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**UNITED NATIONS  
General Assembly**

**UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION (UNDC)**

**Statement on behalf of the European Union by**

**H.E. Ambassador Sanja Štiglic**

Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations

**New York, 8 April 2008**

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman,

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

The Candidate Country Croatia\*, Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Montenegro, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that I have taken the floor please allow me to extend congratulations on your election as Chairman of the 2008 UNDC-session as well as to all members of the Bureau. The EU looks forward to working closely with you to achieve under your able guidance a successful outcome to our proceedings. I will revert in more detail to the work that lies ahead of us in this regard as we address these items in the two relevant working groups.

The EU hopes that this year's deliberations will result in constructive discussions and will do its best to promote consensus. Our objective is to agree on "Recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical Confidence Building Measures in the Field of Conventional Arms. As a matter of general appreciation, our recommendation to the chairs of both working groups is to strongly keep the objective of consensus in sight.

The EU stresses the need for general and complete disarmament. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control remain indispensable elements of cooperative security between states. There is broad agreement that the security of the international community continues to be challenged, both globally and regionally, by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and the risk that Non-State actors could gain access to those weapons. The existence of potential clandestine military nuclear activities remains of particular concern.

It is thus of utmost importance that all existing disarmament and non-proliferation agreements are effectively resourced, implemented and fully complied with. The EU believes that the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, are essential for global peace and security. The NPT provides the essential multilateral norm and the basis of all our

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\* Croatia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

endeavours to address the security challenges in the nuclear field. It is based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In view of the current proliferation risks we are convinced that the NPT today is more important than ever; its authority and integrity must be preserved and strengthened. To this end the EU will continue to promote all the objectives laid down in the Treaty.

Our conviction, as expressed in the EU's Strategy against the Proliferation of WMD, is that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation provides the best means of countering the threat to international peace and security resulting from the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. We regret that the 2005 NPT review Conference was unable to agree on a substantive outcome document to address the most pressing challenges to the Treaty. It is most important that all States Parties work together to meet the challenges of the NPT and have an open and inclusive discussion in the run-up to the Review Conference of 2010. The EU will continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT, calling on all States not party to the NPT to undertake commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament and calling on those States to become States Parties to the NPT as non nuclear weapon States.

We are committed to continuing to make a constructive contribution to the NPT Review process. As a matter of fact, today there is room for some hope, given the fact that the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2010 NPT Review Conference was able to initiate the new review process on the basis of an agreed agenda. We hope that the second session of the Preparatory Committee will provide a forum for general and substantial discussion on the current situation and NPT goals, with a view to identifying consensual topics on which progress could be made during the cycle. We trust that the contributions the EU made and other further contributions will play their part in a successful and substantive conclusion to the current review cycle. The EU is engaged in discussions on the basis of its Common Position adopted prior to the 2005 Review Conference, by which we stand. In this regard, the EU continues to support the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 review and extension conference and the final document of the 2000 NPT review conference, and shall bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report, which includes the programme of work, adopted by consensus at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, constitutes a reference for the current review process.

In this regard we recognize that serious proliferation events have occurred since the end of the 2000 Review Conference.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) is as essential to nuclear disarmament as it is to non-proliferation. The EU believes that a legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons test explosions and all other nuclear explosions as well as a credible verification regime are vital. The occurrence of nuclear tests after the opening of the CTBT for signature underlines the need for an early entry into force of the Treaty as soon as possible. The EU warmly welcomes the latest ratifications of the CTBT, and urges the few remaining Annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay and without conditions. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, we urge all States to abide by a moratorium and to refrain from any actions which are contrary to the obligations and provisions of the CTBT..

The EU attaches high importance to the substantial work of the CTBT Organisation (CTBTO) Preparatory Commission. We will continue to actively support the work of the Special Representative of the States which have ratified the Treaty in his work promoting universal accession. The CTBTO also has additional and complementary benefits through the potential of the International Monitoring System to support the early detection of potential tsunamis. The EU is deeply concerned that the financial stability of the Organisation, and the collective investment by the International Community in the CTBT verification regime, is threatened by the failure of some States Signatories to meet their commitments. We therefore urge all States Signatories to meet their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. In addition to fulfilling our financial obligations, the EU has extended its support for the CTBTO in areas such as training, capacity building and enhancing the performance of the global verification system.

