12 March 2013

Conference on Disarmament
Statement of the European Union on
"FMCT"
Geneva, 12 March 2013

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

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia.

In our previous statements on this issue, we reaffirmed several times that 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, and subsequently referred to in CD/1864, remains a clear priority for the European Union.

Let me emphasize that for the European Union, launching and concluding these negotiations are urgent and important. An effective FMCT would constitute an essential step 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. Logically an FMCT constitutes the next multilateral instrument to be negotiated in the nuclear disarmament field as a complement to the NPT and the CTBT. National security concerns, while legitimate, can and should be addressed as part of the negotiation process rather than as a prerequisite. We also believe that confidence-building measures can be taken immediately, without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. This is the rationale behind our calling on all States possessing nuclear weapons to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

All EU Member States supported GA resolution 67/53 on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The mechanism established by this resolution represents a useful contribution to helping the CD without undermining its authority and primary role in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Germany and the Netherlands for organizing two useful technical expert meetings in May and August 2012 on FMCT in support of the early commencement of negotiations within the CD. They enhanced our knowledge and understanding on technical issues.

The CD, in accordance with its mandate, has a crucial role to negotiate multilateral treaties. It is in the hands of all members to restore the CD to the central role it can play in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and multilateral disarmament: we all bear the responsibility of making the CD deliver according to its mandate. Its on-going stalemate remains deeply troubling. In this context, we continue to urge the last remaining State to join consensus in adopting a Programme of Work, which, inter alia will enable negotiations on an FMCT.

* Accession Country Croatia and the Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
We reaffirm our commitment to engage in substantive discussions on all the other core issues on the CD agenda.

Madame President,

Consistent with our engagement with civil society, we are looking forward to the enhanced interaction between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, thus strengthening the contribution of NGOs and research institutions to the work of the Conference and in this regard we welcome Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) addressing the Conference today.

Thank you.