

**Statement by Belgium on behalf of the European Union - First Committee - 65th
UNGA**

4 October 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

1. I speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Iceland, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration. We will fully support you, Mr. Chairman, in your efforts to achieve a successful outcome of this session.

Mr. Chairman,

2. This year has seen a series of positive events, including the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference, the Washington Nuclear Security Summit and the signing of the Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. Positive developments with regard to conventional weapons issues, such as the Arms Trade Treaty process and the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, give further reasons for optimism.

3. The European Union warmly welcomes the continued momentum in global arms control and disarmament and stresses the need for general disarmament. At the same time, we need to address major proliferation challenges. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, together with confidence, transparency and reciprocity, are vital aspects of collective security. The European Union has long stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to all these issues. A combined effort by the international community is required to strengthen disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, which are joint security interests for all.

4. Effective multilateralism, prevention and international cooperation are the three main goals of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The European Union is deeply committed to strengthening the multilateral system. To further this aim, the EU makes considerable efforts to support the UN and other international organisations, treaties and regimes. The EU promotes universal adherence to and full implementation of all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions, not only through diplomatic means and initiatives, but also through practical training and assistance. The EU is a major donor to international organisations in this field providing support to dozens of countries. We also want to support and reinforce verification mechanisms, so as to ensure full compliance with international obligations. This enhances mutual confidence and ensures the credibility of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and conventions. The Security Council has a crucial role that should be further strengthened in addressing cases of non-compliance threatening international peace and security.

Mr Chairman,

5. The NPT, based on the three mutually reinforcing pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, represents a unique and irreplaceable framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability. The Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI and an important element in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The European Union warmly welcomes the adoption by consensus of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference. Its members will firmly dedicate themselves to implementing the Action Plans it contains and call upon NPT States Parties to do the same. This outcome has strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation regime by setting ambitious goals in all three pillars of the Treaty and by endorsing other concrete measures, including on the Middle East. The European Union worked actively for the successful outcome of the Review Conference and will strive for implementation of all the objectives in the NPT, whether they are disarmament, non-proliferation or the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We have also stated our readiness to contribute to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and welcome the agreement to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction

6. We continue to be faced with major proliferation challenges, which must be addressed in a resolute way in order to maintain the credibility of the NPT regime. Iran's nuclear programme and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) testing of a nuclear explosive device and delivery mechanisms are the two most worrying examples in this regard. Both issues raise grave concerns and have led the EU, in particular in the case of Iran, to engage into sustained efforts aimed at finding a negotiated solution. We call on all UN Member States to support these efforts by fully implementing relevant Security Council Resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The EU calls for the strengthening of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime and for revitalizing relevant international instruments. Within this context, we have been both encouraged and discouraged by developments in the Conference on Disarmament over the past years. Last year we welcomed the decision of the Conference on Disarmament, finally, after 12 years of stalemate, to agree on a Programme of Work. Yet, in 2010, despite the best efforts of the majority of its members, the Conference on Disarmament has remained dogged by discord. The EU continues to urge the last remaining state that has not yet joined consensus to allow the CD to resume its negotiating role, to regain its credibility and to achieve its fundamental purpose.

8. The EU welcomes the recent High-Level Meeting aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. The EU also welcomes the call for action made by the UN Secretary General. We stand ready to engage in consultations with all UN member states to consider the High-Level Meeting's outcome during this session of the First Committee.

9. The EU has long attached high priority to the negotiation in the CD of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty that would significantly strengthen nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and contribute to a climate of mutual trust and security. The EU continues to urge all States to actively support efforts to launch negotiations on a FMCT. In the meantime, the EU calls on all concerned States that have not yet done so to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

10. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and a top priority for the European Union. We are hopeful that renewed political commitments to pursue ratification, in particular within some Annex 2 States of the CTBT, like Indonesia and the USA, will give new impetus to our efforts to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of this key treaty. In the meantime, the EU continues to provide significant support for the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the monitoring and verification system.

11. The EU stresses the need to do everything possible to prevent the risk of nuclear terrorism, linked to possible terrorist access to nuclear weapons or materials that could be used in the manufacture of radiological dispersal devices and, in this context, stress the need for compliance with obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009) and calls for improved nuclear security for high radioactive sources. In this respect, the EU welcomes and supports the work through initiatives such as the Nuclear Security Summit, the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear terrorism.

12. The EU remains committed to ensuring a responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions, by countries wishing to develop their capacities in this field. We stress the key role played by the IAEA in this regard. We note with interest the convening of the International Conference on Access to Civil Nuclear Energy held in Paris last March. The EU supports the development of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle and appreciates ongoing initiatives in this regard. We also welcome research into proliferation-resistant technologies.

