5 March 2013

Conference on Disarmament
Statement of the European Union on Nuclear Disarmament
Geneva, 5 March 2013

Madame President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro², Iceland³, Serbia⁴, Albania⁵ and the Republic of Moldova.

In our statement of 22 January 2013 we outlined the overall views of the European Union on the current situation at the Conference on Disarmament. We continue to be deeply troubled by the persisting impasse. We commend the efforts of you and your team to advance our work. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the efforts made by Ambassador Dekany of Hungary and his team in this regard. Let us stress again today that exchanging views on main issues is not a substitute to our main focus which is the adoption and implementation of a Programme of Work leading to negotiations. We should not create the impression that the CD is advancing while it is not.

Reverting to our topic of today, the EU would like to reaffirm its commitment to the global efforts to seek a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the objectives of the NPT. The EU continues to regard the 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. We reaffirm our full and unconditional support of all three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In view of current proliferation risks, we are convinced that today it is more vital than ever to preserve and strengthen its authority and its integrity.

We remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The European Union consistently underlines the need to continue the overall reduction of global stockpiles of nuclear weapons especially by those States with the largest arsenals, taking into account the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency to guide all measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms control as a contribution to establishing and upholding international peace, security and stability.

We therefore welcome the increased transparency shown by some nuclear-weapon States, in particular the European Union Member States on the nuclear weapons they possess and call on other to do likewise.

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* Acceding Country Croatia and the Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

¹ Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
The first session of the Preparatory Committee last year in Vienna paved the way for a smooth start of the new Review Cycle. We are hopeful that during the second session of the Preparatory Committee to take place in Geneva in a few weeks time, we will be able to see further progress in assessing the implementation of all elements of the Action Plan designed to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty. The European Union remains engaged to assist the Chair designate Ambassador Feruta in his efforts to achieve a successful outcome of this session.

We noted with regret the postponement of the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which, in accordance with the decision of the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT was scheduled to take place in 2012. The EU supports the ongoing preparations for a successful conference with the participation of all States of the region and the tireless efforts of Ambassador Laajava to lay the groundwork in this respect. We hope that the Conference will be convened as soon as possible this year. The EU continues to be actively engaged in supporting this process, notably through its Non-Proliferation consortium and a series of seminars on the topic, such as those organised in 2008, 2011 and November 2012.

The international community continues to be faced with major proliferation challenges, which must be addressed in a resolute way in order to maintain the credibility and effectiveness of the NPT regime. The recent DPRK nuclear test was condemned by the international community: it represents a serious threat to regional and international peace and security and a serious affront to the principles set out in the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Council of the EU, in its conclusions of 18 February 2013, condemned in the strongest terms the nuclear test which clearly violates its international obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874 and 2087 and demanded that Pyongyang abandons from further tests. In addition to those contained in UNSCR 2087, the EU decided to further strengthen sanctions against the DPRK by adopting EU autonomous measures. The EU calls upon the DPRK to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and re-engage constructively with the international community and in particular the members of the Six-Party Talks, in order to work towards lasting peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

International concerns about the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program have increased, in light of the latest IAEA DG's reports. The EU's objective remains to achieve a comprehensive negotiated long-term settlement. The E3+3 - China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States – led by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy - remain firm, clear and united in seeking a swift diplomatic resolution of the international community's concerns on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, based on the NPT, and the full implementation of UN Security Council and IAEA Board of governors resolutions.

On 26 February in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the E3+3 tabled a balanced and fair revised proposal for a first confidence building step. The offer addresses international concerns on the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program, but is also responsive to Iranian ideas. We regret that the Almaty meeting has not been the occasion for Iran to take concrete steps and make some substantial progress. We therefore urge Iran to engage seriously and to urgently take the necessary steps that would restore confidence.

Let me emphasize that for the EU, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the CD on an FMCT, on the basis of the document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, and subsequently reiterated in CD/1864, remains a clear priority. Launching and concluding
these negotiations are urgent and important as an essential step to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT.

All EU Member States supported GA resolution 67/53 on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The mechanism established by this resolution represents a useful contribution to helping the CD without undermining its authority and primary role in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and a top priority for the European Union. The European Union calls on all States that have not done so, in particular the remaining Annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty at an early date. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the EU calls on all States to uphold a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. It is clear that the adoption of a Programme of Work will require sustained political efforts from all of us. We regret that the CD so far this year was unable to agree on a Programme of Work. We reaffirm our commitment to engage constructively and urge others to do the same.