

Impact on EU Associate Countries and Russia

The inclusion of EU Associate Countries and Russia in any European BW control regime would be a clear demonstration that the regime was open for expansion and could lead directly to other enthusiastic countries – such as Canada and the South American nations – joining up. This could rapidly expand co-ordinated and improved BW control measures across the globe. In addition, any inclusion of the EU associates and, above all, Russia would represent an important and valuable challenge for the European regime as these clearly represent ‘higher-risk’ states. An expanded EU regime could play a vital role in lowering proliferation risks and verifying the end of Russian offensive BW development.

The Role of Canada

The EU and Canada agreed on many of the key tenets of the BTWC protocol negotiations. Canada strongly supported the work of the AHG process and the concept of a legally binding Protocol, and its new BTWC Implementation Act (BTWCIA) will provide framework legislation, paralleling the Convention. A European regime could provide further opportunities for EU-Canadian cooperation, including the development of synergies between the BTWCIA and EU national authorities. Canada and the EU could also agree to open their facilities to inspection by each other.

The creation of an EU-Canadian association of national BW coordinating authorities and the harmonisation of EU-Canadian CBMs (in line with Canada’s recent adoption of higher CBM standards) would be other practical steps. Expansion of the regime eastwards could involve Canadian participation modelled on either the 1992 Open Skies Treaty or the Ottawa Process against anti-personnel landmines. Canada could also be the bridge between Europe and the United States on the issue.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Next Steps

It is clear from this preliminary assessment that the EU is already adopting a strong leadership role in this issue. Civil emergency planning, export controls and the fight against terrorism, for example, are all areas that to some extent are already being coordinated at the EU level. However, the Member States and EU institutions will need to develop a stronger culture of co-operation between the full range of experts and interested parties, across the wide number of affected disciplines, including law enforcement, intelligence, science, education, industry and international diplomacy.

Moreover, much more debate is needed as to the scope and direction of any future EU BW control regime. At present, for example, there seems little enthusiasm among EU officials for developing investigative or reporting mechanisms among member states as means of promoting confidence in compliance with the BTWC. However, regional control, reporting and response measures in the European context could serve as a positive role model for other regions. This is a debate that is still in its infancy and needs to be broadened to include parliamentarians and other interest groups.

With the adoption of its ‘concrete measures’, the EU has already gone beyond the ad hoc mechanism stage in dealing with the BW threat. However, it is important that this high level of coordination on paper is translated into high-level cooperation in practice. The best way for the EU to approach the challenge would be a multilevel approach: gradually increasing and