13. Strengthening the security of activities in outer space is another key priority for the European Union. The growing number of actors and the rapid development of activities in outer space are welcome, but they also pose potential risks to the security of space and other assets. The current situation requires enhanced international space cooperation. While further multilateral legally binding commitments have been proposed, pragmatic and voluntary confidence-building and transparency measures would allow relatively rapid subscription by as many countries as possible and could bring effective security benefits in the short term. In this spirit the EU continues to promote a draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space activities.

14. The proliferation of missiles with potential to deliver weapons of mass destruction remains a major concern for international security. The EU fully supports the MTCR and the Hague Code of Conduct. The EU continues to promote universal adherence to and strengthening and full implementation of the Code, which is the only multilateral instrument regarding missile proliferation. In this context, the EU welcomes the decision of Iraq to

subscribe to the Code and to become its 131st Subscribing State. The EU is also in favour of examining further multilateral steps to prevent the threat of missile proliferation and to promote disarmament efforts in the missile field. Our proposal to start consultations on a treaty banning short and intermediate range ground-to-ground missiles remains valid.

Mr. Chairman,

15. The Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons. The European Union actively promotes the universalisation of and full compliance with the Treaty. We also remain committed to developing measures to verify compliance with the BTWC. The Review Conference in 2011 will provide a key opportunity to further strengthen the BTWC and its implementation, and to build on the effectiveness of the Intersessional Programme 2007-2010, and the decisive improvements brought about by the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit. We have actively supported the series of intersessional expert meetings that was recently completed. The EU looks forward to the Meeting of States Parties in December. We believe that all States Parties must now use their best efforts to prepare the ground for a successful outcome of the BTWC Review Conference in 2011.

16. The Chemical Weapons Convention has an essential role to play in preventing the risks posed by chemical weapons. The CWC is unique among disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. It completely bans an entire class of weapons of mass destruction in a verifiable manner. The European Union continues to promote its universalisation and full implementation and we continue to provide significant support to the OPCW for meeting those goals.

17. The EU fully supports the 1540 Committee in fulfilling its renewed mandate of preventing and countering proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We also support other international mechanisms and initiatives designed to prevent the proliferation of WMD.

Mr. Chairman,

18. The EU reaffirms its commitment to contribute to the prevention and combating of illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of SALW. In this context, the EU strongly supports the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are looking forward to contributing to the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts in 2011 in view of a comprehensive and substantial 2012 Review Conference. Meanwhile, the EU continues to assist countries in addressing threats posed by the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of SALW through a comprehensive set of projects.

19. Action to prevent the trafficking in conventional weapons can only be effective if it is coupled with rigorous transfer controls on the legal arms trade. This is why the EU is fully committed to the negotiation of an Arms Trade Treaty, a legally binding international instrument, setting the highest common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. We were encouraged by the promising start of the ATT negotiating process at the July session of the Preparatory Committee. We call on all States

to maintain the spirit of genuine engagement that characterised this summer session. Continuous constructive participation and inclusiveness of the negotiating process are essential ingredients to ensure the success of the 2012 UN Conference, mandated to elaborate the ATT. With this in mind, the EU is fully engaged in promoting the ATT process vis-à-vis third countries. Following the outreach activities conducted in 2009, the EU, in cooperation with UNIDIR, will soon launch a new series of regional outreach seminars. In this context and beyond, let me express our appreciation for the excellent work done by UNIDIR, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

20. The EU supports the full implementation and universalisation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. Our continuous commitment to mine action is well known. We welcome the enormous progress achieved and the new Action Plan decided at the Cartagena Summit. We reiterate our call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. We will continue to provide concrete assistance to States to achieve the objective of a mine-free world.

21. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, which recently entered into force, represents an important step forward in responding to the humanitarian problems caused by this type of munitions, which constitute a major concern for all EU Member States.

22. The EU remains firmly committed to preserving and developing the CCW, which constitutes an essential part of international humanitarian law. The adoption of a meaningful protocol on cluster munitions in the CCW framework, complementary and compatible with the CCM, involving all major military powers could be an important further contribution.

Mr Chairman,

23. The EU recognizes the importance of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly as a fundamental body to discuss current topics and develop timely initiatives on non-proliferation and disarmament issues. We, as UN Member States, share the responsibility of keeping the relevance of this forum. We should make sure that it is seized with real and most salient questions related to international security. Rather than being a mere formalistic body that technically updates resolutions without substantive changes, the First Committee should improve its working methods in order to be capable of debating contemporary security challenges in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, and to develop concrete measures to address them.

24. In closing, Mr. Chairman, let me state that the EU believes that the UN and its Member States will be judged by the public opinion on the basis of their ability to make actual progress in preventing and responding to the most pressing threats to international peace and security. The EU will work together with its partners and all interested countries to uphold and strengthen the authority of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr Chairman