



EU statement
Negative Security Assurances
the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 9 February 2023

Mr. President,

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

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina¹, the potential candidate country Georgia, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

We welcome today's thematic discussion, which is very topical and timely in the current tense international security environment. The issue of negative security assurances has remained high on our agenda for many years and was discussed in this body on several occasions. In 2022, the subsidiary body on "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapons States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" was yet another opportunity to review the current state of negative security assurances (NSAs). Acknowledging the work of Ambassador Febrian A. Ruddyard of Indonesia in facilitating our discussion last year, we underline that the current challenging global environment has increased the necessity of effective international arrangements on NSAs. We regret that a report of the subsidiary body was not adopted, but we believe its work provides a good basis for continuing our discussion on this topic.

Mr. President,

The current severe security environment underscores the importance of preserving and further advancing disarmament, non-proliferation and general arms control. The EU calls for further progress on all aspects of disarmament as well as risk reduction to enhance global security.

The EU recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. Negative security assurances can be an important confidence building measure, which strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contributes to nuclear disarmament and enhances regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We stress the importance of continued reaffirmation

¹ North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

by nuclear weapon States of their existing security assurances noted by relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including UNSC resolution 984 (1995), and recalled in UN Security Council Resolution 1887 (2009) and Resolution 2310 (2016).

The EU recognises that treaty-based security assurances are available to nuclear-weapon-free zones, which already comprise more than 100 States, and encourages nuclear weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations. 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 addressed the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones in a more comprehensive manner at the CD plenary last week. We had the opportunity, in this context, to recall the EU commitment to the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan, and to the fact that nuclear weapons free zones can only be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between all States of the region concerned.

We reiterate that, as agreed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Conference on Disarmament should, within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work, immediately begin discussing effective international arrangements to reassure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, to discuss substantively, without limitation, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all aspects of this issue, not excluding an internationally legally-binding instrument.

Mr. President,

Full adherence by all nuclear-weapon States to all existing obligations and commitments related to security assurances given to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT either unilaterally or multilaterally, including the commitments under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum in connection with Ukraine's Accession to the NPT, is vitally important.

We recall that Russia has blatantly violated its commitment to refrain from the threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum. Moreover, Russia's provocative, dangerous and escalatory threats to use nuclear weapons in this war of aggression are entirely unacceptable. These violations undermine the credibility of security assurances to the detriment of the NPT regime. Russia's continued war of aggression against Ukraine with Belarus' complicity thus has devastating consequences for international peace and security, as well as global disarmament efforts. The EU reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war and reaffirms the Union's full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, as well as for Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence against the illegal and brutal Russian aggression. The EU calls on Russia to refrain from any threats with nuclear weapons, as well as to abide by the January 2022 Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States and by all its international obligations.

I thank you, Mr. President.