Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. 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 the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, San Marino and Andorra associate themselves with this statement.

2. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

3. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation system, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its Article VI and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy application for the peaceful purposes. In view of current proliferation risks, we are convinced that today the NPT is more vital than ever. We must preserve and strengthen its authority and integrity.

4. We warmly welcome progress made in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation since the successful NPT Review Conference in 2010, in particular the entry into force of the New START Treaty. At the same time we continue to be deeply concerned at the persisting impasse, for over a decade, in the Conference on Disarmament, thereby preventing it from fulfilling its mandate and in particular its failure to start negotiations on an FMCT. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

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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 remains an EFTA country and member of the European Economic Area
and their means of delivery, and the risk that non-state actors gain access to such weapons, continues to be a major threat to international peace and security that calls for a global approach.

Mr. Chairman,

5. With the adoption by consensus of the forward-looking Action Plan set out in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, States parties reaffirmed their shared commitment to comply with their obligations and to fulfil the goals of the NPT and towards its universal accession. The implementation of the Action Plan is a collective responsibility shared by all states parties. The EU calls on all the States Parties to work on implementing, without delay and in a balanced manner, all actions designed to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy and we will do the same.

6. In line with Action 1, calling for actions from all state parties, nuclear as well as non-nuclear countries, the European Union welcomed the follow up meeting to the NPT RevCon by the five nuclear weapon states in Paris on 30 June – 1 July 2011 at which they expressed their determination to implement the commitments they made at the 2010 Conference and to achieve further progress on the objectives of the NPT. The European Union also takes note with appreciation of all initiatives genuinely aimed at promoting the implementation of the NPT Action Plan in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, including, inter alia, the “Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative”.

7. The European Union and its Member States are committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and Action 2 of the 2010 Action Plan, and with regard to Actions 3 to 5, have supported the significant steps taken by two European Union Member States. The European Union consistently underlines the need to continue the overall reduction of the 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 reaffirmed by NPT 2010 Review Conference, as a contribution to establishing and upholding international peace, security and stability. The European Union therefore welcomes the increased transparency shown by some nuclear–weapon States, in particular the European Union Member States, on the nuclear weapons they possess, and calls on others to do likewise. The European Union furthermore welcomed the entry into force of the New START treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation. The implementation of this Treaty and the pursuit of the bilateral disarmament process are the most important issues on the disarmament agenda. The EU encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to continue negotiations in order to achieve greater reductions in their nuclear arsenals, including non-strategic weapons.

8. With regard to the implementation of Action 9, the European Union, at the first Conference of States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty, offered to
support the implementation of the Treaty and the establishment and work of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE). The European Union started work on identifying instruments and means to actively support the AFCONE, depending on concrete assistance needs to be determined.

9. With regard to the implementation of Actions 6, 7 and 15, the European Union remains deeply concerned by the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, including the persistent failure to agree on a Programme of Work for the CD, despite recent attempts to achieve consensus. The European Union has repeatedly appealed for the immediate launch of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), which is an indispensable step towards fulfilment of the obligations and final objective enshrined in Article VI of the NPT. The European Union and its Members States are therefore committed to engage, in order to make progress on Actions 6, 7 and 15, in substantive discussions on all the core issues on the CD agenda. By the same token, the European Union continues to call on the CD to consider the question of the enlargement of its membership.

10. The effective functioning of multilateral disarmament institutions is vital for our security. The European Union deeply regrets that despite clear manifestations of strong political will on the part of the overwhelming majority of CD members and firm support for negotiations and clear calls from both the UN Secretary General and UN General Assembly, the CD has not yet been able to build upon the momentum in global disarmament and non-proliferation. The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the mandate it received from the SSOD-1, should be the place to forge multilateral treaties. However, given the continuing stalemate in the CD, the international community needs to reflect on options and to ensure progress. In this respect, the European Union has presented during the UNGA debate on 27-29 July 2011 options to overcome the deadlock in the CD in order to take multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations forward.

11. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which was also underlined during the Article XIV Conference in New York on 23 September 2011. This is a top priority for the European Union. The European Union, with regard to the implementation of Actions 10 to 12, repeatedly, in all its diplomatic outreach activities, calls on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining Annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty at an early date. We welcome the latest ratifications by the Central African Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Guinea, Guatemala and Indonesia. In line with Actions 13 and 14, the European Union has continued to provide significant support for the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the verification system (more than €10 million in the last 5 years). The latest Council Decision (2010/461/CFSP) adopted on 26 July 2010 provides for €5.3 million and another Council Decision is under preparation.

12. We reiterate our appeal to all States that have not done so, and in particular the 8 remaining States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty, to sign and ratify the CTBT swiftly and unconditionally. Pending the entry into force of the
CTBT, 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 pending its entry into force.

13. With regard to Action 19, the European Union organised several topical conferences, including in May 2011 and February 2012, and supports via the so-called European Union Non-Proliferation Consortium with more than €2 million the establishment and strengthening of a network of independent European Think Tanks and NGOs.

Mr. Chairman,

14. In line with Action 8, the EU continues to stress the necessity of progress in all fields of disarmament. Positive and negative security assurances play an important role in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The EU is committed to promoting further consideration of security assurances and welcomes the respective adjustments in the nuclear postures of some nuclear weapon states.

15. The proliferation of missiles with potential to deliver weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security as underlined in UNSCR 1540, 1887 and 1977. We are concerned about the ongoing missile programmes in the Middle East, North-East Asia and South Asia, including Iran and the DPRK, and support international instruments regarding missile proliferation, such as the Hague Code of Conduct and the MTCR.

16. In line with Action 9, the EU continues to attach great importance to the development of internationally recognised nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs), established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned, as provided for in the guidelines adopted by the UNDC in 1999. We hope that outstanding issues concerning nuclear-weapon-free zones can be resolved through in-depth consultations, in accordance with the UNDC guidelines and with the agreement of all parties involved and, in this respect, welcome the recent progress of the negotiations between ASEAN Member States and the P5 on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Serious challenges remain in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and we must face them with resolve. We note with satisfaction the growing momentum for progress towards achieving the goals enshrined in the NPT. The EU calls on all States to seize this opportunity and work together to make the world a safer place.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.