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Thank you. We are entering the third decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first decade, as we know, was dominated by, if I may characterise a short mantra, preventing proliferation through normative action. It left us with incomplete agendas in 1995 and 2000 that we have to implement. The second decade was dominated by fears triggered by the 9/11 attacks and by another mantra that emerged, countering proliferation through coercive actions. It has developed through some mistakes and excesses in the first half of this second decade. In 2005, the NPT review conference was unable to agree on conclusions of substance. For various reasons, however, one of them being a change of course in US foreign policy in the field of non-proliferation, the 2010 review conference did succeed in reconciling both approaches, but it has now left us with two ambitious and extensive programmes regarding both disarmament and non-proliferation, which are both to be completed and implemented.

What will characterise the third decade that we are entering? We already know some of the characteristics, and perhaps I will try to list them:

- More financial constraints.
- A reduction – in relative terms, at least – in the global influence of what we call, sometimes inappropriately, the Western world, and particularly of the external overseas expenses of Western countries.
- The jury is still out in terms of determining whether we are heading towards a new multi-polar world or to a non-polar world.
- It is still out in terms of determining whether, in this new context and despite China's rise, the P5's ability to shape the international non-proliferation agenda will be diminished.
- Another tendency that scholars usually recognise in this new period is that the modernisation of arsenals, leading to the somewhat inappropriately termed 'structural disarmament' – fewer weapons that are more modern, more expensive and sometimes more difficult to use in modern conflicts – will continue.
- Additionally, we could also see, at least from Washington, a tendency in the field of non-proliferation to give slightly less high-level political attention to the external aspects of it, because, clearly, the tendency is to strengthen internal currencies of societies across the world in order to avoid societal disruptions and, in many cases, home-grown terrorism.
- There is a risk of a slight deficit of attention, at a time when the problems of non-proliferation and disarmament remain as great as ever. New fields, however, open up to our reflection, particularly in the cyber field.
- After Fukushima, nuclear safety will also be key.
- Finally, as illustrated by the Arab Spring, regional problems are more important than ever, and double standards will be of greater relevance.

It is too early to know whether there is going to be a new mantra and what it will be, but the question for us is what all of that tells us when it comes to EU action. What card does the EU have to play in the field of non-proliferation at a time when we are entering a new context?

I would like to try to answer two questions that I heard yesterday. First: what can the EU do? Clearly, at this time, we are further building up the EU in the field of non-proliferation. This means two things: first, trying to increase our governance, globally speaking, which is valid also in the field of non-proliferation.

This means better structuring. Following the Lisbon Treaty, we saw the first building blocks being erected. We now have a single head, Lady Ashton, chairing the Foreign Council and the Defence

Council, the European Defence Agency and the Development Council, and the unique EEAS being created. A point that is sometimes overlooked by scholars is that EU delegations are substituting Commission delegations following the creation of a true diplomatic network.

All of that takes time. We still have to face many shortcomings, some of them very practical, such as organising better communication within the extreme diversity of the EU inter-institutional landscape; some of them less obvious. Do not forget that we are inexperienced and it is quite unprecedented in EU institutional history to see an institution such as the EEAS being created from scratch within two months. That is not how the EU usually works. As you know, EU time is not the same as that of the media or the markets. We have our own pace, which is not as quick as others would expect, but which is steady and solid.

We have to strengthen our structures in the field of non-proliferation, a point made by Annalisa. I am in Washington and can tell you that I often hear the same point that she made. We should not, however, be paralysed by complexities. We also have a number of cards to play. Coming from Washington, I cannot but tell you that the best image of the EU in recent months is linked to non-proliferation and to Iran. When the EU adopted a set of far-reaching sanctions against Iran, US opinion was somewhat surprised.

Two weeks ago, the headline in the *Chicago Tribune* said something like “EU” and “bold” – these words we are not used to seeing together. Bravo EU. It makes a nice change to the criticism about the euro.

We know and you know that EU non-proliferation and disarmament policies are a whole. And I am not sure that we have to be proud of sanctioning anybody. We know, however, that our credibility, when it is flagged somewhere, depends strongly on the solidity, credibility and in-depth investment in and commitment to the global and complete range of aspects of non-proliferation issues. That is where the EU, for 20 years, has acquired, as Annalisa recalled, true credibility. As a result, I believe that we will be able to develop our actions in a number of fields in the years to come, in areas where the EU is most efficient.

Here we should remind ourselves that we are on a thin line between giving the lead to a few important member states and having too many expectations within the EU. We need to walk this line in the knowledge that the EU is more than the sum of its components and that member states have national interests. If an issue is too divisive for the EU, we should not expect the EU to be able to play a very active role. It is on issues where the EU can build a consensus that we can play a beneficial role, and only when we are able to overcome the difficulty of inter-EU negotiations. In the field of nuclear, for example, negotiations within the EU framework are often more difficult than the overall negotiations. We should not forget that EU states have their own interests. We are not a post-historical construction but a collection of countries like others. We are not unique or exceptional as such.

To conclude, there are also a number of fields where the EU has proven particularly adept at building up its own home-grown expertise in trade sanctions and export controls on the one hand and capacity-building and assistance programmes on the other. You will certainly find an example of that in the new strategies that the EU is developing, such as the Neighbourhood Policy, which is a good example of a post-Lisbon strategy. The EU is also good at outreach, which is why it is important that this kind of seminar happens. There are not many other places where we could have such a diverse and high-level conference. It is a small thing but a good indicator that the EU is still a good, central soft power. There are things that other states cannot do but that the EU can. It is our hope that member states, as well as the global community, will use the specific capacity that we have for the best. Thank you.