

Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

67th Session of the General Assembly. Item 137: United Nations Common System
United Nations, New York, 26 November 2012



Mr Gerton van den Akker
First Secretary
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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

The Acceding country Croatia*, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to thank Mr Kingston Rhodes, Chair of the International Civil Service Commission, for introducing the Commission's report for 2012, contained in documents A/67/30 and Corrigendum 1, Ms Maria Casar, Assistant Secretary-General and Controller, for introducing the Statement on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2012, as contained in document A/C.5/67/3. Furthermore, we would like to thank Mr Collen Kelapile, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for his introductory remarks on the related report of the Committee, contained in document A/67/573, and the staff representatives Mr Mauro Pace, President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and Ms Paulina Analena, President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System for their statements.

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to stress that the Member States of the European Union support the significant role of the International Civil Service Commission. Its work is invaluable to the United Nations, and plays an important role in enhancing the effective functioning of the organisations of the common system, especially now given the current worldwide financial and economic crisis.

Staff are the major asset of this Organisation. At the same time, costs related to staff continue to make up by far the largest portion of the UN's budget and are a major contributing factor in budget increases. We believe that this trend has to be reversed and call upon the Secretary-

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

General to continue to strive for new levels of efficiency, economy and transparency in the way the Organisation does business and to identify areas wherein improvements can be achieved. At the same time, we remain committed to providing staff of the United Nations with the appropriate support to allow them to work effectively and safely, especially those working in the most dangerous circumstances. But this should be done bearing in mind the limitations imposed by many Member States on their own national civil services as a result of the financial difficulties they face. It is unrealistic and unsustainable that UN staff members should be artificially insulated from current economic realities.

Mr Chairman,

We studied closely the report of the International Civil Service Commission for 2012 and the Secretary-General's statement on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of the Commission. In this regard, we believe that it is time to undertake a full and comprehensive review of all of the allowances and benefits of the United Nations Common System in order to establish a more realistic and simplified system that better responds to the needs of the organisations involved. The Member States of the European Union support the efforts to streamline practices within the common system regarding issues such as the conditions of service of staff, the education grant and danger pay. However, we will carefully examine the proposals and their administrative and financial implications in the light of the overall economic situation.

The Member States of the European Union have expressed their interest in freezing the base salary as well as the post adjustment, and we believe that – given the aforementioned circumstances – salaries of UN staff members cannot be increased. Such measures should remain in place until a more realistic and sustainable system can be identified and implemented. Additionally we believe that there is also a strong need to review the methodology for deciding the education grant.

Mr Chairman,

We are looking forward to discussing these issues further with all other Member States and the International Civil Service Commission as well as with the Secretariat in the upcoming informal consultations.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.