



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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**Organisation of Work
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- AS DELIVERED -

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 Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland⁺ and Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me thank you Ambassador Berger, for opening this 23rd formal meeting of the Fifth Committee, for your introductory remarks on the organisation of work and for your stewardship during the previous and the current session.

Mr. Chairman,

We would also like to thank all Member States for the constructive efforts made in trying to reach a consensual outcome during the main session of the 67th General Assembly. The current economic climate is affecting the membership of the United Nations at large. Our national budgets continue to come under strong pressure and suffer from increasing constraints. However, despite this, we were able to reach agreements last session which prove that the Committee is still able to achieve consensus on very difficult issues. We call upon all partners to continue to work in this spirit of compromise. It is very important that the Committee can continue to finish its deliberations of all time-bound items within the time allotted to the Committee so as not to hamper the predictable and sustainable financing of the Organisation. For our part, the Member States of the European Union are looking forward to working constructively once again with all partners during this session so that we can conclude negotiations on all the issues before us at the very latest by 28 March, as is foreseen in the Programme of Work.

Mr. Chairman,

We have a number of important items on our agenda during this session, including issues which have been deferred from the main session, such as Human Resources Management,

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

⁺ Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.

Common System, OIOS, Civilian Capacity and Safety and Security. We have already expressed our position on these items, and we will further elaborate on them during the informal consultations. Among the other important items that deserve our full attention, let me mention the Report of the Senior Advisory Group on Troop Costs and Related Issues, Progress towards an accountability system in the UN, the Feasibility Study on UNHQ Accommodation Needs, ICT, Procurement, the Standard of Accommodation for Air Travel, as well as the financial consequences in the aftermath of Storm Sandy.

We welcome the consensus outcome reached by the Senior Advisory Group on troop costs and related issues and we look forward to discussing its report in the upcoming session of the Fifth Committee. The Member States of the European Union would like to underline the interdependent nature of the various recommendations contained in the SAG report and we hope the General Assembly can endorse the integral package that has been presented to us.

Another important item is Accountability. An effective accountability system depends mostly on effective cooperation and common objectives. Promoting a culture of accountability at the United Nations, including individual accountability in conjunction with a transparent appraisal system, effective delegation of authority, and the development of a risk management and internal control framework, are key priorities for us.

With regard to accommodation needs at UN Headquarters, it will be crucial to discuss solutions which provide the most favourable, sustainable and financially-viable terms and conditions, and that will truly meet the future needs of the organisation.

We look forward to the opportunity to exchange views on ICT and the actions being undertaken by the Administration to strengthen information and systems security in the Secretariat. ICT remains an essential element in supporting the UN's work on a broad range of issues in peacekeeping, development, human rights, security, humanitarian assistance and international affairs.

Another important topic to be discussed is Procurement. In addition to the general principles which govern procurement, we believe the UN's procurement activities should also be sustainable and integrate requirements, specifications and criteria that are compatible and in favour of the protection of the environment, of social progress and in support of economic development by seeking resource efficiency, improving the quality of products and services

and ultimately optimising costs. The Member States of the European Union look forward to discussing this and other issues related to UN procurement with our partners.

In resuming our consideration of the topic of Air Travel, which was deferred from the first resumed session last year, our goal is to pursue a more effective and efficient use of the Organisation's resources for air travel, and to encourage the Secretary-General to take practical measures to this effect as a matter of urgency.

We welcome the Secretary-General's reports on the important matter of Safety and Security, we commend the progress made in strengthening the security management system of the Organisation, and we encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with a view to achieving the greatest impact given resource constraints.

We note with concern the new estimates in relation to the damage caused by Storm Sandy and we look forward to discussing the financial consequences in further detail during the informal consultations. We hope that the lessons learned from this event will be applied to ensure that the Organisation will be protected both physically and financially from any future natural disasters.

Finally, we welcome the informal briefings that will follow this formal meeting and are grateful to the Secretariat for organising them. Such briefings are useful to update members of the Committee and provide additional information on key on-going projects such as UMOJA and CMP.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that the Member States of the European Union remain committed to working closely with all partners in a spirit of openness, transparency and constructive cooperation in order to reach decisions by consensus at the end of this first resumed session.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.