The EU also attaches a clear priority to the negotiation, without precondition, in the Conference on Disarmament, of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), as a means to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation. It constitutes a priority that is ripe for negotiation. We were encouraged by the substantive debates conducted in the CD on this issue in 2006 and the progress made last year through the appointment of a coordinator on item 2 of the Agenda and the constructive deliberations on FMCT which took place during the first part of the session. The EU appeals to all delegations in the Conference on Disarmament to work towards achieving a consensus on a possible programme of work that would enable the Conference to start as soon as possible the negotiations of an FMCT. Pending the entry into force of an FMCT, the EU calls on all States to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the action of those four nuclear weapons States which have decreed such moratoria.

The EU supports the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and has welcomed the reduction of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons and their delivery systems since the end of Cold War as well as the important steps taken by two EU Member States. We stress the need for an overall reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, in particular by those countries which possess the largest arsenals. In this context we recognise the application of the principle of irreversibility to guide all measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms control, as a contribution to the maintenance and enforcement of international peace, security and stability, taking these conditions into account. We are pursuing efforts to secure transparency as a voluntary confidence building measure to support further progress in disarmament.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which reduced US and Russian strategic nuclear weapons arsenal to 6,000 accountable warheads, is due to expire in 2009. We note that the US-Russia Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions, which limits each side to no more than 1,700 - 2,200 deployed strategic nuclear warheads, will expire on 31 December 2012. While welcoming the reductions in deployed nuclear warheads and means of delivery which START and the Moscow Treaty have brought about, the European Union stresses the need for more progress in structurally reducing these nuclear arsenals through appropriate follow-on processes. In this regard, the EU was encouraged by the announcement in July 2007 that the United States and the Russian Federation are discussing the development of a post-START arrangement.

The EU also highlights the importance of implementation of the presidential nuclear initiatives (PNIS) declared by the presidents of Russia and the United States of America in 1991 and 1992 on unilateral reduction in their stocks of non-strategic nuclear weapons and calls on all States with non-strategic nuclear weapons to include them in their general arms control and disarmament processes, with a view to their reduction and elimination. We welcome the announcement of the United States confirming the full implementation of their part of the commitments in 2003. The EU stresses the importance, from the point of view of nuclear disarmament, of the programmes for the destruction and elimination of nuclear weapons and the elimination of the fissile material as part of the G8 global partnership.

Since security in Europe is linked to security in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, the EU puts particular importance on non-proliferation and disarmament issues in that region and, in this context, reiterates the urgent necessity of universalisation of the NPT and as early entry into force as possible of the CTBT.

The EU calls on all States in that region to make the Middle East into an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, in keeping with the Resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

Iran's nuclear programme poses a major challenge to the non-proliferation regime. Iran has hidden for more than twenty years a series of clandestine nuclear activities and is pursuing enrichment and heavy water related activities, while developing simultaneously a ballistic missile programme. Iran has cooperated with the IAEA only when pressed, and in piecemeal fashion. While some progress has been made on the "outstanding questions", Iran has refused to implement the additional protocol, to suspend its sensitive activities, and to seize on offers for negotiation.

By adopting a sanctions resolution 1803 on Iran's nuclear programme under article 41 of chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN security Council sent for the third time a strong message of international resolve to Iran. We call upon Iran to fulfil the requirements of UN security Council and the IAEA, including the suspension of its enrichment-related, and reprocessing activities and work on all heavy water related projects. The EU remains committed to an early negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and we reaffirm our firm commitment to a dual-track approach. We call upon Iran to open the way for negotiations by complying with Resolutions 1737, 1747 et 1803. We reaffirm our support for the proposals presented to Iran in June 2006 by the Secretary-General and High Representative of the European Union, which can be further developed. The EU reiterates its recognition of Iran's right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with its NPT obligations. A solution to the Iranian nuclear issue would significantly contribute to global non-proliferation efforts and to realize the objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, including their means of delivery..

