Mr. Chair,

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

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Republic of Moldova\(^1\) as well as the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the chair of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee of the 11\(^{th}\) Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Rest assured of the EU’s full support so that this PrepCom contributes meaningfully to a successful eleventh cycle. We appreciate your inclusive and transparent approach building on constructive discussions from the First Session of the Preparatory Committee and the Working Group on Strengthening the Review Cycle. We fully support continuing this debate with appropriate time and space in line with your proposal for the agenda.

The EU and its Member States remain united in their unequivocal support to uphold and strengthen the Treaty, which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its Article VI, and an important element in the development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The NPT has enduring value and its universalisation and full implementation is needed now more than ever, particularly in view of the ongoing destructive and destabilising actions by Russia, and continuing proliferation crises. We call upon the remaining States to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and, pending their accession, to adhere to its terms.

The EU deeply regrets that, in spite of all tireless efforts, the Tenth NPT Review Conference was not able to adopt a final outcome document due to Russia blocking consensus. We should however build on last year’s fruitful discussions. We are committed to constructively engage

\(^{1}\) North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
in a comprehensive manner on all thematic priorities under the Treaty’s three pillars and we expect that all States will re-double their efforts in this regard. In particular, we are convinced that improving transparency and accountability in the implementation of NPT obligations and commitments will contribute to both the backward and forward looking work of Review Conferences. Ensuring the implementation of the 64 actions in the 2010 Action Plan is a collective responsibility shared by all States Parties to the NPT without exception.

We support work on risk reduction, call for the entry into force of the CTBT, and the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations for Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Pending a future FMCT in force, the EU calls on all States concerned to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The EU recognizes that negative security assurances strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and calls on all nuclear weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We emphasise the importance of existing nuclear weapons free zones and reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the Resolution on Middle East at the 1995 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chair,

The EU reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia’s brutal and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, with Belarus’ complicity, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the systematic missile strikes against Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Furthermore, the EU reiterates its grave concern over Russia’s irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and threats to use nuclear force in its illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. This also seriously undermines and has a significant negative impact on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. We are also gravely concerned over the highly precarious nuclear safety and security situation at Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), which is a direct consequence of Russia’s illegal war of aggression and seizure of the plant. We urge Russia to immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders. We will stand by Ukraine with steadfast support for as long as it takes.

We call on Russia, a Permanent Member of UN Security Council with responsibility to uphold the UN Charter, to reverse this unacceptable course of action that undermines the UN Charter and international law and to take the path leading towards international peace and security. Russia must immediately return to compliance with the New START Treaty and fulfil all its obligations. We call on Russia to revert its decision to withdraw its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and in the meantime, respect the object and purpose of the CTBT. In order to reconstitute trust in negative security assurances by non-nuclear weapon States, we call on Russia to cease violating its commitments to refrain from the threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the
1994 Budapest Memorandum. By not respecting its agreed obligations and commitments, Russia undermines the NPT and the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Mr. Chair,

The EU notes the very severe consequences associated with nuclear weapons use and emphasises that all States share the responsibility to prevent such an occurrence from happening.

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.

The EU is extremely concerned by the rapid and extensive build-up of China’s nuclear arsenal, which runs counter to its Article VI commitments. Therefore, we urge China to refrain from further build-up, immediately take measures to improve the transparency of its nuclear weapons and doctrine, and pursue risk reduction measures. In this context, we call on China to join future arms control agreements and to respond positively to calls for an arms control dialogue as a first step.

The EU remains seriously concerned in the face of persistent proliferation crises and challenges, which represent a threat to international peace and security, and underlines its resolve to increase non-proliferation efforts and to strengthen, universalise and render more effective the nuclear non-proliferation architecture.

It is a key security priority for the EU to ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. The EU remains committed to a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. We call on all countries to support the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015). We regret that Iran has not made the necessary decisions to return to its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, to which the EU remains committed. The risk of a nuclear proliferation crisis in the region is increasing as a result of Iran’s escalating nuclear trajectory. The EU is gravely concerned that the Agency is still not in a position to provide assurance that Iran’s nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful, due to Iran’s lack of cooperation. The EU urges Iran to work with the IAEA swiftly and substantially, as most recently called for in the June IAEA Board of Governors resolution, towards full compliance with its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement obligations.

The EU reiterates that the DPRK must comply immediately with its obligations under all relevant UN Security Council resolutions by abandoning all its nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missile programmes and existing nuclear programmes, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and cease all related activities. The DPRK cannot and will never have the status of a nuclear-weapon State under the NPT or any other special status in that regard. The EU urges the DPRK to return immediately to full compliance
with the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and its NPT Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, bring into force the Additional Protocol and sign and ratify the CTBT without delay or precondition. The EU is ready to work with all relevant partners and promote any meaningful diplomatic process aimed at building sustainable peace and security and to take steps aimed at pursuing the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. We strongly condemn arms transfers and military cooperation between the DPRK and Russia, in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions. We call on the DPRK and Russia to immediately cease these activities.

Mr. Chair,

The EU recognises the important work and central role of the IAEA and is resolved to ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. The EU calls on all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the international nuclear safety and security conventions without delay. The EU stresses that the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with the Additional Protocol, constitute the current verification standard under the NPT and calls for their universalisation without delay. Ahead of the Summit of the Future in September 2024, we are also mindful of the contributions of nuclear science and technology to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement. Since the last NPT Review Conference, the EU and its Member States have continued to support activities to facilitate cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and provide technical expertise and know-how. EU Member States are among the largest donors to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme.

The EU underlines that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a top horizontal priority and believes it is important to integrate a gender perspective into discussions across the three pillars of the NPT. Improving gender equality in participation in the NPT review process is highly desirable to enhance the effectiveness of Treaty processes and their outcomes. Furthermore, women and men have an equal right to participate meaningfully in negotiations and shape the decisions that affect their lives. To this end, we welcome initiatives such as the “Young Women Next Generation Initiative” established by the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium. The EU is also the largest donor to the IAEA's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme. We also support the meaningful and inclusive participation of young people.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to further contribute to the work of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee, as well as throughout the whole NPT review cycle, with the aim of making concrete progress towards the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chair