

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

**THE EU NON-PROLIFERATION AND
DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE**

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WELCOMING REMARKS

FRIDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2012

**MACIEJ POPOWSKI,
DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, EEAS**

Welcoming Remarks

Maciej Popowski, Deputy Secretary-General, EEAS

Thank you, Mark, and thank you for sparing the details of my CV. Good morning, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the EEAS to Brussels and to this conference organised by the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium. We are very grateful for the great cooperation that we have already managed to develop. Let me offer you some initial thoughts before you start the real work. As I am sure you know, Brussels is not that far away from the city of Ypres – about an hour's drive – and for anyone who, for whatever reason, has difficulty in understanding the time, energy and zeal put into disarmament and non-proliferation – and I assume there are not that many in the room – I recommend a visit to Ypres. Visiting the sites of the Great War that ravaged the area almost a century ago, including through massive use of chemical weapons, is certainly an eye-opener. There are many such cities throughout Europe and, indeed, throughout the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, in 2010, the EU Council decided to create a network bringing together foreign-policy institutions and research centres from across the EU to encourage political and security-related dialogue and debate on measures to combat the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems. Less than a year later, the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium is doing well and has developed a dedicated website, as Mark told us, and produced a series of policy-oriented publications. I would once again like to publicly thank the four institutes that jointly manage the consortium, which forms the core of a wider network of European independent think-tanks and academic institutions that are engaged in research on non-proliferation and disarmament matters. In our open democracies, this contribution of independent think-tanks is key.

Our aim today and tomorrow is to openly discuss among experts from official institutions, governments and the academic world. Our agenda spans all aspects of non-proliferation and all relevant weapons disciplines – nuclear, chemical and biological; missiles, small arms and light weapons – as well as nuclear security and proliferation-related crime. It is a very ambitious undertaking. Before discussing such a wide variety of issues, let me briefly emphasise the basics. The guiding principle and the overall aim of the EU in the field of non-proliferation is the promotion of the universality of international treaties, conventions and other instruments and their national implementation. We do this because the threats from WMD and proliferation remain as valid as when the Union produced its first collective strategic document on security, the European Security Strategy of 2003. Take the case of the present situation in Libya: the massive presence of weapons following conflict and concerns about arms stocks going missing are yet another demonstration of this threat.

We do this work through a variety of means. Within the EU, one should always start by putting one's own house in order. There is key regulatory work, such as the strengthening of the dual-use export regime. Another is funding; for instance, our contribution to the Nuclear Security Fund, where the EU is a key donor. We also do a fair amount of technical support and expertise; for instance, through the European Commission's Cooperative Support Programme, which, last year, celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Of course, there are many linkages to other policy areas, such as trade. Diplomacy is clearly part of

the picture, through mainstreaming the work on the promotion of stable international and regional environments and through a variety of concrete tools – démarches, statements, high-level conferences and visits etc. This sometimes includes sanctions. It often includes diplomacy at the highest level; for instance, the High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the international community has followed a sustained approach in leading the efforts to engage Iran in a process that will build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. For now, the acceleration and expansion of the Iranian enrichment programme and the IAEA findings about Iranian activities relating to military nuclear technology remain a source of increasing concern. It is likely to remain at the top of the agenda of this year.

Other key challenges for our work in 2012, without wanting to be exhaustive, include: the start of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process; the Arms Trade Treaty negotiation; the process leading to the establishment of a zone free of WMD in the Middle East; and the review conference on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The method of our daily work remains grounded in a belief in effective multilateralism, providing the legal and normative basis for all non-proliferation efforts. Also, close cooperation with partners is crucial for the success of our common efforts.

It is on this note of partnership that I would like to end. Your relations with research institutes of all the countries in the world, for instance, are essential. We count on you not only to give us innovative input but also to involve in this exercise important think-tanks from third countries. We need allies. This is a point where the synergy between the EEAS and the EU network of think-tanks will be very helpful. I am pleased to welcome today representatives from many research institutes and governments outside the EU, just as I welcome the many participants from within the EU. I thank you for your attention and I wish you a very successful and productive conference. Thank you very much.