The EU continues to attach great importance to the Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs), established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among states of the regions concerned as elaborated in the guidelines adopted by the UNDC in its 1999 substantive session. Nuclear weapon 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 weapon states of the relevant protocols to the NWFZs following completion of the necessary consultations. We hope that outstanding issues concerning nuclear weapon free zones can be resolved through full consultations in accordance with the UNDC guidelines and with the agreement of all parties involved.

The EU pays particular attention to the need to enhance the detectability of violations, as a means to reinforce compliance with obligations established by the multilateral treaty regime. To this end, particular emphasis is placed on making best use of existing verification mechanisms and, where necessary, establishing additional verification instruments. The EU supports strengthening the role of the UN Security Council which has the primary responsibility for safeguarding international peace and security.

The EU would like to highlight the IAEA's unique and positive role in verifying States' compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation commitments. The EU believes the international safeguards system of the IAEA is the irreplaceable basis of verification in the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the success of this multilateral system. The EU considers that comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols have a deterrent effect on nuclear proliferation, form today's verification standard and constitute the current IAEA verification standard. The EU would therefore like to reiterate its call for universal accession to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols. EU Member States are also working towards making the Additional Protocol a condition of supply for sensitive nuclear exports.

The European Union continues to be committed to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls in order to complement our obligations under the NPT, and to support the strengthening of the Nuclear Supplier Group. The European Union urges the NSG and the Zangger Committee to share their experience on export controls with non-members to meet the new non-proliferation challenges arising from an increase of global trade in nuclear related goods.

Among the relevant multilateral instruments, UNSC resolution 1540 plays a crucial role in developing an effective mechanism of prevention and counter proliferation of WMD, their means of production and delivery to or from states and non-state actors world-wide. We commend the 1540 Committee for engaging in activity in support of the resolution, and urge them to continue ever stronger with focussed outreach to those regions where implementation of the resolution is most urgent. We appreciate the positive attitude of Member States towards the necessity of comprehensive national implementation of UNSCR 1540 and encourage States to continue in their efforts of national implementation consistent with the goal in UNSCR 1673 to reach this year compliance through the achievement of implementation of all provisions of UNSCR 1540. The EU is ready to continue to provide assistance, in particular in building legal and administrative infrastructure, sharing our experience of implementation and training respective national authorities.

Mr Chairman,

We should not be detracted from other important tasks on the disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agenda this year. These tasks are manifold and include a broad range of issues also relating to conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons.

The EU is strongly committed to eradicating the illicit accumulation and trade in SALW and associated ammunition. The EU aims to reduce the unregulated availability of SALW and associated ammunition in areas of conflict or potential conflict. To further its objectives, the EU has adopted a specific strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and associated ammunition. Other specific instruments include a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, a Joint Action on combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of SALW, and a Common Position requiring Member States to introduce national legislation to effectively control the activities of brokering. We are also determined to contribute to reduce the risk of diversion of SALW into the illicit market, in particular through efforts to combat illicit trafficking of SALW by air, inter alia by increasing cooperation and exchange of information between States.

The EU was deeply disappointed that the UNPoA Review Conference was unable to agree on an outcome document in 2006. The EU looks forward to a more focused, action-oriented and fruitful BMS3. We will spare no effort to that end and strongly encourage all UN member States to take part in this major event. We commend and fully support the on-going efforts of the chair-designate of this meeting towards that end. The EU would like to underline the importance of the national reporting requirement in the UN PoA and the International Tracing Instrument as a tool to enhance transparency and identification of implementation challenges.

Global standards on marking and tracing of SALW are essential in tracking the illicit trade in these weapons. The adoption of the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing was a first important step in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action in this regard. The EU supports full implementation, and further strengthening in the future, of the International Marking and Tracing Instrument) inter alia by making it legally binding. We look forward to the first meeting devoted to its implementation that will take place next July in the Framework of the BMS, with a view to the continued process beyond BMS3.

Brokering controls remain a high priority for the EU as illicit brokering is recognised as being among the main factors fuelling the illicit trade in SALW world-wide. We welcome the report of the GGE established by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 60/81. We all need to implement the recommendations contained in the report as well as continue consideration of further steps to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in SALW.

