



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

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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 Candidate Countries Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Albania* and Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank Mr. Kingston Papie Rhodes, Chair of the International Civil Service Commission, for introducing the Commission's report for 2015, and the Controller Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartiotas for her remarks on the statement of the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the ICSC, as well as the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for his introductory remarks on the related report of that Committee. We would also like to thank Mr. Imed Zabaar of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA), Mr. Ian Richards, President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA), and Mr. Dimitri Samaras, Chairperson of the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV), for their statements.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to underline the continued appreciation of the Member States of the European Union for the crucial role of the International

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

Civil Service Commission. We highly value its work and consider it essential to enhancing the effective functioning of the organisations of the common system.

Mr. Chairman,

As expressed on several occasions, it is the EU Member States' strong conviction that staff are the main asset of the Organisation, and that the UN must first of all keep its ability to attract the best people to do the job. Our common goal remains to make sure the UN staff are able to achieve the organization's mandates and capable of adapting to new challenges, especially in the field of peace and security, human rights, and social and economic development. Therefore, we remain fully committed to equipping the personnel of the United Nations with the appropriate and necessary support in order to enable them to work effectively and safely, particularly those working under the most dangerous circumstances. However, we are also aware that costs related to the Organisation's staff still constitute by far the largest element of the United Nations' budget. As such, given the economic difficulties facing most of our national governments, it is key to recall that UN staff cannot be insulated from current economic realities.

Mr. Chairman,

We have studied closely the report of the International Civil Service Commission for 2015 and the related reports of the Secretary-General and the ACABQ in the knowledge that the present compensation system has remained for the most part unchanged in over 25 years, while individual elements that comprise it have been reviewed independently of each other in a fragmented way. A comprehensive review of all the elements and interdependencies was therefore long overdue, and it is in that spirit that the General Assembly at its 67th session requested the Commission to review all remuneration elements

holistically. In the meantime, we also heard from many organizations that the current package had become increasingly problematic for their budget sustainability, and eight organizations officially urged the ICSC to go ahead with in-depth reform.

General Assembly resolution 68/253 clearly sets out the five attributes of the revised system: to support the delivery of the organizations' mandate, to be cohesive but show flexibility to meet the specific needs of the organizations, to be sustainable and premised on overall cost containment, to include all categories of personnel (starting with "P" staff at the present session) and to be immediately applicable while respecting acquired rights. That resolution also specifies the goals of the review: to be competitive, to be fair and equitable, to be transparent, to be simple in design and easy to administer, and to reward excellence and manage underperformance. It is in light of these elements agreed by the General Assembly that we plan to examine the ICSC proposals in front of us.

Mr. Chairman,

We are very pleased to see that the members of the Commission have been able to present today, after two years of discussions with all key stakeholders, a comprehensive set of conclusions and recommendations on the compensation package. We believe that this session constitutes a unique opportunity to make progress on all elements of the package in a comprehensive manner. It is our joint responsibility not to let this opportunity go and to agree at this session a new compensation system that would bring the approach of all organisations in respect of staff compensation of the common system into the 21st century.

While the Member States of the European Union welcome the recommendations of the ICSC, we had very high expectations for the review.

We believe that the Commission's recommendations should have been much bolder in rethinking traditional approaches to the compensation system. We think in particular of the incomplete proposals on performance management, which do not address underperformance; to the still very generous education grants, compared to the situation prevailing in other international organizations and national diplomatic services; to the continuation of rewarding historical moves; and to the automatic annual step increases.

Mr. Chairman,

Bearing in mind the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution 68/253, we are cognizant that the proposed package is a delicate compromise, which attempts to strike a balance taking into account the concerns of all stakeholders. We are therefore mindful that it must be looked at as a package that represents a balanced and constructive compromise, and this is how we envisage the next steps of our discussion.

In this context, we also read the statement of the CEB. We welcome the CEB endorsement of the ICSC recommendations, and we take note of the three issues they raise. However, as I just stated, we must bear in mind that the ICSC proposals, which were agreed by unanimity, are the result of three years of work by experts of all organizations. We therefore see no reason to question the overall package of recommendations made by the ICSC, but we are nevertheless ready to look into the facts and data that will be presented to us by the CEB.

Mr. Chairman,

The Member States of the European Union will also look into the other important issues under this agenda item, such as the mandatory age of

separation, the implementation of the methodology of the margin management procedure, and the conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited staff.

At this stage, please allow me to say a few words on the mandatory age of separation that we agreed to in GA resolution 69/251. While respecting the decision to raise the mandatory age of separation, we need to look further into the impact it will have on budgets and workforce planning, in all organizations and at the UN Secretariat specifically, including on the UN Pension Fund. The decision on the final date for implementation will necessarily need to factor in these various aspects.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me assure you of the EU Member States' commitment to engage constructively with all Member States in negotiations on these issues in the upcoming informal consultations.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman