Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey§, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Andorra.

2. Allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the chairmanship of the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2020 NPT Review Conference and assure you of the EU’s full support. We appreciate the inclusive and transparent manner in which you have conducted the preparations and your initiatives to ensure a coherent review cycle.

3. The EU and its Member States are united in their support for the NPT which remains 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 future development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The NPT has made a crucial contribution to international peace, security and stability over the past half a century.

4. At the start of this important new review cycle, our priority is to uphold and preserve the NPT as a key multilateral instrument, to promote its universalisation and strengthen its implementation. Speaking at the 2017 Carnegie Nuclear Policy Conference in March this year, the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini said "The Non-Proliferation Treaty, as it turns fifty, has become even more important - not less". We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States. We reiterate the EU’s strong, resolute and continuous support for all

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§ Candidate Country
* Candidate Countries Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
three pillars of the Treaty which are equally important and mutually reinforcing and can contribute to a safer world. We call on all State Parties to implement all the obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT or undertaken during previous Review Conferences. The concrete, equally important and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy contained in the 2010 Action Plan remain valid and will contribute to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. It is of utmost importance that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context for arms control and disarmament. The EU continues to contribute actively to global efforts 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, in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

Mr. Chairman,

5. EU Member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. We stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of Article VI of the NPT, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals. We encourage 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, and pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. The EU calls on all Parties to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty which is vital for Europe’s and other regions’ security and stability and to ensure its full and verifiable compliance.

6. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force and universalisation remain top priorities for the EU. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the EU calls on all States to uphold their moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty. The EU will continue to promote this objective diplomatically and financially, including through support to strengthen the verification capabilities of the International Monitoring System. We will host a dedicated side-event during this Preparatory Committee session to highlight the importance of the CTBT. We welcome the reaffirmation of the importance of the CTBT through UN Security Council Resolution 2310.

7. The EU remains united and committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and reiterates its call for the necessity, more than ever, to overcome the longstanding deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament. As a first step we call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We call on all States
possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the establishment of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group, whose mandate is to make recommendations on substantial elements for a future Treaty, without prejudice to national positions in future negotiations.

8. The EU and its Member States supported the 2016 General Assembly Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. While verification is not an aim in itself, further development of the multilateral nuclear verification capabilities will be required for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

9. EU Member States are undertaking initiatives in multilateral fora to enhance nuclear disarmament and may elaborate on these initiatives in their national statements.

10. The EU recognizes that negative security assurances strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and calls on all nuclear weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We express our readiness to pursue further discussion on negative security assurances.

11. Promotion of gender equality, gender consciousness and empowerment of women remains a priority for the EU, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU is 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.

12. We also wish to highlight the importance of the disarmament and non-proliferation education and the useful role played by the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, the European network of independent think tanks.

13. The EU notes the severe consequences associated with nuclear weapons use and emphasises that all States share the responsibility to prevent such an occurrence from happening.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The world continues to face serious proliferation crises which threaten international peace, security and the global non-proliferation regime. We underline the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council to address cases of non-compliance and to respond effectively to a State Party’s intention to withdraw from the NPT.

15. The EU has condemned, in the strongest terms, the nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in violation and flagrant disregard of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions. We once again demand that the DPRK comply with all its international obligations fully, unconditionally and without delay and thus abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The DPRK’s nuclear
and missile programs pose critical and increasing challenges and call for a strong and timely international reaction before the DPRK acquires operational nuclear weapons capabilities. We call on the DPRK to return at an early date to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards, to ratify the CTBT, and to refrain from any further action that would only increase regional tensions. We urge the DPRK to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community. We call on all UN Member States to fully implement all UN Security Council Resolutions adopted with regard to the DPRK.

16. The EU deeply regrets that Syria has still to remedy its non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement and once again urges Syria to resolve all outstanding issues in full cooperation with the IAEA and to adhere to the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

17. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the E3/EU+3 and Iran demonstrates that it is possible to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions even to the most pressing proliferation challenges. This is a multilateral, successful endeavour, concluded in full conformity with the principles of the NPT and endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The EU remains committed to the JCPOA and this Resolution, welcomes progress made so far in its implementation, and underlines the need to continue ensuring full and effective implementation throughout the entire lifetime of the deal, as verified by the IAEA. We call on Iran to promptly ratify the Additional Protocol and refrain from activities such as ballistic missile tests, which are inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

18. The EU supports the strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA safeguards system that plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations under the NPT. Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with the Additional Protocol constitute the current verification standard. The EU continues to call for their universalisation without delay.

19. The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We consider the 1995 Resolution valid until its goals and objectives are achieved and deeply regret that the 2012 Helsinki conference was not 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. The EU has continuously expressed its readiness to assist in the process and organised a seminar in 2011 and in 2012 as well as a capacity-building workshop in 2014 to help produce a conducive atmosphere and move the process forward. We continue to call on all States in the region, which have not yet done so, to accede to, and abide by the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, to sign and ratify the CTBT, and to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Additional Protocol and, as applicable, a modified Small Quantities Protocol with the IAEA.

20. The EU is gravely concerned about the risk of state or non-state actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems. UN Security Council
Resolution 1540, complemented by Resolution 2325 last December, remains a key part of the international non-proliferation architecture in this regard. The EU also attaches high importance to multilateral export control regimes, namely the Zangger Committee, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement and Missile Technology Control Regime, and invites all States to adhere to their guidelines as well as to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

21. The EU recognises the right of NPT State Parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty. The responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy must take place under the best safety, security, safeguards and non-proliferation conditions.

22. The EU and its Member States are committed to promote the highest standards of nuclear safety in Europe and around the world. The IAEA has a central role in strengthening States’ capacity to ensure that the development and use of nuclear energy take place under the most rigorous safety conditions to ensure the protection of people and the environment. We urge all States with nuclear facilities to become Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and Radioactive Waste, and to actively participate in review processes and meetings.

23. Nuclear security remains the responsibility of States. International cooperation is of utmost relevance to prevent illicit nuclear and radiological trafficking and terrorist access to nuclear and radiological materials, including radioactive sources. In this regard, the IAEA plays a central role in coordinating international efforts and strengthening the international nuclear security architecture. The EU and its Member States welcome the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and will continue to work for its universalisation.

24. In the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the EU has allocated EUR 225 million over the period of 2014-2020 to promote nuclear safety, safety of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel management, radioactive protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards in third countries. The EU’s Centres of Excellence initiative against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats contributes to capacity-building in already 56 countries with a budget of EUR 156 million for the period of 2014-2020. The EU and its Member States are the second largest donors to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund with EU contributions alone amounting to more than EUR 50 million for the period of 2009-2019. Furthermore, the EU has contributed more than EUR 24 million to the establishment and the secure management of a Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank under the control of the IAEA.

25. The EU and its Member States continue to support the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Programme to which they are the second largest contributors. We fully appreciate the Agency’s activities in promoting a responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology in the areas of human health, food and agriculture, water
resources, environment, preservation of cultural heritage, nuclear and radiation safety, and nuclear energy, which contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Some of the EU's assistance activities in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy will be presented in a side-event taking place in the margins of the Preparatory Committee session.

Mr. Chairman,

27. To conclude, I would like to draw your attention to two Working Papers submitted by the EU, which outline in more details our objectives and activities with regard to Cluster II and Cluster III. Bearing in mind the current severe security environment, the EU encourages all State Parties to work for a successful and substantial review cycle that would reaffirm the integrity and authority of the Treaty. We look forward to making concrete progress towards that goal during the Preparatory Committee sessions.