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European Union

Statement on Cluster I issues

By

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Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

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Mr. Chairman,

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

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference, we encourage all States Parties to focus on seeking common ground. The EU will play a constructive and active role in ensuring the implementation of the obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT and undertaken during the previous Review Conferences. In our General Statement, we have outlined the EU's balanced approach in support of the NPT and its three pillars which are equally important and mutually reinforcing and contribute to international peace, security and stability. We recall that all States Parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. All States Parties have also committed to applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their Treaty obligations.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The EU strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and will continue to promote comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan.

Bearing in mind the increasingly severe and complex security environment, we stress the need to preserve and further advance general arms control and disarmament processes and call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament to enhance global security. It is important that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and avoid eroding the rules-based multilateral system. The viability and effectiveness of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements require that they be fully complied with.

EU Member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. We stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of Article VI, especially through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals.

In this context, we attach the highest importance to the New START Treaty and 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.

In particular, the EU encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to include non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control and nuclear disarmament processes, pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting, and to reduce the operational readiness of their nuclear weapons systems to the minimum level necessary.

We welcome the current momentum on risk reduction, including strategic risk reduction measures, which can contribute to alleviating tensions and building the necessary trust and confidence, such as transparency and dialogue on nuclear doctrines and postures, military-to-military dialogues, hotline agreements among nuclear weapon possessors, “accident measure” agreements, and notification exercises, as well as missile launch notification and other data exchange agreements. All States, in particular nuclear weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons should engage in such efforts. We welcome the continuation of P5 conferences which should contribute to the NPT review process.

Over the past 30 years, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty has made an enormous contribution to European security and broader international security and stability. Almost three thousand missiles with nuclear and conventional warheads were removed from European soil and verifiably destroyed, constituting a tangible contribution by the two nuclear weapon States to the implementation of their NPT related disarmament obligations. The EU has repeatedly noted that the Russian missile system raises serious concerns regarding Russian compliance with the INF Treaty and we urge Russia to address these concerns in a substantial and transparent manner. We emphasise the continued importance of full and verifiable compliance under the Treaty prior to the expiry of the six-month withdrawal process, which represents the last opportunity for dialogue and for taking the necessary measures to preserve the Treaty.

Promoting universal adherence to and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a top priority for the EU. We urge all States to sign and ratify the CTBT without any preconditions and further delay. In the meantime, we call on all States to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions. The EU provides extensive financial support for the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to verifiable treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament, and stresses the need to revitalise multilateral efforts and bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on a Programme of Work or a Decision for the 2019 session that would have allowed subsidiary bodies to continue substantive work towards negotiations, as well as further reflection on working methods and the CD enlargement.

We reiterate that our longstanding priority in the CD is to immediately commence negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices and we support starting such negotiations in accordance with the document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.

In light of these long-standing commitments, the EU has decided to become a supporter of four actions on the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, including on promoting the entry into force of the CTBT and commencing immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, in accordance with the above mentioned EU position.

We call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the action by the two European nuclear weapon States, which have declared relevant moratoria and dismantled or converted such facilities, and call on others to follow suit.

We welcome that consensus was found on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification and support the continuation of work in other relevant fora, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the UK-Norway initiative. We welcome the Franco-German Nuclear Disarmament Verification exercise to be held in September this year. We encourage all nuclear weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons to contribute to such activities.

With regard to negative security assurances, the 2010 NPT Review Conference stated that the CD should immediately begin discussions with a view to elaborating recommendations on all aspects of the issue, without excluding an internationally legally binding instrument. We call on all nuclear weapon States to reaffirm the existing security assurances.

We recall that Russia has violated its commitment to refrain 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 acknowledge the importance of nuclear weapon free zones for peace and security, in accordance with Article VII of the Treaty. Such zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The EU encourages nuclear weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing nuclear weapon free zones. We also call on those States in existing nuclear weapon free zones that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant nuclear weapon free zone treaties.

We support disarmament and non-proliferation education, to which the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, the European network of independent think-tanks, is contributing with various activities. We encourage further involvement of academia and civil society and emphasise that active and equal partnership and leadership of women will be crucial in achieving further progress on nuclear disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.