Statement on Cluster I issues
Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
First session, Vienna, 2-12 May 2017

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

Mr. Chairman,

2. For the European Union, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and an important element in the future development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

3. At the start of this important review cycle, our priority is to strengthen the implementation of the NPT in order to uphold and preserve its role as a key multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability and to promote its universalisation. We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States. We reiterate the EU's strong and resolute support to all three pillars of the Treaty which are equally important and mutually reinforcing and can contribute to a safer world. We call on all State Parties to implement all the obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT or undertaken during previous Review Conferences. The EU will continue to promote comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the 2010 Action Plan designed to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty. The concrete, equally important and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy contained in the 2010 Action Plan remain valid and will contribute to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. It is of utmost importance that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context for arms control and disarmament. The EU continues to contribute actively to global efforts to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT, in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

4. The EU notes the severe consequences associated with nuclear weapons use and emphasises that all States share the responsibility to prevent such an occurrence from happening.
5. EU Member States are undertaking initiatives in multilateral fora to enhance nuclear disarmament and may elaborate on these initiatives in their national statements.

6. EU Member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. The EU recalls that all NPT State Parties are committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of Article VI of the NPT, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals.

7. The entry into force of the new START agreement in 2011 between the United States and the Russian Federation was a significant step and welcomed by the EU. The EU encourages 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 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 welcome the increased transparency shown by some nuclear weapon States, including by two EU Member States, on the nuclear weapons they possess, and call on others to do likewise. We call on all States concerned to take appropriate practical measures in order to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war. 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.

8. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is a landmark arms control agreement that has eliminated an entire class of weapons, including some 3000 nuclear and conventional ballistic missiles. It is vital for Europe’s and other regions’ security and stability and a tangible contribution by the United States, the Russian Federation and other States Parties to the fulfilment of their obligations under Article VI of the NPT. The EU calls on all Parties to preserve the INF Treaty and to ensure its full and verifiable compliance.

9. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force and universalisation remain top priorities for the EU. All EU Member States have ratified the CTBT and are abiding by its obligations. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty in order to allow its early entry into force. In the meantime, the EU calls on all States, in particular the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. The EU will continue to provide strong diplomatic and
The EU remains united and committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and stresses the need to renew multilateral efforts and revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies. We reiterate the necessity, more than ever, to overcome the longstanding deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament and recall our commitment to its enlargement. We continue to call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We welcome the establishment of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group, whose mandate is to make recommendations on substantial elements for a future Treaty, without prejudice to national positions in future negotiations. In the meantime, 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 some nuclear weapon States, in particular by the two EU Member States, which have declared relevant moratoria and dismantled or converted such facilities and call on others to follow suit. Through its continued financial support to the G7 Global Partnership and to the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC), the EU has significantly contributed to international efforts to destroy and eliminate stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and fissile material, and to re-direct scientific and technical expertise for peaceful purposes.

The EU and its Member States supported the 2016 General Assembly Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. While verification is not an aim in itself, further development of the multilateral nuclear verification capabilities will be required for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

Promotion of gender equality, gender consciousness and empowerment of women remains another key priority for the EU, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU is committed to the full implementation of Resolution 1325 and all other relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council aimed at advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

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 UN Security Council Resolution 984 (1995) and recalled in UN Security Council Resolution 1887 (2009) and Resolution 2310 (2016). 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.

14. 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.

15. The proliferation of missiles with potential to deliver weapons of mass destruction constitutes a severe threat to international peace and security as underlined in a number of UN Security Council Resolutions. We are gravely concerned over the ongoing development of ballistic missile programmes, especially in the DPRK. In addition to support for other multilateral instruments, such as the Hague Code of Conduct, the EU strongly supports the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and plays a crucial role in tackling the proliferation of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and UAV technologies. We continue to advocate the full membership of all 28 EU Member States in the international export control regimes.

16. We wish to highlight the importance of the disarmament and non-proliferation education and the useful role played by the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, the European network of independent think tanks. The annual EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference has become an important forum to encourage global dialogue on all relevant issues.

Mr. Chairman,

17. The EU and its Member States agree on the importance of upholding and strengthening the authority and integrity of the NPT, which has contributed to international peace, security and stability for more than 40 years. We are determined to work towards a successful outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman