

**United Nations General Assembly
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First Committee**

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

General statement

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EU General Statement

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and the Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania. The Candidate Countries 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 country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

1. The European Union is deeply committed to the United Nations, to upholding and developing international law, and to effective multilateralism. The work of this Committee, the First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, is a critical element within the UN, reflecting the primary aim of removing the scourge of war from our world. The work of this Committee must reflect the most pressing contemporary challenges of this interdependent world. That is why the EU has been very committed to revitalisation of the First Committee, and joins those who stress the importance of implementation of the principles all of us agreed to last year. In this statement, I would like to focus on the key interdependent challenges we all face, on which we will expand later in more specific interventions.

2. This year has been an important one for the United Nations. We have celebrated its 60th anniversary and we meet here only weeks after the 2005 World Summit. As the Secretary-General set out at the Summit, we live in a world where we all benefit from collective security; and all suffer when it is lacking. Development, security and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. International Security also depends upon social development, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, environmental sustainability and promoting international trade.

3. Positive steps were taken at the Summit on peace and security. We welcome the agreement to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, one of the EU's priorities, to break the cycle of conflict that afflicts so many places in this world. For the first time the UN will have a single forum in which the wider international community, including regional political players, donors and the IFIs, can come together to assist countries emerging from conflict. We hope this will reduce the huge human and financial costs of further violence. Getting the Commission established by the 31 December 2005 deadline is a top EU objective for this autumn.

4. We also strongly welcome the agreement on the Responsibility to Protect. International recognition that we cannot stand by as the very worst atrocities are committed, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, is an important step forward for peace and security and for the role of the UN in the twenty-first century. It is a recognition that the world in which we now live is too small for us to be unaffected by, or indifferent to, the innocent victims of murder and

of oppression. The EU is committed to playing its part. Today, the European Union is on the ground, as military, police or civilian presence, in Bosnia, Aceh, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo and, with the African Union, in Darfur.

5. There were some significant steps forward on terrorism at the Summit. The EU strongly endorses the resolution passed by the Security Council at the Summit urging all States to make incitement of terrorism illegal and to combat extremist ideologies. We also welcome the condemnation of terrorism at the Summit and strongly support the call to for urgent action to develop the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy. We should now commit ourselves to conclude and agree the draft of the Comprehensive Convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition of terrorist acts, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

6. However, there were also setbacks at the Summit. The EU regrets that no consensus on non-proliferation and disarmament language in the outcome document was reached. We agree with the Secretary General that this was a considerable disappointment. This comes in a year in which, regrettably, the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not able to agree a substantive outcome. We believe that the international community must take responsibility and address the serious threat posed to peace and security by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We recognise that this outcome requires due reflection from us all. The EU worked tirelessly on the basis of a Common Position, at both the NPT Review Conference and the Summit, to make progress on these and related issues, including disarmament and peaceful uses. We will continue this work in all the relevant international fora, including this Committee over the coming weeks.

7. As expressed in the EU's Strategy Against the Proliferation of WMD, we are convinced that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation provides the best means of countering this threat to international security. As we said in our 2003 Common Position on multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation, we support the universal ratification of, and adherence to, the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as well as the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. These key instruments provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. They contribute to international confidence and stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism.

8. The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its Article VI, and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as vital as ever. We continue to defend this consensus, on the basis of the framework established by the NPT, by supporting the Decisions and Resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 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 future review process in which the EU will engage on the basis of our Common Position. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on those States not yet Party to join the Treaty as Non Nuclear Weapon States. The EU considers that Comprehensive Safeguards

Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current IAEA verification standard and are the essential means for States Parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under the NPT. We support strengthening the role of the UN Security Council, as final arbiter of international peace and security, in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

9. The EU places the utmost importance on the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to prohibit all nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions. We reaffirmed our commitment to the CTBT with our support for the Final Declaration, delivered on behalf of the ratifiers and State Signatories of the Treaty, at the conclusion of the recent Article XIV Review Conference, held in New York. We also continue to call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, on a non-discriminatory, universally applicable Treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, without pre-conditions, and bearing in mind the special co-ordinator's report and the mandate contained therein. We are concerned by the continuing inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree a Programme of Work and begin negotiations on an FMCT.

