EU Statement

By

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At the General Debate of the 71st Session of the
UN General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
New York
3 October 2016

- Check against delivery –
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me to first congratulate you on the assumption of the chairmanship of this year's First Committee meeting and assure you of the European Union's full support.

2. The European Union remains fully committed to effective multilateralism and the rules-based international system, with the United Nations at its core. The EU will continue to promote universalisation and full implementation of the existing multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control treaties and regimes.

3. Promotion of gender equality, gender consciousness, empowerment of women and prevention of sexual violence is another important horizontal priority for the European Union. We believe that the active and equal participation and leadership of women in decision making and action, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, is crucial in achieving peace, security and sustainable development. The EU continues to be committed to the full implementation of Resolution 1325 and all other relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council aimed at advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

4. The European Union regards the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. A key priority for the EU is to uphold and preserve the NPT as a multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability.

5. We emphasise the importance of universalizing the NPT and call upon States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states without delay and without conditions. We reiterate the European Union's strong support for all three pillars of the Treaty. We call for the implementation of all obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT or undertaken during previous Review Conferences.

6. The European Union calls on all State Parties to implement, without delay and in a balanced manner, the 2010 Action Plan designed to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty. The concrete and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, contained in the Action Plan, will contribute to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We underline the importance of achieving a substantial outcome during the next NPT review cycle and

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
look forward to progress at the First Preparatory Committee meeting in 2017. The EU and its Member States will continue to contribute actively to the discussions in various disarmament and non-proliferation fora.

7. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the opening up for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force and universalization remain top priorities for the EU. We welcome the Vienna Ministerial Meeting and the 8th CTBT Friends Ministerial meeting which garnered wide political support for the CTBT. All 28 EU Member States have ratified the Treaty and are planning to co-sponsor the 1st Committee Resolution on the CTBT.

8. We welcome the reaffirmation of the importance of the CTBT expressed in the new UN Security Council Resolution. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the eight remaining States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify it. The EU will continue to promote this objective through our diplomatic and financial engagement. Moreover, the EU continues to support the build-up of the verification regime of CTBTO through significant voluntary contributions.

9. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the EU calls on all States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and refrain from any action that would defeat the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

10. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the DPRK's nuclear tests and launches using ballistic missile technology, which constitute a direct threat to international and regional peace and security and further aggravate tensions on the Korean peninsula. We are appalled by the continuing grave violations by the DPRK of its international obligations, as set out in relevant UN Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, and 2094 and 2270 and its continuing acts of provocation, including two nuclear tests and multiple ballistic missile launches across a variety of platforms and ranges. As a result, the EU and its Member States have continuously implemented all relevant UN Security Council resolutions in a robust manner, reinforcing and complementing UN restrictive measures with the EU’s own autonomous restrictive measures targeting the DPRK’s nuclear, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes.

11. We urge the DPRK to fully comply with its international obligations, abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and return to compliance with the NPT and IAEA safeguards at an early date. We furthermore call on the DPRK to refrain from any action that further increases regional tensions and to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

12. The European Union will use every means at its disposal to assist in resolving proliferation crises. The historic agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is one of the rare successes of diplomacy in the Middle East, strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Only its full and sustained implementation can provide the international
community with the necessary assurances on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and contribute to international and regional security.

13. We welcome Iran's provisional application of the Additional Protocol and the full implementation of the modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements to its Safeguards Agreement. We look forward to the early ratification of the Additional Protocol and its sustained implementation. We reiterate the need for Iran to strictly adhere to all its commitments under the JCPOA, and to carry on cooperating fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA, which is crucial for the IAEA to reach the Broader Conclusion on the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme. Furthermore, we call on all parties concerned to fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 2231, including the call on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

14. The European Union reaffirms its strong support to the objective of creating in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, all other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery. We regret that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems has not been convened. We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree arrangements for a meaningful conference, to be attended by all States of the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them as decided by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Ratifications by the remaining States of the region of the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) would be important confidence- and security-building measures, and could constitute tangible steps in the direction of the Middle East WMD Free Zone.

15. The European Union is appalled by the recurring and systematic use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We have noted with dismay the report by the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), confirming that the Syrian Armed Forces and Da'esh have carried out such attacks. There can be no impunity and perpetrators of these horrific attacks must be held accountable. In this regard, the EU recalls UN Security Council Resolutions 2118 and 2209. We stand united in condemning, in the strongest terms, all use of chemical weapons in Syria or anywhere else, by anyone and under any circumstances. The use of chemical weapons constitutes a violation of international law, a war crime, and a crime against humanity.

16. The EU and its Member States have supported by significant contributions the work of the OPCW in verifying the dismantling of the declared Syrian chemical weapons programme. While the complete destruction of the declared chemicals as verified by the OPCW is welcome, the EU remains concerned over the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain in Syria’s declaration. The EU strongly supports the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and deplores the fact that the OPCW is not in a position to confirm that the Syrian declaration is "exact and exhaustive". We urge the government of the Syrian Arab Republic to extend full cooperation to the Technical
Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues and convince the international community that its chemical weapons programme has been completely and irreversibly dismantled.

17. The EU welcomes the successful removal of the remaining chemical weapon precursors from Libya for destruction outside the country. This constitutes a positive and important development for Libya’s stability. EU Member States have contributed to the success of the international operation through providing personnel, technical expertise, equipment, financial and other resources.

18. The European Union attaches high priority to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We have consistently supported the full implementation and further strengthening of these Conventions in order to prevent chemical and biological agents and toxins from being developed and used as weapons.

