



**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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**Organisation of work**

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Chair,

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\*, Serbia\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by congratulating you upon your election as Chair of the Fifth Committee. Of course, we would also like to congratulate all members of the Bureau upon their election. We have a difficult task ahead, but we are confident that with your experience and under your leadership, these important negotiations will reach a fruitful and timely conclusion.

Chair,

Our session comes at a critical juncture for the future of the UN. The Committee's agenda includes many important and complex items such as the 2018-19 regular budget and a long list of additional reports with implications for this proposed programme budget as well as elements pertaining to the much anticipated management reform of the UN. It will be for the 5<sup>th</sup> committee to connect the strands on reform to make the UN more focused on delivery rather than process. This is a very important responsibility that will require a collective effort from us all. Therefore, we must conduct our negotiations in the most effective and expeditious manner, focusing on those issues on which decisions must be taken.

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

The Secretary General has been clear in his diagnosis of the problem afflicting the UN: an organisation crippled by its own bureaucracy and overly complex decision making processes. In the past, it has been argued that the Fifth Committee has been part of the problem, through its micro-management and aversion to change. We must aspire to be part of the solution: strategic, open-minded to change, honouring the trust we have put in the Secretary General and his team. We will discuss this later, but the reform envisaged by the SG should have direct positive implications for the working methods of the Fifth Committee.

As we approach a particularly heavy workload this session, we need to use the limited committee time allotted to us wisely and effectively.

Simplification is needed, duplication has to be avoided and our processes should be streamlined to the maximum extent possible. We should aspire to need less conference time, fewer documents and fewer and shorter resolutions. Simplification is at the heart of the reform agenda and should be at the heart of our working methods.

Chair,

Please allow me to highlight a few points that are particularly important to our group.

First: all documents should be submitted on time and simultaneously in all official languages. The distribution and use of so called “advance copies” of reports should really be exceptional. This is key to the much needed inclusivity and transparency that will help us reach a successful negotiated outcome.

Second: this committee should be able to reach decisions by consensus during normal working hours, with proper conference facilities and without having

to resort to working during weekends or nights. Working outside normal conference hours is dysfunctional: it should be the exception and can no longer be the rule of doing business in this committee. The budget committee has a key role to play in steering the organisation towards more transparency, effectiveness and efficiency.

Third: we believe this committee needs to find a sustainable solution regarding time management in the second resumed session. We regret that, year after year, we need to extend the deadline of the session without conference services and interpretation. We believe that a solution is long overdue and we hope that under your leadership we can come to better time management and better scheduling of items throughout the year, especially related to peacekeeping budgets. In our view the effective organisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> resumed session, particularly given the items which will then be on our agenda, should be a priority for the bureau and we would urge them to begin thinking early about making best use of the Committee's time.

Finally, allow me, Chair, to make clear the wish of the EU Member States to work with you and all members of the Fifth Committee in a spirit of constructive cooperation, consensus and collegiality. As far as the individual items on our agenda are concerned, we will make statements, as necessary, at the time of their introduction.

I thank you, Chair.