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www.ebsaweb.eu

The European Biosafety Association EBSA

To States Parties to the UN Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention, BTWC

About EBSA

EBSA is a non-governmental, non-profit and independent association, committed to enhancing the knowledge and understanding of biological safety issues throughout Europe and beyond. EBSA strives to ensure the prevention of harm to man, animals and the environment from handling biological substances. EBSA will seek to influence and support emerging legislation and guidelines in the areas of biological safety, biosecurity, transport and associated activities. EBSA, with its membership of biosafety experts from 25 European as well as non-European countries, has become a recognized platform for knowledge and expertise within the field of biosafety and biosecurity. This expertise is offered to the BTWC for the achievement of its goals regarding biosafety and biosecurity.

EBSA Activities with relevance to the BTWC

Many of EBSA activities fall within the scope of the BTWC e.g. i) to raise awareness among life science workers, policy makers and other stakeholders; ii) professional biosafety competence building among those handling biological agents and toxins; iii) development and implementation of biosafety/biosecurity standards and guidelines as well as guidance for certification.

EBSA was represented with a break-out session at the BTWC 6th Review Conference and at the Meeting of Experts in 2008 and has been presenting statements and posters at the Meetings of States Parties in Geneva since 2006.

Capacity Building in Biosafety & Biosecurity

As the focal point for Biosafety & Biosecurity in Europe, EBSA is striving to establish and communicate best biosafety practices amongst its members through annual conferences and pre-conference training workshops, updated information on the website, a discussion list and more. EBSA is participating in EU funded concerted actions and research projects as well as in developing of new standards and guidelines.

Biosafety Professional (BSP) Competency

EBSA has developed a Biosafety Professional Competence Initiative with the objective to define skills and tasks for the BSP and to develop a training curriculum to reach these skills. A European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Workshop aiming at a CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA), a consensus based document close to a standard, has been granted funding by the European Commission. A CWA will also allow certification of Biosafety Professionals and subsequent international recognition of this profession by stakeholders. *The CEN Workshop 53 - Biosafety Professional Competence (BSP)* is open for registration to interested parties from all over world. The 'kick-off' and 1st plenary meetings are scheduled for December 17 & 18 in Frankfurt.

http://www.ebsaweb.eu/EBSA_Activities.html ; www.cen.eu

Laboratory Biorisk Management Standard CWA 15793 development

EBSA and the American Biosafety Association (ABSA) were driving forces behind the development of the Laboratory Biorisk Management Standard CWA 15793:2008, funded by the European Commission, which was very well received by users and other stakeholders. EBSA and ABSA have now together with the Asian-Pacific Biosafety Association (A-PBA) taken an initiative to develop a Guidance document to the CWA 15793. This process will be funded by the Canadian Government and the Biosafety Associations. Tentative date for the 1st plenary meeting is mid-December 2009 in Brussels. The possibility to develop a certification guidance document within the same CEN workshop is being explored, pending funding sources are secured. www.absa.org, www.ebsaweb.eu, www.cen.eu

BIOSAFETY-EUROPE recommendations

BIOSAFETY-EUROPE was a coordinated action within the European Commission 6th FP comprising 18 European partners including EBSA. Great discrepancies were found among Member States in their understanding and implementation at the laboratory level of European legislation concerning handling of biological agents, toxins and genetically modified microorganisms (GMMs). A number of areas for improvement were identified and recommendations were delivered to the Commission e.g. that *competent advice* (biosafety professional/officer/adviser) commensurate to risk should be identified by organizations handling biological agents, toxins and GMMs; that requirements for *competency of biosafety/biosecurity professionals* should be set out in legislation; that *training* in bio-

safety and biosecurity should be promoted throughout the European Union. More detailed findings and recommendations can be found on <http://www.biosafety-europe.eu/>

Annual Conferences and Training Workshops

EBSA organises annual conferences with preconference training workshops. The conferences alternate between North/Western Europe and countries where there still is an urgent need for strengthening of the biosafety/biosecurity area. The EBSA 2010 Conference is planned to take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The training workshops cover 6-8 topics and are currently one of few specific biosafety training activities on the European level; only few EU Member States provide national Biosafety training.

Sponsored membership

EBSA has, on request, developed a 'package', facilitating for stakeholders to fund individuals from areas where the representation of biosafety professionalism is weak. The package includes a 3 year EBSA membership, a secured participation in a training workshop and conference participation. Sponsoring of such a membership is one of the means of supporting EBSAs goals to promote biosafety & biosecurity world-wide.

Interaction and networking

EBSA has a working relationship with international organisations, authorities and agencies e.g. WHO, ECDC, EU OHSA, BWTC and with the Biosafety Associations globally. EBSA is member of the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA).

EBSA was an active discussion partner to the European Commission CBRN Taskforce Bio Sub-group during the preparation of a Commission policy document on Bio-Preparedness, expected to become adopted in the fall of 2009.

EBSA coordinates the Biological Safety Officers Platform in the Netherlands and the Belgian Biosafety Professionals network (BBP).

EBSA will be happy to provide further detailed information on its activities, possibilities for participation and interaction, therein, to States Parties, distinguished representatives and experts.

The EBSA President 2009/2010

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