19. Over the past decade, numerous countries have benefitted from EU assistance in support of the CWC and the BTWC. The EU will continue its efforts in building and sustaining confidence in compliance, supporting national implementation, supporting the UN Secretary General’s Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons and agents, and promoting universality.

20. The upcoming Eight Review Conference of the BTWC has a responsibility to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of the Convention in a fast changing world of unprecedented scientific and technological developments.

21. The EU’s objective at the Review Conference is to contribute to a full review of the operations of the Convention, to support a new substantive work programme and a Ninth Review Conference to be held no later than 2021. In this context, we are supporting all efforts that would lead to a much more effective intersessional programme and enable a better functioning of the Convention, including the ability of States Parties to formally take collective action between Review Conferences.

22. The risk of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction adds a further critical dimension to the proliferation threat. The European Union and its Member States remain gravely concerned about this risk and the continued use of chemical weapons by Da’esh in Iraq and Syria. We underline the importance of further national, regional and international efforts to prevent non-State actors from acquiring and using nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, their means of delivery, related materials or radioactive sources.

23. Improving nuclear and radiological security is a key priority for the EU and its Member States. We support the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in this area and continue to provide significant support for assistance projects in third countries. We underline the importance of countries adhering to the relevant international conventions and recognise the work carried out in the auspices of other initiatives to combat nuclear terrorism. We welcome the international conference on nuclear security to be held in Vienna from 5-9 December 2016 and encourage all IAEA Member States to participate at ministerial level.
24. From the outset, the EU and its Member States have been staunch supporters of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 calling for its practical, effective and robust implementation with the objective of strengthening global efforts in this regard. All 28 EU Member States have submitted at least one report on the implementation of this Resolution to the 1540 Committee, and several of them have drawn up national action plans which are updated periodically. We are ready to offer further assistance to third countries to help them meet their obligations.

25. In June this year, the EU submitted its report entitled EU support to the full and universal implementation of UNSCR 1540. As a result of the Comprehensive Review, we expect the UN Security Council to restate its strong support for the resolution's full implementation, through a further resolution.

26. The Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in December this year will provide a renewed opportunity to take important decisions for the next review cycle and continue discussions on issues such as Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). The EU welcomes the adoption of the Political Declaration on IEDs in the framework of Amended Protocol II, and takes note of the recommendations of the 2016 Group of Experts on LAWS.

27. The EU and its Member States have a long-standing commitment to the CCW and its Protocols. The CCW is a unique international forum gathering diplomatic, legal and military expertise. It offers a flexible way to respond to new developments in the field of weapons technologies and above all, to support the implementation of an essential part of International Humanitarian Law which contributes to preventing and reducing the suffering of both civilians and combatants.

28. The universalisation of the CCW remains an important objective for the European Union. We support efforts to strengthen the Convention and stress the importance of compliance with its provisions and the annexed Protocols. We are concerned about allegations of recent air-delivered incendiary weapons against targets located within a concentration of civilians in Syria.

29. The EU has long supported the process leading to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its entry into force in 2014. All 28 EU Member States are party to this Treaty which provides for robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, making it more responsible and transparent and preventing the illicit trade and diversion.

30. The EU welcomes the successful outcome of the Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Geneva in August this year. Now that the necessary structures of the Treaty are in place we should tackle the issues of substance and make further progress to achieve all the objectives of the Treaty. Our aim is to maintain the international momentum and continue to promote the effective implementation and further universalisation of the ATT.

31. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) is currently fuelling crime, conflicts and terrorism in many parts of the world. It has a wide range of humanitarian
and socio-economic consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development.

32. The European Union supports the implementation of the UN Programme of Action and provides assistance to various countries and regions to curb the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of SALW and their ammunition.

33. The EU will continue to support the implementation and universalisation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, to which all 28 EU Member States are Party. As the world's largest humanitarian donor, the EU will continue to provide assistance, in particular related to the clearance and destruction of mines and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), assistance to victims and mine risk education in the most heavily affected countries and regions of the world.

34. We support the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and call upon all actors to fully observe the principles of International Humanitarian Law. At their Sixth Meeting, the States Parties agreed by consensus to implement all their outstanding obligations before 2030.

35. It is ever more urgent that the international community works together to preserve the long-term safety, security and sustainability of the space environment. The EU warmly welcomes the agreement reached in COPUOS, in June 2016, on a first set of long-term sustainability guidelines and looks forward to further work on this issue. This notwithstanding, we believe that a constructive discussion among international partners on principles of responsible behaviour in outer space should be a useful complement to these efforts.

36. The continued proliferation and the technological improvement of ballistic missile technology adds uncertainty in international relations. The development, tests or use of ballistic missiles by certain States is a destabilizing factor in various regions of the world. The alarming acceleration of the DPRK missile programmes, the continued ballistic missile launches by Iran, as well as the use of and attempts to acquire missiles by Syria, are particularly worrying.

37. The Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) is the only multilateral transparency and confidence building instrument concerning the spread of ballistic missiles. The HCoC and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) have been effective in limiting the spread of ballistic missiles and the proliferation of missile technology, even though more remains to be done. We support the reinforcement of both instruments, which contribute to international peace, security and stability. We warmly welcome India's accession to the HCoC and MTCR and encourage others to follow this example. We strongly support the candidacy of 9 EU Member States willing to join the MTCR. Their accession would strengthen the Regime and international non-proliferation efforts.

38. The EU and its Member States support further development of norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, as well as the promotion of confidence building measures, international cooperation and capacity building to improve cyber security. We will continue to pay due attention to cyber security discussions in the UN Group of
Governmental Experts, which has already established that existing international law applies in cyberspace.

39. We will elaborate in more detail on the EU’s positions and contributions during the thematic debates.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.