

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY DIRECTORATE

Disarmament, Non-Proliferation
and Arms Export Control Division

EU joint reply to UNGA Resolution 79/240

“Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification”

30 May 2025

The European Union (EU) and its Member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. They also stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals.

Verification is one of the key elements for enhancing transparency, building confidence and fostering compliance with disarmament.

The establishment of effective nuclear disarmament verification (NDV) measures will be an important and necessary step in fulfilling this goal. While verification is not an end in itself, further development of the international cooperation on nuclear disarmament verification instruments would assist in the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

In this regard, the EU welcomed the outcomes of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to consider the role of nuclear disarmament verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. The EU also welcomes the contribution of practical cooperation initiatives, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), in which it participates along with several EU Member States.

Resolution 79/240, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 24 December 2024, requests UN Member States’ views in writing on the establishment of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts (GSTE) on NDV. All EU Member States voted in favour of the resolution at the First Committee and at the General Assembly.

The EU emphasizes that all States – both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States – can make important contributions to the field of NDV. We encourage in particular all nuclear-weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons to contribute to such activities. Such engagement would help to deepen trust and develop confidence among them, as well as between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

The active involvement of non-nuclear-weapon States, including smaller nations, is also key. Their approach and experience in conventional verification can offer a valuable contribution and an impartial, credibility-enhancing perspective to NDV. It enables the development of

technical expertise in monitoring, verification methodology, and forensic nuclear analysis, and raises awareness and understanding of the challenges of disarmament. By engaging non-nuclear-weapon States in NDV, the international community would take meaningful steps towards risk reduction, transparency, and verifiable disarmament.

Therefore, the EU sees value in broadening scientific and technical discussions on NDV to nuclear-weapon States, other States possessing nuclear weapons, and non-nuclear-weapon States that wish to participate and contribute to them. The format of a GSTE within the UN framework seems adequate for such purpose.

In the EU's view, such a GSTE should comprise 25 experts, including from non-nuclear-weapon States, based on their scientific and technical expertise, and to work in their personal capacity. The GSTE should be appointed by the UN Secretary-General based on equitable geographic representation and gender balance.

The GSTE should meet for a minimum of ten days each year, ideally grouped in two sessions, at a location based on a rotating system between Geneva, New York and Vienna. The working language would be English, in order to lighten the budgetary burden of the meetings. The GSTE could also invite other experts for briefings, from all relevant stakeholders, including States not part of the GSTE, International Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, and industry.

The mandate of the GSTE should include – bearing in mind the applicable confidentiality and non-proliferation imperatives – the following subjects, *inter alia*:

- a. technical verification aspects of the reduction and elimination of nuclear warheads and their associated infrastructure for such purposes; and
- b. means of technical verification, both in terms of correctness and completeness of declarations.

The goal of the GSTE would be to provide a toolbox of potential useful technical means of verification (tools, techniques, processes and procedures) that could be used in the framework of disarmament or arms control treaties, agreements or arrangements agreed among the States parties concerned to advance towards the ultimate objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons, based on an exchange of views and knowledge on different NDV options, as well as an evaluation of their benefits and their challenges.

In this endeavour, the GSTE could also consider previous work developed in the context of processes such as the IPNDV.

The GSTE's deliberations should not be legally-binding, nor would it be tasked to negotiate any treaty on nuclear disarmament, or its establishment imply any commitment that negotiations might follow, or prejudge their possible outcome, including on the entities that would be entrusted to perform the technical verification, or the unilateral, bilateral or multilateral nature of such arrangements.