

***FIFTY-EIGHT SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY***

FIRST COMMITTEE

GENERAL DEBATE

**Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Carlo Trezza
Head of the Italian Delegation
on behalf of the European Union**

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that you will guide us through the Committee's work in an excellent way. I wish to assure you of our wholehearted support in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The Acceding Countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovakia, Slovenia), the Associated Country Romania has expressed its wish to align itself with this statement.

Let me first of all mention the "Declaration on non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction"-adopted by the EU Heads of State and Government at the Thessaloniki European Council on 20 June 2003 - which stresses that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery such as ballistic missiles is a growing threat to international peace and security. Many of the issues that are dealt with in that Declaration are of interest to this forum.

The EU is committed to elaborate a coherent strategy to address the threat of proliferation. The European approach is guided by the commitment to:

- uphold and implement the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements;
- support for the multilateral institutions charged respectively with verification and upholding of compliance with these treaties.

To implement the Action Plan established last June, the EU has decided to focus its efforts on a number of measures. I enumerate those that are of higher relevance to this forum, such as:

- further universalising the key disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, agreements and arrangements;
- promoting national implementation of relevant treaties' obligations;
- enhancing the EU political, financial and technical support for Agencies in charge of verification; fostering the role of the UN Security Council, and enhancing its expertise in meeting the challenge of proliferation;
- reinforcing EU co-operative threat reduction programmes with third Countries, targeted at support for disarmament, control and security of sensitive materials, facilities and expertise.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU regards the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, under article VI. The Treaty does not prevent application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

All our efforts should be aimed at preserving and strengthening this fundamental instrument of international peace and security.

The EU supports wholeheartedly the objectives laid down in the Treaty and is committed to the effective implementation of the Final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and the Decisions and the Resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The EU welcomes Timor Lorosae's and Cuba's accession to the NPT and the latter's ratification of the Tlatelolco Treaty, a further step towards universalisation. The EU continues to attach special

importance to achieving universal adherence to the NPT and calls on India and Pakistan to fully comply with UNSC resolution 1172 and accede as non-nuclear weapon States to the NPT. We also call on Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State.

We have also witnessed developments susceptible to weaken the Treaty. The EU deeply deplores the announcement last year by the DPRK of its intention to withdraw from the NPT and its subsequent acts and statements challenging the non-proliferation regime. The EU continues to urge the DPRK reconsider its course of action.

The IAEA's international safeguards system is the fundamental pillar of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The EU considers that the Additional Protocols are an integral part of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system and that adherence to them should be considered an essential means of demonstrating the fulfilment of States Party's obligations under article III of the NPT. The EU considers that the IAEA comprehensive safeguards, including the Additional Protocol, constitute the verification standard, and accords a high priority to its implementation. All EU members have signed additional protocols and have either ratified them or are in a process of doing so - and we are determined to bring them into force by the end of 2003. We call on all States, that have not yet done so, to conclude and bring into force Additional Protocols with the IAEA.

The Iranian nuclear programme remains a matter of grave concern for the EU. The EU fully supports the Resolution by the IAEA Board of Governors and calls on Iran to immediately comply with all requirements of the Resolution and fully cooperate with the IAEA to enable the Board to draw definitive conclusions at its next meeting in November. The EU welcomes Iran's stated willingness to cooperate with the IAEA and hopes that Iran will sign, ratify and implement the Additional Protocol without delay as a first and essential step to restore international trust in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The EU urges Iran to act - in order to build confidence - in accordance with the provisions of the Additional Protocol with immediate effect and to refrain from fuel cycle activities which can also be used to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU wishes to reiterate that it spares no efforts in promoting the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and universal accession to it. With a view to the third Conference to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT which took place in Vienna, 3-5 September, the EU - on the basis of its renewed common position - has carried out demarches in 74 (seventy-four) countries. We welcome that Algeria - as one of the countries named in annex 2 to the Treaty - has deposited its instruments of ratification before the Conference. To ensure that the resolve of the international community does not weaken, the EU continues to call on all those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT, without delay and without conditions, in particular those States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. It is with this in mind that the Union expresses its full support for the rapid establishment of the verification regime through all its elements.

