

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution L. 25 entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty". The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Mr Chairman,

Under the nuclear cluster, I had the opportunity on behalf of the European Union to express the views of the EU regarding CTBT, reiterating EU's beliefs that the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty is an essential part of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We hope to move closer to early entry into force of the Treaty and work towards universality of the Treaty, because global adherence to the Treaty will contribute to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security also taking into account that the ultimate objective of the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The EU attaches utmost importance to the early entry into force of this treaty and will continue to call on those states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT, without delay and without conditions. In particular, we call for early ratification by the so-called Annex II countries, States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to enter into force. In this context, the EU also strongly supports the work of the Special Representative of the ratifying States who will visit several of these Annex II countries this autumn to promote universal adherence to the CTBT. In this context, the EU notes the proposal in operative paragraph 8 of a report, which we believe should be prepared using the expertise of the preparatory commission of the CTBTO.

The EU believes that a legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions as well as a credible verification regime, are vital. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the EU urges all States to abide by a moratorium and to refrain from any actions which are contrary to the obligations and provisions of the CTBT.

Mr. Chairman, this is the reason why the EU fully supports the draft resolution L. 25 which has been co-sponsored by all EU member states.

* Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process