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**Swedish Presidency  
of the European Union**

4 August 2009

To the Permanent Representatives in Geneva  
of the States Parties, Signatories to the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the  
Development, Production and Stockpiling of  
Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin  
Weapons and on their Destruction, and  
Observer Delegations

Excellency,

Under a strategy adopted by the European Council (Heads of State and Government), the European Union is committed to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to effective multilateralism. As part of this strategy, the EU Council has adopted a Joint Action in support of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). On behalf of the EU, I have the honour to invite you, your mission colleagues and BWC experts from capital, to the

**Official Launch of the European Union Joint Action in support of the  
Biological Weapons Convention**

**Monday 24 August 2009, 13:00-15:00** (sandwich lunch included)

**Room XXIII, Palais des Nations**  
(1st floor, Building E, Door 40)

The European Union Joint Action in support of the Biological Weapons Convention was adopted on 10 November 2008, and will be implemented by the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs over the period May 2009 to April 2011. The overall objectives of the Joint Action are to support the universalization of the BWC, to enhance its implementation, including through the submission of confidence-building measures (CBMs), and to support the best use of the 2007 - 2010 intersessional process in the lead up to the next review conference of the Convention.

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The Joint Action comprises four specific projects:

- Promoting universalization - encouraging those states currently not members to join the BWC as soon as possible.
- Implementation assistance - enabling interested states to strengthen their national arrangements to prevent the development and acquisition of biological weapons.
- Improving CBM participation - practical assistance for States Parties to provide data for the annual exchanges of information.
- Supporting the intersessional process - helping to prepare for and make the most of the annual meetings of the BWC.

The Joint Action is governed by five key principles: to make best use of the work done to date; to reflect on the stated specific needs to universalize and improve implementation of the treaty; to encourage local and regional ownership of efforts to strengthen the implementation of the BWC and to develop partnerships between the EU and other States Parties; to focus on activities that will lead to common understandings in the lead up to the next review conference; and to support the Chair of annual BWC meetings and make best use of the Implementation Support Unit.

The launch will be an opportunity to learn more about the Joint Action, including the ways in which states outside the European Union can benefit from the activities to be conducted under the four project areas. Following the brief presentations about the Joint Action, there will be time for questions and discussion. The programme for the launch is attached.

I hope you and your colleagues will be able to join us for the launch of this important initiative, and to continue to work with the European Union in our common endeavour to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and reduce the risks posed to global security by biological weapons and bioterrorism.

For logistical purposes, I would be grateful if you would confirm your attendance via e-mail to the BWC Implementation Support Unit at **bwc@unog.ch** by 21 August.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Magnus Hellgren  
Ambassador

encl: Programme for the launch of the EU Joint Action in support of the BWC

## **Launch of the European Union Joint Action in Support of the Biological Weapons Convention**

13:00-15:00, Monday 24 August 2009  
Room XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

### **PROGRAMME**

- 13:00            Sandwich lunch served outside room
- 13:30            Introduction and welcome  
*H.E. Mr. Magnus Hellgren, Ambassador of Sweden for  
Disarmament, representing the Presidency of the European  
Union*
- Outline of the European Union Joint Action in support of  
the BWC  
*Dr. Andreas Strub, Deputy to the Personal Representative  
of the High-Representative on non-proliferation of WMD,  
General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union*
- Implementing the Joint Action: how to get involved  
*Mr. Richard Lennane, Head, BWC Implementation Support  
Unit, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*
- Opportunities and challenges: the EU Joint Action in  
context  
*H.E. Mr. Marius Grinius, Ambassador and Permanent  
Representative of Canada, Chairman of the 2009 meetings  
of the BWC*
- 13:45            Questions and discussion
- 15:00            Close
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