FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST COMMITTEE

Draft resolution L.32

“Missiles”

Explanation of vote

By
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on behalf of the European Union

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Check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

It is my honour on behalf of the European Union to speak on the draft resolution L.32 entitled “Missiles”. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey as well as the EFTA countries of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union has decided to abstain on this draft resolution on missiles, as was the case last year.

Let me underline that our abstention must not be regarded as a lack of commitment to the issue at stake here. The European Union remains deeply concerned about the proliferation of ballistic missiles that can carry weapons of mass destruction. Member States of the EU therefore played an active role in the Panel of Experts constituted by last year’s resolution. The EU fully recognises the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the field of international peace and security. The EU has therefore actively pursued the finalisation of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation – the ICOC – through a multilateral, open and transparent process of negotiation and consultation.

The EU is aware that the Code is not the only missile initiative around. The EU would welcome increased UN involvement in the missile issue. We therefore welcome the conclusion of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles that “it is essential to have continued international efforts to deal with the issue of missiles”.

The EU remains deeply convinced that the final text of the ICOC constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and offers the best chances of leading to tangible results in the short term. This includes the right of every State to reap the benefits of the peaceful use of space.

The EU therefore reiterates that the draft resolution does not reflect the essential issue, which is the proliferation of ballistic missiles and the technologies linked with them. Moreover the text does not sufficiently refer to the multilateral and concrete initiative, which is underway, the ICOC, and which aims at combating the issue of ballistic missile proliferation. The EU regrets that this initiative has not been reflected in the draft resolution.

The EU however is not convinced that another panel of governmental experts to assist in the preparation of a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, is an efficient next step. The current report does not include any substantial recommendations on the subject, which would justify a follow up
in the framework of a panel. Furthermore we want to underline that any future panel would only be meaningful on the basis of an agreed specific mandate which ensures that added value could be offered. Alternative options should have been considered. These are the reasons why the EU, unfortunately, is not in a position to support the draft resolution.

With the launching of the ICOC a first step towards curbing the threat of ballistic missile proliferation has been taken. The European Union therefore urges all states to adhere to the Code by subscribing at the launching conference in The Hague 24 and 26 November this year. Participation allows for influence in the further development of the Code. Once adopted, the ICOC could be of interest to the UN. We encourage all States to join this effort aimed at addressing an issue that is regarded in the words of the Panel as ‘a serious concern for international peace and security in the world today’.

Mr Chairman,

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.