Statement

by

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States have a longstanding position in favour of the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Strengthening the safety, security, and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space is in our common interest and a key priority for us. The European Union's goal is therefore to promote international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, we are convinced that Transparency and Confidence Building Measures can make a contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. To this end, we proposed in 2012 a non-legally binding International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.

Since then we have only seen an increase in the use and uses of Outer Space. Space assets, operated by an increasing number of governmental and non-governmental entities, offer the world enormous benefits unimaginable just a few decades ago. Today these benefits are accompanied by significant challenges stemming from dangerous orbital debris and thus the potential of destructive collisions, the crowding of satellites, the growing saturation of the radio-frequency spectrum, as well as the threat of deliberate disruption or destruction of satellites. These challenges call for the serious and timely involvement of states to ensure greater safety, security and sustainability in outer space.

The EU continues to believe that an International non-legally binding International Code of Conduct for Activities in Outer Space would be an important contribution to the safety, security and sustainability of the outer space environment. Such a Code of Conduct could constitute a first step in strengthening the international framework for outer space, which could also include other instruments of both non-legally-binding and legally-binding nature.

The meeting convened at the UN Headquarters in New York on 27-31 July 2015 at the initiative of the EU with the assistance of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs entitled “Multilateral Negotiations on an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities” was very well-attended, with delegations from 109 States and 8 inter- and non-governmental organizations. We regret that negotiations could not commence after so many years of consultations, but we are confident that the rich and substantial discussions in New York both on the substance and on the process will help the international community to move forward.

Preventing an arms race in outer space and preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict is essential to safeguard the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
purposes. The European Union remains strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Therefore all EU Member States voted last year in favour of UNGA Resolution 69/31 regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

In our view, the updated draft on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) does not represent the basis for substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on PAROS. A new legally binding instrument would need to be comprehensive, precise and verifiable. Regarding the initiative on the "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space" (NFP), we are equally concerned that it does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence between States.

In conclusion, the consensus resolution on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs) in Outer Space Activities, co-sponsored by all EU Member States, underlines the shared sense of urgency in the international community and responsibility for preserving outer space for the peaceful use by all humankind. The EU is ready to contribute to efforts in this regard.

Thank you, Mr Chairman