The fight against the illicit trade in ammunition continues to be another pressing task. Uncontrolled stocks of ammunition contribute to the risks of trafficking and proliferation and to the prolongation and intensification of armed conflicts. Furthermore, insufficiently secured stockpiles in storage depots constitute a threat to security, health and the environment. Currently there is a growing awareness of the importance of the ammunition problem. This is reflected in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. In this regard, the EU welcomes the start of the work of the group of governmental experts (GGE) on "Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus" established pursuant to resolution 61/72, which has already held its first and second session of work.

The EU continues to strongly encourage progress to strengthen arms transfer controls in general. The EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports has made an important contribution to this goal by setting up conditions for the responsible transfers of arms by EU Member States and Associated States. The European Union also continues to attach great importance to the efforts of the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies in further strengthening arms transfer controls.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate the EU's position on the pressing need for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Every day, and everywhere, people are affected by irresponsible arms transfers. The negative impact on peace, reconstruction, security, stability, human rights and sustainable development is especially damaging to developing countries, in particular in Africa. In addition, it diverts scarce resources from vital poverty alleviation and other development work. The EU firmly supports the elaboration of a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

The European Union is convinced that the United Nations is the only appropriate forum to deliver a truly universal instrument.

The EU has noted that there is a strong call from States and civil society for the establishment of a treaty to better regulate the trade in arms. We reiterate our view that the establishment of binding standards, consistent with the existing responsibilities of states under relevant international law, would be a major contribution to tackling the undesirable and irresponsible proliferation of conventional weapons which undermines peace, security, development and full respect for human rights.

The European Union is committed to playing an active role in this process. We urge other States to actively support the ATT process and the work of the GGE that has now started, holding its first session last February in New York.

The use of Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) by terrorists and non-state actors as a tool for threatening civil aviation demands further attention and sustained and comprehensive action. MANPADS are lethal, easily concealable and inexpensive. In this respect, the EU firmly supports broader efforts, in various multilateral fora, focusing in particular on export controls including the Wassenaar Arrangement, the OSCE Principles for Export Controls of MANPADS and the G8 initiative. The EU supports initiatives both in the wider context of the UNPoA as well as targeting MANPADS related issues specifically. The EU fully supports intensifying efforts to prevent the illicit transfer and unauthorised access to and use of MANPADS, including through implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The EU welcomes progress achieved in universalising the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and their Destruction. Good progress has been achieved in destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting victims, although much remains to be accomplished.

Promoting and achieving universal adherence to the Convention remains a priority. Eleven years ago, more than fifty countries produced and sold anti-personnel mines. Since then, a major effort was made to ban production and trade of these items. Almost 80% of the world's states have now acceded to the Convention. However this is not yet enough, as important countries remain outside the Convention. We call upon all states that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

The EU regrets that the implementation of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), which is the cornerstone of European security, has been suspended by one of its States Parties. We call for the reversal of this unilateral suspension which risks eroding the integrity of the CFE regime and undermines the cooperative approach to security in

the OSCE area. The message that the EU delivered last year in this same body stated very clearly its attachment to the conventional arms control and CSBM's regime developed in Europe, in particular via the OSCE, The CFE Treaty is a central element of this regime. We support the ongoing efforts to overcome the CFE crisis.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) constitutes an integral part of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the EU attaches great importance to it. A clear consensus exists on the need to urgently address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians as demonstrated by the decision to establish a GGE to deal with this matter. The European Union has expressed its commitment to negotiate a legally binding instrument that addresses the humanitarian concerns of cluster munitions in all their aspects by the end of 2008. The EU's aim is to conclude a legally binding instrument that prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and which would include provisions on co-operation and assistance. The EU feels encouraged by the fact that the CCW has actually started implementing its negotiation mandate and engaged in real negotiations that reinforce the credibility of the CCW. Negotiation on cluster munitions is also on-going within the framework of the so-called "Oslo Process". The EU considers that work on cluster munitions conducted both in the CCW and the Oslo process is complementary and mutually reinforcing and that each forum can benefit from work done in the other, by taking advantage, inter alia, of the military and technical expertise of the CCW.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.