budgets to support the full range of efforts of the OPCW; this is certainly an approach supported by the European Parliament in several resolutions; and our support as a budget authority counts for something;
- Last March I had the pleasure of hearing Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter speak at the Subcommittee of Security and Defence of the European Parliament, of which I am the Vice-Chair;
- He was very generous in his praise for the EU, underlining its support for the OPCW, mentioning the European financial contribution for the destruction of Russian stockpiles and generally highlighting that in terms of legislation and implementation, the EU was, in his words, "*in the vanguard of all these standards*;"
- He did however refer to the fact that one or two countries haven't totally implemented the CWC;
- I couldn't speak here today, as a Portuguese MEP, without mentioning the case of my own country;
- Ten years after the CWC entered into force, Portugal still hasn't implemented it at home; there is no legislation in place yet and although there is a national authority responsible for the implementation of the Convention, it hasn't been endowed with a proper budget and staff;
- I have been told that the OPCW has done an excellent job in Portugal so far and that it has done all it can do prepare the country to get in line with the Convention, namely through training and financing and through awareness-raising with industry; all this despite the legal uncertainty;

- I myself and others in Portugal tried to accelerate the legislative process, from the consultation and drafting phase in the Ministries, through to Parliamentary approval;
- We can now report some success, with the legislation having left the Parliament and expecting the President's imminent signature - the last step before it comes into force;
- It took ten years for this legislation to be drafted and passed and, again, it couldn't have happened without the OPCW and the assistance of its legal department;
- Portugal has some chemical industry, which, as far as I know, has been exporting and importing chemicals without any supervision; as I wrote in an article about this disgraceful situation, I hope Al Qaeda has been too busy to go shopping in Portugal;
- Of course Portugal can add some value to the global efforts to universalize and implement the CWC in Portuguese-speaking countries, through military-to-military contacts; maybe this could be one way of prodding Angola, for example, to join the CWC and, while they think about it, to raise awareness within the country;
- In short, this is a question of consistency: we in Europe can only be credible in our efforts to sell the CWC and its effective implementation abroad if we ourselves have an immaculate behaviour;
- You can rest assured that the European Parliament will continue not just to support the financial allocations for OPCW and the implementation of the CWC, but also to act as the conscience of the EU in the field of arms control and effective multilateralism.