10. The Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a matter of grave concern for the EU. The EU strongly supports the efforts of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, in association with the European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, to find an acceptable agreement to rebuild international confidence in Iran's intentions. We recognise the inalienable right of NPT parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of the NPT. However, maintaining the balance between rights and obligations envisaged in the treaty is essential. We believe it is incumbent on a non-compliant state to return to full compliance and to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities, in the specific case of Iran through the suspension of fissile material production and enrichment-related activities. The resolution passed by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September, finding Iran non compliant with its obligations under the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) but deferring the report to the Security Council, gives Iran an opportunity now to address the clear concerns of the international community. The European side, for its part, is prepared to resume negotiations within the framework agreed between the Europeans and Iran last November. It is only when Iran demonstrates beyond any doubt that it is not seeking a nuclear weapons capability that it will be able to develop a better relationship with Europe and the international community as a whole.

11. We welcome the joint statement by the participants in the Six Party Talks on 19 September and recognise the hard work, flexibility and co-operation shown by participants. We note in particular the renewal of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea's (DPRK) commitment to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programmes and its undertaking to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, the EU considers the DPRK nuclear weapons programmes to be a serious violation of its commitments under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement, the US/DPRK Agreed Framework and the Joint North-South Declaration on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. We continue to deplore the DPRK's stated intention to withdraw

from the NPT and urge the adoption of measures to deal with withdrawal from the Treaty. The EU has supported the Six Party Talks throughout and remains ready to assist in whatever way we can.

12. International treaty regimes and export control arrangements have made an important contribution over many years in preventing the spread of WMD and associated delivery systems. However, we have entered a new and particularly dangerous period that raises the possibility of a WMD arms race and of acquisition by non-state actors. The European Security Strategy from 2003 highlighted the threat posed by terrorism and the proliferation of WMD. The illicit trade related to WMD, in particular in highly sensitive nuclear equipment and technology, is of serious concern and we must be united in a common endeavour to strengthen the non-proliferation regime by closing existing loopholes. The European Union is committed to strong national and internationally co-ordinated export controls to complement our obligations under the NPT. We also strongly support the important non-proliferation measures within resolution 1540 of the Security Council to prevent the illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. States must continue this vital work. In addition, we support and encourage States to participate in the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, the Proliferation Security Initiative (the Krakow Initiative), the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and to continue to support the work of the G8 Global Partnership.

13. The European Union is convinced that an arms race in outer space should be prevented given the international community's increased involvement in space-based activities aiming at global development and progress. Such a prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the promotion of international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

14. The EU believes the Chemical Weapons Convention has an essential role in countering the threat of chemical weapons and urges States who are not parties to it adhere to this treaty. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument that must be strictly applied. We are equally supportive of the organisation that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

15. The EU also believes the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) has an essential role in countering the threat of biological weapons and urges States who are not parties to it adhere to this treaty. In 2006, we will play an active role at the BTWC Review Conference to secure a substantive outcome and strengthen the Convention and compliance with it.

16. At the same time as taking strong action to prevent the spread of WMD, we must limit the carnage caused by small arms and light weapons (SALW). The EU believes that easy access to small arms and light weapons exacerbates conflicts, facilitates violent crime and terrorism, impedes post-conflict reconstruction and undermines long term sustainable development. Much can and must be done to control the proliferation of these weapons. Additional measures should be taken to combat the illicit brokering of SALW. The EU supports minimum common international controls on SALW transfers and provisions on ammunition to be included in the UN

Programme of Action and calls for these issues to be discussed at the forthcoming Preparatory Committee in January 2006 and in the Review meeting in June 2006. In the wider context of the need to control the undesirable proliferation of conventional weapons the EU is supportive of calls for an international agreement on the arms trade as a comprehensive instrument based on universally accepted norms and standards. We encourage other states and regions to engage in the discussion and to express their support for action in this area.

17. In one specific area the easy availability of weapons increases markedly the threat all of us face from terrorists; the use of Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) as a means to threaten civil aviation warrants immediate action by the international community.

18. Since the Ottawa Convention or Mine Ban Treaty entered into force in 1999, significant progress has been made with the use and production of Anti-Personnel Mines being reduced significantly and trade has virtually ceased. Large areas of the world, which had been seriously affected by these indiscriminate weapons have now been cleared and human suffering significantly reduced. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine action system and to promote the universalisation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

19. The EU also believes the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is an important and influential instrument of international humanitarian law in restricting the use of certain types of weaponry. We hope that at the meeting of States Parties to the CCW in November progress will be made towards a consensus on the balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations in controlling the use of these weapons.

20. The United Nations will be judged by its ability to respond to the most pressing threats we face, from development and conflict, environmental degradation, the proliferation of WMD and terrorism. The international community will be judged by the strength of its resolve. The EU stands ready to use this session of the United Nations General Assembly to help in this task.

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