STATEMENT

On behalf of the European Union

by

H.E. Mr Magnus Hellgren
Ambassador

in the Outer Space Cluster
of the General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
New York

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Mr Chairman,

1. I speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

2. The growing number of actors and rapid development of activities in outer space reinforce the longstanding position of the EU and its Member States in favour of the enhancement of the multilateral framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space. The EU stresses that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

3. We are particularly sensitive to the issue of the security of space objects and urge all States to refrain from undertaking actions likely to undermine it, especially by creating additional debris.

4. The EU is participating in the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on various aspects of space security. In that context, we have noted the proposal by the Russian Federation and China of a draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects. We have also noted ideas for a legally binding prohibitions on testing and use of anti-satellite weapons.

5. In our common response to General Assembly resolution 63/68 the European Union outlines in detail its views on the way forward regarding transparency and confidence building measures in outer space activities.

6. The European Union promotes the elaboration of an international and voluntary set of guidelines, a short term deliverable that would strengthen safety, security and predictability of all space activities. Such guidelines should, among other things, limit or minimise harmful interference, collisions or accidents in outer space, as well as the creation of debris.

7. To this end, the European Union has elaborated a draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The draft has been made public and earlier this year presented both at the Conference on Disarmament and at the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The draft Code is based on three principles:

- freedom for all to use outer space for peaceful purposes;
- preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit;

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process
- due consideration for the legitimate security and defence needs of States.

8. Our proposed draft foresees that the Code would be applicable to all outer space activities conducted by States or non-governmental entities. As the draft code would be voluntary and open to all States, it would lay down the basic rules to be observed by space faring nations in both civil and military space activities. The draft Code does not include any provisions concerning the placement of weapons in outer space. The purpose of the draft Code is not to duplicate or compete with initiatives already dealing with this specific issue. On the contrary, as a transparency and confidence building measure, the draft Code does insist on the importance to take all measures in order to prevent space from becoming an area of conflict and calls on nations to resolve any conflict in outer space by peaceful means.

9. The aim of the EU is to soon reach a text that is acceptable to the greatest number of States and that thus bring effective security benefits in a relatively short term. For this purpose the EU has launched an extensive consultation process. At the end of this process, the EU hopes to be able to propose a revised Code of Conduct that would be open to participation by all States on a voluntary basis at an ad hoc conference.

Thank you.