The EU attaches the utmost importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), an unique instrument towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It is for this reason that we decided to engage in a wide effort to explain, to those countries that have not adhered to it, its relevance in strengthening international peace and security and the importance of its universalisation. In this context the EU recalls articles IV and V of the Convention, obliging relevant States to destroy all their chemical weapons and calls on them to fulfil their obligations in compliance with the agreed deadlines. We are fully aware of the difficulties that some States Party to the Convention are facing to meet that

obligation. It is for that reason that we expect them to co-operate fully with the OPCW and all Member States to allow any decision on the postponement of those deadlines.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is a key instrument to prevent biological agents or toxins from being developed, produced, stockpiled or used as weapons. The EU attaches great importance to the strengthening of the Convention and to a successful outcome of the meeting of the States Party to be held in Geneva in November of this year. Member States of the EU consider the issue of national compliance and legislative and regulatory implementation measures as priorities and support proposals to strengthen such measures. The EU expresses a positive judgement on the BTWC expert meeting which took place in Geneva on 18 – 29 August last, where a great deal of information on national legislation and national mechanisms on security was exchanged. At the forthcoming meeting of States Party, the EU will strongly favour an agreement on a core package of legislation that all States Party should have in place, effectively covering both national implementation of BTWC obligations and security and oversight on the handling of pathogens.

The EU attaches special importance to the negotiation of a non-discriminatory and universal Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). The banning of the production of such material would strengthen both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and thus international security. The EU and its Member States have actively worked in the Conference on Disarmament in the search of a consensus to launch the negotiation on the basis of the report of the special coordinator and the mandate contained therein, of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We reiterate our call to the members of the CD to make every effort to attain this objective as soon as possible.

The EU regrets the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and is convinced that the new threats to peace and security require that this standstill be overcome as soon as possible. The EU is committed to reaching a consensus on a program of work in the CD and welcomes the fact that new ideas have been put forward over the last year. We appreciate these efforts aimed at promoting consensus for a program of work. We urge the Conference to start substantive work from the outset of the first session in 2004. In this respect we support efforts by the current and incoming Presidency during the intersessional period.

The EU would like to recall its attachment to the follow-up of the enlargement process of the CD. The follow-up on this process is of great importance in particular to those members of the EU that are not yet members of the Conference as well as the Acceding Countries which have submitted their request for admission to this Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU attaches great importance to the development and strengthening wherever possible of internationally recognised Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones, based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones enhance regional and global peace and security and are a means to promote nuclear disarmament, stability and confidence. We welcome and support the signature and ratification by the nuclear weapons States of the relevant protocols of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones and look forward to the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty at an early date.

The EU welcomes the adoption of an International Code of Conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles last year, in The Hague. The Code also confirms the commitment by Subscribing

States to the United Nations Declaration on international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all States. The EU considers HCOC an initial, though essential step to effectively address the problem from a multilateral, global perspective, without precluding other initiatives or, in the longer term, more comprehensive approaches. The EU believes that a relationship between the Code and the United Nations should be established.

Mr. Chairman,

In the Thessaloniki Declaration the EU recognises that "appropriate steps towards the goal of general and complete disarmament can contribute to furthering non-proliferation objectives; and we are determined to play our part in addressing the problems of regional instability and insecurity and the situations of conflict which lie behind many weapons programmes, recognising that instability does not occur in a vacuum".

While welcoming the six parties talks recently held in Beijing on the DPRK nuclear programs, the EU is alarmed that it has still not been possible for IAEA to verify the completeness and correctness of the initial DPRK report of its nuclear material to non-peaceful uses. The EU notes that the IAEA Board of Governors has reported further non-compliance by the DPRK with its safeguards agreements to the UN Security Council. We strongly urge the DPRK to visibly, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle any nuclear program, a fundamental step to facilitate a comprehensive and peaceful solution. The EU calls on the DPRK to abide by its obligations under the NPT, fully co-operate with the IAEA and repeats its appeal to the DPRK to sign and ratify unconditionally the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Finally, the EU also notes with interest the DPRK's stated engagement of continuing its moratorium on missile testing, but expresses its concern with regard to the DPRK exports of missiles and missile technology.

We renew our appeal to the Countries of South Asia to make every effort to stop an arms race in the region. We continue to urge India and Pakistan to co-operate in the efforts of the international community to contribute positively to the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We have called them to implement the specific measures set out in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1172, in particular acceding to the NPT and the signing and ratification of the CTBT. We also ask them to reaffirm and maintain their declared moratoria on nuclear testing and their willingness to participate in the negotiation of a FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament.

