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There have recently been significant developments related to the question of nuclear weapons. On 24 September 2009, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously in favour of a resolution on disarmament and non-proliferation addressing the issue of the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

In addition, in December 2009, the US and Russia are due to sign a treaty which will reduce the number of strategic weapons deployed, and the US has pledged even further cuts to its nuclear arsenal. At this critical juncture, the EU should accelerate its action towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. With the same objective, the EU should pursue closer cooperation with its partners, in particular the US and Russia. The EU should also seize the opportunity represented by the 2010 UN NPT review conference to call for the establishment of an international treaty abolishing nuclear weapons. Such a treaty must prohibit development, testing, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and oblige states that possess nuclear armaments to disarm. This treaty must also prohibit the production of fissile material and require the destruction of delivery vehicles. The same treaty will remove any justification advanced by countries which possess nuclear weapons outside the NPT regime for keeping them. Nuclear armaments should assume the same status - a complete ban - as chemical and biological weapons. Furthermore, the European Union should actively support global efforts to establish a 10-year timeframe for achieving a nuclear weapons-free world.

In line with the commitments enshrined in the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of WMD (European Council, 12 December 2003), what recent steps has the Council taken in order to achieve a nuclear weapons-free world? Does the Council agree that the European Union should try to establish a timeframe of 10 years to achieve this goal?

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure by Pino Arlacchi, on behalf of the ALDE Group to the Council

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