Statement on behalf of the European Union

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Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

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1. I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

2. The EU is guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Meeting the challenge of proliferation risks constitutes a key element in the EU’s external relations. The EU Strategy against Proliferation of WMD commits the EU to will act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its disposal, to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern world-wide. We are also committed to implementing our Common Position of 17 November 2003 on the universalisation and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery.

3. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention have an essential role in countering the threat of chemical and biological weapons. Together with other key multilateral agreements they provide a basis for the international community’s disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, which contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism. We urge States who are not parties to them to adhere to these treaties and join the mainstream and in any case urge all States to meet their obligations under UNSC resolutions 1540(2004) and 1673(2006). We will continue to urge all those States who are parties to the treaties to take all necessary steps to implement their obligations under both these treaties and UNSC resolutions 1540(2004) and 1673(2006), including in relation to enacting penal legislation. The EU stands ready to assist when requested to do so.

4. The EU believes that control of emerging technology will continue to be an issue of considerable concern in the area of CBW. The potential for illicit use of such technologies has been specifically mentioned in scientific literature and highlights the need to monitor technological developments, in respect of emerging processes and related equipment, with potential use in CBW programmes. We intend to be active in this area.

5. Cooperation with other countries to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction within the framework of the Global Partnership initiative, is part of the EU strategy and its Common Position on the NPT. The EU underlines the relevance of the G8 Global Partnership initiatives, for the WMD disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

6. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is particularly topical now as the Sixth Review Conference of the BTWC is taking place in
November and December. The EU considers the BTWC a key component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation framework and the cornerstone of efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons. We aim at strengthening further this Convention, and remain committed to the development of measures to verify compliance with the Convention in the longer term.

7. At the Review Conference, the EU will promote a successful outcome by contributing to a full review of the operation of the Convention, including the implementation of undertakings of the States Parties under the Convention. The EU is ready to do its part in building consensus for a substantive outcome, on the basis of the framework established by previous Review Conferences. We will promote, inter alia, the following essential issues: universal adherence of all States to the Convention; full compliance with the obligations under the Convention and effective implementation by all States Parties; national implementation measures and control over pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins in the framework of the Convention; working towards identifying effective mechanisms to strengthen and verify compliance within the BTWC; efforts to enhance transparency through the increased exchange of information among States Parties including through annual information exchange among States Parties (CBMs); compliance with the obligations under UN SC resolutions 1540(2004) and 1673(2006) in particular to eliminate the risk of biological or toxin weapons being acquired or used for terrorist purposes; the G8 Global Partnership programmes; decisions on further action on the work undertaken to date under the past intersessional programme.

8. The EU will support a further intersessional work programme until the next Review Conference that should be held no later than 2011. We will contribute to identifying specific areas and procedures for further progress under this work programme. We have submitted working papers where our views and suggestions are elaborated in detail.

9. The EU is well prepared to play a constructive role in ensuring that our joint efforts lead to meaningful and practical results at the Conference. We support the efforts of the President-designate of the Conference to this effect.

10. At the same time as preparing for the Review Conference, the EU is taking practical measures to promote the universalisation and effective national implementation of the BTWC, including regional workshops and assistance on relevant legal and technical aspects. This is done through our Joint Action giving implementation to some elements of our WMD Strategy. In parallel to the Joint Action, we have also adopted an Action Plan in which the EU Member States undertook to submit Confidence Building Measures returns to the UN each year, as well as to consider and volunteer expertise to the Secretary-General in helping him update the lists of experts and laboratories which he may call on for an investigation of
alleged CBW use. We welcome that the UNGA resolution on the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted on 6 September this year encouraged the Secretary-General to update the roster of experts and laboratories as well as the technical guidelines and procedures available to him. More generally, regarding exchange of information including the CBMs, we also welcome the new BTWC internet site by the UNDDA as a valuable tool.

11. The EU acknowledges the progress made towards the universalisation of the CWC, a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We fully support the organisation that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Through our Joint Action, our support for the OPCW extends to very practical cooperation, thus giving immediate and practical implementation to some elements of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of WMD. This practical support is focused on the promotion of universality of the CWC, support for implementation of the CWC by the States Parties, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities.

12. The EU believes that the CWC must be strictly applied. One of the most important features of the CWC is the obligation for possessors of chemical weapons to destroy their stockpiles by specified deadlines. We continue to urge the possessors to take every possible step to meet these deadlines. In supporting this aim, the EU, and bilaterally several of its member states, has provided assistance to Russia. The EU underlines also the necessity for all States Parties to implement in their own legislation the Convention’s provisions as per Article VII. We recall that the States acceding to or ratifying and implementing the CWC can be provided assistance by the OPCW to comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. We would like to reiterate our offer of assistance as communicated to all States Parties by the Director General of the OPCW.

13. The EU believes that the verification regime implemented by the OPCW is an essential means of deterring non-compliance with the Convention and increasing transparency, confidence and international security. Within that regime challenge inspections remain a valid tool and the EU believes that the Technical Secretariat must be well prepared and equipped to conduct such an inspection. Furthermore the EU supports the efforts being made to maintain its readiness.

14. In addressing the problem of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, the EU supports the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) which, since its inception in November 2002, has become an important transparency and confidence building instrument and a practical contribution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In particular, we continue to underline the fact that the Code constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and a fundamental step to effectively addressing the problem of
missile proliferation from a multilateral global perspective. We are pleased that 124 countries have already subscribed to the Code and more countries are seriously considering taking this step soon. However, the strength of the Code depends on the full implementation of the transparency measures foreseen by all subscribing States. The EU therefore urges all subscribing States to fully implement the Code's transparency measures.

15. The EU is conscious of the growing involvement of the international community in outer space activities for development and progress, and of the increasing dependence on outer space for their economic and industrial development as well as their security. We are also actively cooperating in various space initiatives. Such activities should be developed in a peaceful environment: an arms race in outer space must be prevented. Such prevention is an essential condition for strengthening strategic stability and for the promotion of international cooperation in the free exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes by all States.

16. We recognize a growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space. We also appreciated the careful consideration of the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) this year by the Conference on Disarmament. We consider PAROS to be an important matter to be dealt with in the CD, in a way that is subject to agreement by all.

17. I would like to conclude this statement by noting the value of international public discussion that contributes in the long term to the creation, universalisation and effective implementation of international commitments relating to the WMD. Among other things, this discussion has contributed strongly to the CWC and BTWC that in effect represent the universal perception of the total unacceptability of biological and chemical weapons - and the everyday relevance of this contribution has been well illustrated for example in the discussion on the codes of conduct for scientists in the BTWC context.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.