STATEMENT

On behalf of the European Union

by

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Ambassador

in the Disarmament Machinery Cluster
of the General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
1. I speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries 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, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

2. The European Union strongly believes that a multilateral approach to security, disarmament and non-proliferation is the best way of maintaining international peace. The EU, as a firm supporter of effective multilateralism, considers that the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and various international treaties, together with their organisations and review processes, are mutually reinforcing.

3. In view of the new threats to security, the disarmament machinery has an increasingly important role to play and we should make every effort to preserve and, where possible, strengthen it.

4. Given its universal nature, the First Committee is one of the most important fora for discussing and passing resolutions on non-proliferation and disarmament issues. In the First Committee we should foster a common understanding of the current threats to peace and security and enable the international community to address them effectively in all relevant bodies.

5. The EU supports the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, under the able leadership of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Ambassador Sergio Duarte. The ODA inter alia plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the mandates, decisions and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

6. The European Union underlines the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single permanent forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. The EU warmly welcomed the adoption by consensus of the comprehensive Programme of Work on 29 May 2009 and profoundly regrets that its implementation did not begin before the end of the 2009 session. The EU looks forward to the early commencement of substantive work in 2010, building on the political consensus achieved this year.

7. The EU wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its desire to see the CD enlarged, in particular to include those of its Member States which are not yet members of the Conference.

8. The UN Disarmament Commission was established to be the universal deliberative body on disarmament. The EU hopes that the UNDC will in the future be able to fully resume its role in promoting the objectives set out in its mandate and start in-depth consideration of the key issues on the agenda adopted in 2009.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process
9. The existing disarmament machinery has produced significant obligations and commitments in the disarmament field. While there is room for improvements, the machinery continues to have the potential to fulfil its functions. Given the current security challenges and today’s international relations it is important that we effectively utilize the potential of the disarmament machinery and, where needed, improve its functioning. In the end, what is essential for any machinery of this kind to function effectively is political will, good faith, trust and the willingness of States to fully comply with obligations and commitments agreed. In this spirit, the EU will continue to work constructively in all parts of the disarmament machinery.

Thank you.