The EU remains committed to the full implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on the Middle East and the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT. We continue to support efforts to establish an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Furthermore, we call on all States in the region that have not yet done so, to sign and bring into force Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols with the IAEA as soon as possible. The EU believes that, in addition to the accession of all States in the region to the NPT, also accession to the Conventions banning chemical and biological weapons should be actively pursued.

The EU believes that the results of the July 2003 Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms were positive and useful. The Meeting has demonstrated a strong political will among the participants to successfully maintain this important process within a multilateral framework.

The EU and its Member States can legitimately claim to be at the forefront in the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We believe that the momentum of the UN Programme of Action should be maintained and enhanced. The EU welcomes the recommendations of

the UN Group of Experts on the feasibility of a multilateral instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, and also supports the adoption of a mandate to establish an open ended Working Group with a view to negotiating a legally binding instrument. The EU also supports closer co-operation in order to prevent illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. A UN definition of small arms and light weapons should be worked out. The requirements for an effective national end-user certificate system and the feasibility, as appropriate, of developing an end-user certificate system for small arms and light weapons at the regional and global level as well as an information exchange and verification mechanism should be examined. The EU attaches great importance to a successful second Biennial Meeting, in 2005, and Review Conference, in 2006. The EU intends to propose an EU Member State to chair the 2005 Meeting.

The EU underlines the importance of the UN Register of conventional arms as a global transparency and confidence-building measure to support stability and security which has enabled many governments to develop and simplify their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers. The value of the Register will be increased by an as large participation as possible. The EU reiterates its call on all States to submit timely returns of their imports and exports to the register, including information on military holdings and procurement through national production. The EU welcomes the recommendations of the UN Group of Experts including, in particular, those relating to expanding the scope of the Register - the first time in its 11 years of operation.

Mr. Chairman,

Ratification by 139 States and signature by 11 additional States, which have not yet ratified the Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction, leave no doubt that an international norm has been established that can be no longer ignored. The EU remains strongly committed to promote a global eradication of anti-personnel mines and continues to campaign for a universal and swift application of the Convention.

The EU is committed to universalise the Mine Ban Convention and has carried out numerous démarches to promote the widest adherence to the principles of the Convention. The EU urges States not party to accede to the Convention. Among them, there are some of the biggest and most populated countries in the world. The EU promotes a full implementation of all provisions of the Mine Ban Convention including those providing for an undiminished financial support to mine action. The European Community has pledged 240 million Euro in support of mine action for the period 2002-2009, an effort complemented by substantial national funding by EU Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

The Convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons that may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects (CCW) is an essential and integral part of international humanitarian law and the EU attaches great importance to it. The EU is particularly concerned by the serious humanitarian impact of the explosive remnants of war. The EU will strive so that ongoing negotiations in Geneva lead, as soon as possible, to the adoption of a multilateral legally binding instrument.

We are also concerned about the serious humanitarian risks caused by the irresponsible use of AVMs. AVMs cause civilian casualties and hamper the economic development of affected areas. Therefore, we hope that a mandate for negotiating a legally binding instrument will be agreed at the next meeting

of States parties to the CCW in November 2003. The EU also attaches great importance to the establishment of an overall mechanism for addressing compliance within the CCW Convention.

In view of the enhanced proliferation threat the EU finds it necessary that exporting States assume their responsibilities and take measures to ensure that exports of sensitive materials, equipment and technologies are subject to appropriate surveillance and control. Export controls ensure that transfers take place for peaceful purposes as required by the relevant conventions and treaties facilitating also co-operation and technological development. Therefore, the EU will focus – as it is stated in Thessaloniki Declaration - on strengthening export control policies and practices – within the EU and beyond in co-ordination with partners.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

We need to maintain in the First Committee, a balanced agenda which reflects important goals and objectives and which is able to react to, and focus upon today's most immediate problems. Here, we include, for example, the non-proliferation and disarmament challenges facing the international treaties today, the question of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the working methods in the First Committee could be streamlined to the benefit of us all. The EU will support your efforts, Mr. Chairman, in making the work more effective and relevant so that the Committee can focus on the issues of greatest concern to the international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.