



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM 101 GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

EXPLANATION OF POSITION ON THE RESOLUTION ENTITLED “PRESERVATION OF AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES TREATY”

BY GEORG SPARBER

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Mr. President

Liechtenstein is taking the floor to explain its vote on the draft resolution entitled “Preservation of and compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty”.

The draft resolution addresses a very relevant and urgent matter that goes to the heart of Europe’s security. Liechtenstein is concerned at the status of the INF treaty and the implications of a possible disintegration of this important pillar of Europe’s security architecture for more than 30 years. The INF treaty has provided the legal framework for one of the most successful nuclear disarmament exercises ever conducted – freeing the European mainland from short to mid-range nuclear missiles. The INF thus represents one of the few concrete steps to implement obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). While the INF is in its current form a bilateral agreement, its significance extends far beyond the two parties. Our concern about the status of the INF is not new, but goes back to the serious warning signals since 2014 that the treaty’s provisions are violated by the development and test of new types of missiles, in particular the SSC-8. Of course, recent events have added a new and alarming perspective, namely that the States parties to the INF treaty might prefer sacrificing the treaty altogether over a serious effort to resolving their disputes within the framework of the treaty.

In the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations which represents, more than any other document, the commitment of the international community to strengthen the rule of law and to peacefully resolve disputes, Liechtenstein hopes for constructive signals and concrete steps to address in practical terms the serious concerns raised about non-compliance with the treaty. A successful dispute resolution could not only contribute to much needed confidence building between the parties, it could also pave the way for the INF's extension to other States in possession of weapons falling under the INF provisions. The INF's potential to thus contribute to a broader nuclear disarmament effort should not be cast away lightly given that the overwhelming majority of the international community is frustrated at the lack of implementation of NPT obligations by nuclear weapons States and convinced of the illegality of nuclear weapons. Upgrading and modernizing nuclear arsenals already adds significantly to global insecurity. Nuclear rearmament in Europe with a previously outlawed category of weapons is a perspective that is hardly reconcilable with the security interests of our continent. Nor is a further increase in geopolitical tensions of which non-compliance with the INF is a cause, not a symptom.

Unfortunately, the draft resolution does not sufficiently account for the serious allegations of non-compliance with the INF as the root cause of the treaty's current precarious status. Liechtenstein will therefore abstain on the draft resolution, while acknowledging that the matter at hand touches upon a core interest of the international community, and the European continent in particular, and that the General Assembly is therefore the appropriate body to discuss this matter.

I thank you.