



**EU Statement**

**By**

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Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Albania\*, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.
2. We would like to make the following remarks on regional issues relevant for non-proliferation and disarmament.
3. The illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) pose a grave and increasing threat to regional and international peace and security. The EU reiterates its strong condemnation of the DPRK's nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, which are a direct and unacceptable violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions.
4. Once again we urge the DPRK to refrain from further reckless provocations and abandon its programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in order to pave the way for a lasting peace and de-nuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula through peaceful means. The DPRK must return to compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and IAEA safeguards, and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call upon all countries to fully and effectively implement all UN Security Council Resolutions with regard to the DPRK. The EU has already transposed UN Security Council Resolution 2375 and adopted additional autonomous restrictive measures against the DPRK. The EU is strongly convinced that a lasting peace and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula must be achieved through peaceful means.
5. The EU is determined to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and emphasizes the importance of its continued, full and effective implementation to ensure that Iran's nuclear programme remains exclusive peaceful. The JCPOA facilitated by the EU is a result of 12 years of diplomatic effort. It was unanimously endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and has become a key element of the nuclear non-proliferation architecture and crucial for the security of the region. The EU encourages the US to maintain its commitment to the JCPOA and to consider the implications for the security of the US, its partners and the region before taking further steps. While the EU expresses its concerns related to ballistic missiles and increasing tensions in the region, it reiterates the need to address them outside the JCPOA, in the relevant formats and fora. The EU stands ready to

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\* *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

actively promote and support initiatives to ensure a more stable, peaceful and secure regional environment.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The EU is appalled by the continuing war in Syria which has caused untold and unacceptable suffering for millions of civilians. Despite de-escalation efforts, in the past weeks, in Syria there has been the highest number of casualties in 2017, as a result of the heavy air attacks hitting civilians and civilian infrastructure, in particular hospitals and medical facilities in Northern Syria. The deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructures, including the recent airstrikes on medical facilities in Idlib province and northern Hama province, in violation of human rights and international humanitarian law must cease. The EU condemns all indiscriminate attacks and atrocities perpetrated by Da'esh and other UN-listed terrorist groups against the Syria people. The EU also condemns the continuous systematic wide spread and gross violations and abuses of human rights and all violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) by all parties, particularly by the Syrian regime and its allies. We underline that IHL is applicable and binding. The use of barrel bombs, cluster bombs and incendiary weapons in Syria may amount to war crimes.
7. The EU condemns in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons. We find it deeply shocking and deplorable that chemical weapons have been used in several cases in Syria. In fall 2016 the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) attributed responsibility for three chemical weapons attacks to the Syrian Armed Forces and in one case also to Da'esh. In order to prevent violations of human rights and IHL through the use of chemical weapons in Syria, including against the civilian population the EU has imposed restrictive measures on Syrian high-level officials and scientists operating in the chemical weapons proliferation sector, most recently in July this year. The findings of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission, the JIM and the testimonies gathered by the UN Commission of Inquiry for Syria require strong action by the UN Security Council. The use of chemical weapons in Syria amounts to a war crime. Perpetrators must be identified and held accountable. Therefore, it is also of the utmost importance that the UN Security Council extends the mandate of the JIM without delay.
8. Furthermore, the EU expresses deep concern that Syria has not engaged substantively with the ongoing investigations of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW regarding the numerous gaps and discrepancies of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Declarations. The Director General of the OPCW reported at the beginning of this month that there is evidence of potential undeclared chemical weapons-related activities involving production and/or weaponisation of chemical warfare agents in Syria. It is unacceptable that Syria has failed to provide to date the cooperation necessary to address serious outstanding concerns. Even today, four

years after Syria's accession to the Convention, the list of outstanding unresolved issues, questions and ambiguities remains long and has increased over time. To date, the Syrian Arab Republic has failed to provide clear evidence that it has irreversibly dismantled its chemical weapons programme and put its chemical weapons beyond use. In this regard the EU strongly supports the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).

9. It has been more than six years since the IAEA Board of Governors reported Syria's non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement to the UN Security Council and the General Assembly. We deeply regret that Syria still has to remedy its non-compliance. The EU calls on Syria to fully cooperate with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues, and to swiftly conclude, bring into force and implement in full the Additional Protocol.
10. The EU reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders is the only sustainable way towards a meaningful conference to be attended by all States of the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them. Ratifications by the remaining States of the region of the NPT, the CTBT, the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention would be important confidence and security building measures, and could constitute tangible steps in the direction of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The EU reiterates its readiness to assist in the process leading to the establishment of such a zone.
11. We acknowledge the importance of nuclear weapon free zones for peace and security, on the basis of arrangements freely entered into between all the States of the region concerned. The EU recognizes that treaty-based security assurances are available to nuclear weapon free zones and encourages nuclear weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols to the Treaties establishing nuclear weapon free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations.
12. The EU recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear weapon States as part of a binding and agreed security arrangement. The EU calls on all nuclear weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.
13. The EU recalls that Russia has specifically committed to refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 on security assurances, in connection with

Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State. We call upon Russia to honour and fulfil this commitment.

14. The EU reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. The EU does not recognise and continues to condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by Russia. We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution. We remain deeply concerned about information on the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist-held areas. We call again on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. The duration of the EU's restrictive measures against Russia remains linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.
15. With regard to European security, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is a landmark arms control agreement which eliminated an entire class of weapons, including some 3000 nuclear and conventional ballistic missiles. The EU calls on all parties to preserve the INF Treaty and to ensure its full and verifiable compliance. We welcome enhanced dialogue and continued communication between the Russian Federation and the United States as the best means of preserving an effective and fully implemented INF Treaty.
16. Following the 2011 START agreement, which was a significant achievement, the EU encourages the United States and Russia to meet their obligations, pertaining to the limits on strategic arms, by the February 2018 deadline. We encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons and reduce the operational readiness of their nuclear weapon systems to the minimum level necessary. The EU particularly encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to include non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control and nuclear disarmament processes and pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. We call on all States concerned to take appropriate practical measures in order to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war.

Mr. Chairman,

17. The EU strongly supports the establishment of regional and sub-regional Confidence and Security Building Measures as an important tool to build trust, enhance transparency and military predictability, avoid conflict and maintain stability, especially in situations of armed confrontation and areas of tension, thereby promoting peace and security.

18. European countries have highly benefited from the Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and in particular the commitments in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Vienna Document 2011, the Treaty on Open Skies, the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition and the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. We call on all parties to honour these commitments.
19. The EU will continue to support OSCE activities, including through EU Council Decisions on UN Security Council Resolution 1540, chemical safety and security in Ukraine, and against illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and conventional ammunition in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Georgia. The EU also supports the work of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) which functions under the mandate of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The EU continues to assist in secure arms stockpile management also in Africa through SALW control projects implemented by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament (UNREC).
20. We must continue to work for the resolution of the problems of regional instability and insecurity and of the conflict situations which are often at the root of armament programmes. Bearing in mind the current severe security environment, we stress the need to advance the general arms control and disarmament processes and call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament to enhance global security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman