EU Statement

By

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UN General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
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Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

2. Allow me to start by congratulating you on the assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of the European Union’s full cooperation and support.

3. The world is more than ever confronted with serious proliferation crises that require our utmost vigilance and determined action.

4. The EU condemns, in the strongest terms, the nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), which threaten international and regional peace and security and are a direct and unacceptable violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions. They also represent a major challenge to the global non-proliferation regime, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The EU reafﬁrms that the NPT is 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 Treaty, and an important element in the future development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The EU and its Member States will spare no effort to ensure the success of the 2020 NPT Review Conference, the 10th cycle of which is considered important in many aspects. Moreover, the recent developments on the Korean Peninsula underline the vital importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its verification regime, and the urgency of its early entry into force. The EU welcomes the adoption of UNSCR 2310 which reafﬁrms the CTBT’s key role.

5. The EU welcomes the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 2375 and urges all States to effectively implement rigorous sanctions against the DPRK. The EU is working on additional autonomous measures aimed at achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula through diplomatic means. We reiterate our full support to our partners in the region and their security.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA), negotiated with regard to the Iranian nuclear programme, demonstrates that effective multilateralism and diplomacy in good faith can work and bring about results even to the most pressing proliferation crises. The EU reafﬁrms its longstanding support to the JCPoA, a robust agreement endorsed by UNSCR 2231, which must be rigorously implemented by all parties. While welcoming the ongoing implementation, the EU reiterates the need for Iran to strictly abide by all its nuclear-related commitments and to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The early ratification by Iran of the Additional Protocol is essential. Furthermore, we call on Iran

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The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. We reiterate our support for the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) and emphasise the need to step up multilateral efforts against ballistic missile proliferation which is a destabilising factor in various regions of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

7. We find it deeply shocking and deplorable that the international community is still confronted with the use of chemical weapons despite international law prohibiting them. The EU reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of all use of chemical weapons. Any use of chemical weapons, be it by State or non-State actors is abhorrent. There can be no impunity and those responsible must be held accountable. In this regard, the EU recalls the importance of full observance of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the vital role the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plays in its implementation. We call upon the Syrian Arab Republic, a State Party to CWC, to fully cooperate with the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and clarify the many serious and substantive open questions with regard to its initial and subsequent chemical weapons declarations. The EU notes with grave concern the confirmed use of sarin in a chemical weapon attack in Khan Sheikhoun on 4 April 2017 and exposure of victims to sulphur mustard in Um-Housh on 16 September 2016. The EU supports and encourages the work of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), in partnership with the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM), to promptly identify those responsible for such abominable attacks. The EU calls on all members of the Security Council to support an immediate extension of the JIM’s mandate to send a strong signal against impunity.

8. The EU reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons, all other weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems in the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region.

9. All UN Member States have the responsibility to stem the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition which are fuelling armed conflicts, organised crime and terrorism. The EU calls upon all UN Member States to join the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which has the potential to stem unregulated illicit and irresponsible flows of arms to conflict regions and to countries with high levels of armed violence thereby reducing the harmful impact of such arms transfers.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The EU calls on all Parties to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and to ensure its full and verifiable compliance. This landmark arms control agreement has eliminated an entire class of weapons, including some 3000 nuclear and conventional ballistic missiles. It is vital for Europe’s and other regions’ security and stability.

11. The EU recalls that under the 2011 START agreement, the United States and the Russian Federation must meet the Treaty's central limits on strategic arms by 5 February 2018. The EU encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, reduce the operational readiness of their nuclear weapon systems and pursue further discussions
on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals.

Mr. Chairman,

12. At a time when multilateral cooperation needs to be strengthened due to multiple challenges, the European Union remains a strong, consistent and reliable partner of the United Nations. The EU promotes a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core, as set out in the EU Global Strategy. We will further elaborate on the EU’s positions during the thematic debates. EU Member States will elaborate in their national statements on particular developments in disarmament and international security which they consider to be of special importance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.