



**European Union**  
**Statement on the occasion of the Fifty-seventh Session of**  
**Working Group A, CTBTO Preparatory Commission**  
**(01-02 June 2020)**

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey<sup>§</sup>, The Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+, Serbia\*, Albania\*, Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, Norway+, Ukraine, The Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino.

2. The EU wishes to thank the Executive Secretary for his opening statement and for his report on Non-Verification-Related Activities, as well as the PTS for preparing this meeting, under extraordinary circumstances. Since 13 March, the PTS has been sparing no effort to assure the business continuity of the CTBTO and its efficient provision of IMS data and IDC products, while assuring also the health safety of its staff.

3. We would also like to recognize the efforts of the PrepCom Chair, Ambassador Mebarki, and you Madam Chair, for your proactive approach in exploring the existing possibilities to allow the Policy Making Organs to continue working.

4. The EU, as a strong supporter of the CTBT and its Organisation, welcomes the continued outreach activities of the PTS. The efforts to promote and facilitate signature and ratification remain a priority. We encourage the variety of initiatives by the PTS and the Art. XIV Chairs to engage, especially with the remaining Annex II States: China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the USA, that still have to ratify the Treaty; and on the DPRK, India and Pakistan, that still have to sign and ratify it in order to bring it into force.

5. The EU has so far contributed more than 23 million € to support CTBTO activities, showcasing our full commitment to the Treaty and its implementation. In line with this commitment, the EU was quick to agree to a 7-month extension, until 30 November 2020, for the ongoing voluntary contribution to account for implementation delays due to COVID-19. The new voluntary contribution, which will be the eighth of its kind, will be agreed in the coming months and has a planned duration of 36 months. It is expected to enter into force on 1 December 2020, thus assuring an uninterrupted implementation.

<sup>§</sup> Candidate Country

\*Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Madam Chair,

6. As outlined in the report of the PrepCom Chair, circulated on 8 April 2020, we should now focus our work on the issues directly related to ensuring business continuity of the organisation, including its administrative and financial stability and its ability to carry on the main tasks as planned. Among those is the need for taking a decision on the process of appointing the new Executive Secretary of the organisation. We wish to highlight that in 2012, the June PrepCom endorsed the appointment process, starting with a deadline for submitting candidatures September 1. Therefore, the EU and its MS would like to encourage the PrepCom Chair, Ambassador Mebarki, to conduct informal consultations on this issue, based on the previously agreed 2012 procedure, in order to work towards consensus at the upcoming PrepCom session in June.

Madam Chair,

7. The IMS and IDC have proved their unique ability to provide States Signatories with independent and reliable means to detect nuclear tests, which further reinforce the importance of the CTBTO. However, the CTBTO can only carry out its mandatory functions and the sustainment and provisional operation of the verification system if provided with the necessary funding. We are therefore greatly concerned by the sharp decrease in collection rate reported for the first quarter of the year. We understand that many of the 73 countries currently without PrepCom voting rights are hard-hit by the current financial crisis. However, it is crucial for the operation of the verification regime of the Treaty, and for the wider organization's financial health, that all States honour their legal obligation to pay assessed contributions, on time and in full.

Madam Chair,

8. The EU and its Member States fully support the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Group and note with appreciation the efforts made to allow the on-line meeting of AG experts.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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