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General Debate

Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Chris Sanders, the Netherlands,

on behalf of

the European Union

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First Committee (UNGA59)
EU General statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia*, as well as the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, and the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro), align themselves with this statement.

1. In the spirit of reform and revitalisation of the First Committee, the European Union in this statement will focus on the broader dimension of security, non-proliferation and disarmament issues. The EU will elaborate on its position on the specific issues in more detail during the thematic debates.

Mr. President,

2. As of May this year, the European Union has been enlarged to 25 member states. A larger EU contributes to prosperity, stability and security for all Europeans. Now, some 450 million people share the benefits from an internal market, from increasingly converging views on justice and home affairs, and from a common foreign and security policy. A *European Security Strategy* as well as an *EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction* have been adopted over the last year. Within the framework of the First Committee, the EU considers its enlargement an important development. Because in our view, strengthening co-operation across borders and across issues is the best answer to the challenges the world faces.

Mr. President,

3. Over the last decade, no region of the world has been untouched by armed conflict. Most of these conflicts have been within states rather than between them. More than 4 million people have died in wars, 90% of them civilians. Over 18 million people have left their

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

homes as a result of conflict. In large parts of the world, poverty and disease cause untold suffering and give rise to pressing security concerns. Half the world's population lives on less than 2 Euros a day. AIDS is now one of the most devastating pandemics in human history and contributes to the breakdown of societies. New diseases can spread rapidly and become global threats. In many cases, economic failure is linked to political problems and violent conflict.

4. The world today is a globalised world of increasingly open borders. Flows of trade and investment, the development of technology, and the spread of democracy have brought freedom and prosperity to many people.

5. On the other hand there is an important downside: these developments have increased the scope for hostile non-state groups to play a threatening part in international affairs. In this globalised world, so much dependent on an interconnected infrastructure in transport, energy, information, health, and other fields, the logistic possibilities of such groups to cause harm have increased.

6. The world of today forces all of us to think globally, across borders and across issues. So in thinking about the policies we could develop in the field of security, disarmament and non-proliferation, we should also take a broad approach. I would therefore like to touch upon the world-wide threats we identify, the strategic objectives all of us could share to counter these threats, and what that means for our policy decisions.

[KEY THREATS]

Mr. President,

7. What are the key threats to our security environment, wherever our countries are located? The EU identifies five of them, which more than ever tend to overlap with each other.

8. First: **the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**. It is potentially the greatest threat to global security.

9. International treaty regimes and export control arrangements are in place to prevent the spread of WMD and delivery systems, and probably did help in countering such spread. We have now, however, entered a new and dangerous period that raises the possibility of a WMD arms race and of acquisition by non-state actors. Proliferation is driven by a small number of countries and individuals, but presents a real threat through the spread of technologies and information and because proliferating countries may help one another. Alarmingly, these developments take place outside the current control regimes.

10. The possession of nuclear weapons by states outside the NPT and non-compliance with the Treaty's provisions by states party to the Treaty, undermine non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Furthermore, advances in the biological sciences may increase the

potency of biological weapons in the coming years; attacks with chemical and radiological materials are also a serious possibility. The spread of missile technology adds a further serious element of instability.

11. A second key threat is **terrorism**. Increasingly, terrorist movements are well-resourced, connected by electronic networks, and are willing to use any means to achieve their ends, from small arms and light weapons including MANPADS, to possibly weapons of mass destruction. The most recent wave of terrorism is global in its scope.

12. We are particularly worried about a scenario in which terrorist groups acquire weapons of mass destruction. In this event, a small group would be able to inflict damage on a scale previously possible only for states and armies.

13. Third: **regional conflicts**. Over the last decades, regional conflicts have brought about the devastating scourge of land mines, a huge proliferation of small arms and increased opportunities for organised crime. Regional conflicts also increase the risk of extremism and terrorism, and may lead to state failure. Regional insecurity can fuel the demand for WMD.

14. Fourth: **state failure**. Civil conflict and bad governance such as corruption, abuse of power, weak institutions and lack of accountability corrode states from within. In some cases, this has brought about the collapse of state institutions. Collapse of the state can be associated with obvious threats, such as organised crime, uncontrolled influx of small arms, or terrorism. They form a breeding ground for extremism and terrorism. State failure is an alarming phenomenon, that undermines global governance, and adds to regional instability.

15. And fifth: **organised crime**. It has an important external dimension: cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons. It can have links with terrorism. Such criminal activities are often associated with weak or failing states. In extreme cases, organised crime can come to dominate the state.

16. Another dimension of organised crime which merits further attention is the growth in maritime piracy.

17. Taking these different elements together: the availability of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism committed to maximum violence, regional conflicts, the weakening of the state system and organised crime, any one of us could be confronted with a very radical threat indeed.

18. Again, we can only draw the conclusion that, more than ever, disarmament and non-proliferation should not be viewed as a stand-alone issue. They are fully interlinked with other questions of security and stability, on the global and regional level. It is an important lesson for our work in the First Committee.

[STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES]

Mr. President,

19. On to the strategic objectives we might share.

20. We live in a world that holds brighter prospects, but also greater threats than we have known. The EU has formulated three strategic objectives for itself: to address the threats, to foster regional security, and to further build an international order based on effective multilateralism. Let me shortly dwell on these three objectives, because they are in our opinion not limited to Europe. If the threats of today are essentially global, then the responses should to a large extent be global as well. That is why our strategic objectives could be shared by any country subscribing to our analysis of threats and challenges.

21. First, all of us should be in the process of fundamentally **rethinking our ways of addressing the threats**. The new threats are dynamic. The risks of proliferation grow over time; left alone, terrorist networks will become ever more dangerous. State failure and organised crime spread if they are neglected.

22. How to stand ready? As discussed earlier, in a globalised world none of the present threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. The European Union is of the firm belief that each response requires a mixture of instruments.

23. There is a wide range of instruments available. Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start at an early enough stage. Multilateral treaties with effective verification mechanisms remain essential. Other important instruments are national and internationally co-ordinated export controls; co-operative threat reduction programmes targeted at support for disarmament, control and security of sensitive materials facilities and expertise; political and economic levers, including trade and development policies; interdiction of illegal procurement activities including the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI); and, as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the UN Charter.

At the same time, the EU will continue to address the root causes of instability, including through pursuing and enhancing its efforts in the areas of political conflicts, development assistance, reduction of poverty and promotion of human rights.

24. While all of these instruments and policies are necessary, not one is sufficient in itself. We need to strengthen them across the board, and deploy those that are most effective in each case. The UN Security Council should play a central role. That is why the EU strongly supports Security Council Resolution 1540, adopted last April, which addresses the serious concerns about the risk of non-state actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

25. Second, the EU places particular emphasis on **regional security** and deems it important that regional solutions be found to regional problems. On the subject of small arms and light weapons, a regional approach is crucial. In the framework of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, regional synergies have proven very successful. And

the same applies in the WMD context. The best solution to the problem of proliferation of WMD is that countries should no longer feel they need them, and strengthening security in the region is an important instrument in achieving that. The EU itself is close to volatile regions, such as in the Caucasus and the Balkans. And the EU will pay particular attention to the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in the Mediterranean area, since security in Europe is so closely linked to security and stability in that region. The EU welcomes the recent positive steps made by Libya in this field. But also in regions further away, the EU is an active partner in peace; it will foster regional security arrangements and regional arms control and disarmament processes world-wide.

26. The third strategic objective is **an international order based on the rule of law and on effective multilateralism**. In a world of global threats, global markets and global media, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. The development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and an effective rule-based international order should be our common objective.

The EU is committed to the multilateral treaty system, which provides the legal and normative basis for all non-proliferation efforts. The EU policy is to pursue the implementation and universalisation of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation norms. To that end, we will pursue the universalisation of the NPT, the IAEA Safeguard agreements and additional protocols, the CWC, the BTWC, the HCOC and the early entry into force of the CTBT. EU policy is to work towards the introduction of bans on biological and chemical weapons being declared universally binding rules of international law.

[POLICY IMPLICATIONS]

Mr. President,

27. If these are the threats all of us face and the strategic objectives we share, what then are the active policies which are needed to counter these dynamic threats and attain our joint objectives?

28. The EU believes that it will not be easy to achieve in the short run political solutions to all of the different problems, fears and ambitions of countries in the most dangerous regions for proliferation. Our policy is therefore to prevent, deter, halt, and where possible eliminate proliferation programmes of concern, while dealing with their underlying causes.

29. In working to resolve international problems, we should make use of *flexible toolkits*, carrying all the appropriate instruments.

30. We should fully support the United Nations as it responds to threats to international peace and security, including ensuring effective implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540.

31. But most importantly, we must all realise that there are few, if any, problems we can

deal with on our own. The threats described above are common threats. International co-operation is a necessity. We need to pursue our objectives both through multilateral co-operation in international organisations and through bilateral partnerships.

32. However, if the multilateral treaty regime is to remain credible, it must be made more *effective*. Implementation and universalisation of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation norms have to be pursued.

33. Non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. The EU will continue to encourage progress towards systematic and progressive efforts towards disarmament; the EU supports wholeheartedly the objectives laid down in the Non-Proliferation 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.

34. The EU will place particular emphasis on a policy of reinforcing *compliance* with the multilateral treaty regime. Such a policy must be geared towards enhancing the detectability of significant violations and strengthening enforcement of the prohibitions and norms established by the multilateral treaty regime, including by providing for criminalisation of violations committed under the jurisdiction or control of a state.

Mr. President,

35. The European Union holds the working of the *disarmament machinery* very dear. In developing our thinking on the First Committee, on the Conference on Disarmament, on the Disarmament Commission and on other relevant bodies, it is important to see them as mutually reinforcing, each with its own added value. The guiding principle here being that the existence of these bodies should not be a goal in itself, but only a means to attain better understanding, better co-operation, and in the end better results in tackling the challenges of our time. If restructuring is needed, we should not shy away from it.

36. The disarmament machinery should serve to pave the way for taking decisions which make the world a safer place for all of our citizens. And for those decisions, we need courage and leadership in all of the world's capitals, and a strong commitment to co-operate with others.

Thank you, Mr. President.