EU Statement
on "Outer Space"

By

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at the

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Mr Chairman,

1. I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, The Acceding country Croatia*, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland* and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

2. We all know that space activities are expanding and their importance is crucial. Space is a resource for all countries in the world. Those which do not yet have space activities will have them in the future. The EU and its Member States have a longstanding position in favour of the enhancement of the multilateral framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space and its use on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. We stress 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. The European Union is fully committed to strengthening the security of activities in outer space that contribute to the development and security of states. To this end, the EU aims at promoting international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

3. We are particularly sensitive to the issue of the safety of space systems and urge all States to take necessary measures and actions aiming at mitigating the creation of space debris.

4. We are 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 prohibition on testing and use of anti-satellite weapons.

5. Growing number of countries is now committed to the development and implementation of transparency and confidence building measures, as a means to achieve enhanced safety and security in outer space. All EU Member States cosponsored in 2010 the resolution 65/68 "Transparency and Confidence Building Measures in Outer Space activities" presented by the Russian Federation in the First Committee. Four EU Member States participate in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space established by this resolution, which started its work in New York last July. We fully support it as a means conducive to achieving enhanced space security.

6. In our view, the elaboration of an international and voluntary set of guidelines, a tool that would strengthen safety, security and predictability of all space activities, should be promoted. 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, and based on its reply to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 61/75 of 6 December 2006, the European Union launched initial consultations to promote the development of an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space activities. In 2008, the EU presented a preliminary draft, and following extensive consultations and comments received from third countries, presented revised drafts in 2010 and 2012. The EU formally presented

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* Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.
the latest draft International Code of Conduct to the international community in Vienna on 5 June 2012.

8. The draft Code is guided by the following principles:
- freedom for all to use outer space for peaceful purposes;
- preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit;
- due consideration for the legitimate security and defence needs of States.

9. The proposed draft, now also supported by a large number of countries outside Europe, foresees that the international 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, but insists 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.

10. As an overarching initiative, addressing the safety and sustainability of the space environment as well as stability and security in outer space, we consider that it would not be suitable to hold substantive multilateral discussions in any existing international fora dealing exclusively with either non-proliferation and disarmament issues (e.g. Conference on Disarmament (CD)) or the civilian uses of outer space (e.g. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)). By pursuing discussions outside of these fora, in a process open to all UN States, we hope to broaden international participation in the initiative, including to States currently non members of the CD or COPUOS. We hope that this approach will bring successful discussion of an International Code of Conduct to a swifter conclusion, which would then allow for its submission to the UN General Assembly for endorsement.

11. This initiative contributes to enhancing international space security together with other ongoing international space initiatives, such as the work of the UN COPUOS Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and of the GGE on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space, which the EU considers extremely important and complementary to the principles developed in the Code. The Code was presented last July to the GGE and was positively received. Its non-legally binding and overarching nature will not prejudice any substantive discussions on all issues related to the 'Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space' (PAROS) in the CD.

12. Following the discussion on 5 June 2012 in Vienna on the nature and process of this initiative, we have decided to hold the first multilateral experts meeting to discuss the draft Code in the near future, possibly in January in 2013. This meeting should give the occasion to each participant to present and exchange views on the text, to ask for clarifications and present possible new ideas. All UN Member States are invited to participate.

13. Our aim remains to find agreement on a text that is acceptable to all interested States and that thus brings effective security benefits in a relatively short term. At the end of this process, the EU and other supporters of this initiative intend to present a final version of the international Code of Conduct that would be open to participation by all States on a voluntary basis at an ad hoc diplomatic conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.