United Nations General Assembly
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First Committee

Explanation of vote by
H.E. Ambassador Chris Sanders, the Netherlands,
on behalf of
the European Union

on the draft Resolution on
“Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region”
(L.35)

New York, 28 October 2004

Check against delivery
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution L. 35 entitled “Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region”. The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement before the vote.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union welcomes Resolution L.35, which all its member states have co-sponsored and which we hope will be adopted without a vote. The European Union attaches great importance to the issues of Security, Non Proliferation and Disarmament in the Mediterranean region. As was stated in the EU strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction adopted by our leaders in December 2003, “security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean”. This concept is specifically mentioned in operative paragraph one of this resolution, which also recognizes that prospects for closer Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in all spheres can be enhanced by positive developments worldwide, in particular in Europe, in the Maghreb and in the Middle East.

The Barcelona or Euromed process, launched in 1995, as the Mediterranean dimension of the EU’s external policy, has made a major contribution to the establishment and development of a global partnership between the European Union, its member countries and the Mediterranean partners. This partnership includes engagements regarding non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament, nuclear-weapon-free zones, verification, conventional weapons and confidence building measures. The European Union attaches particular importance to the goal of transforming the Mediterranean into a sea of peace, stability, cooperation and development, as well as, and above all, security.

In the context of working towards strengthening security and stability in this crucial region, the EU warmly welcomes Libya’s decision to eliminate all material, equipment and programmes which lead to the production of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, together with the practical steps to implement this decision it has undertaken since. The case of Libya demonstrates that the problems of proliferation can, with good will, be tackled through discussion and engagement, that countries can abandon programmes voluntarily and peacefully and that states have nothing to fear from coming forward and admitting non-compliance.

The European Union calls on all states of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so, to accede to all the multilaterally negotiated legally binding instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to strengthen peace and co-operation in the region.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

* Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process