



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States  
76th Session of the General Assembly  
Fourth Committee  
Agenda item 58. Questions relating to information**

Madam Chair,  
Madam Under-Secretary-General,  
Distinguished colleagues,

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

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank USG Melissa Fleming and the Department of Global Communications for the reports submitted to the Committee on Information, as well as for their regular updates and exchanges with Member States on the work of the Department.

One year after the launch of the 2020 Global Communications Strategy, we note that, despite significant constraints caused by the pandemic, the Department has **gained in agility, expanded the scope of its activities, and increased its engagement with all stakeholders**, including civil society and young people. These efforts have resulted in expanded audiences across communication tools. We welcome these developments and are committed to work together with the Department and all Member States on the full range of our joint priorities.

We support in particular the DGC's **focus on COVID-19 vaccination as a source of hope** and the way forward for getting back on track to achieving the SDGs. We concur with the need to treat Covid-19 vaccination as a global public good and to ensure universal and equitable access to vaccines. It is key to continue **promoting multilateral solutions, starting with the COVAX facility**, as well as efforts strengthening health systems and universal health coverage, together with supporting countries to develop local production capacities. The long term development efforts in the health sector, including a OneHealth approach, are not only indispensable to roll out vaccines – for COVID-19 or other diseases – but also **to build resilient systems to increase pandemic preparedness**. In this spirit, we look forward to the International Agreement on Pandemic Preparedness and Response, proposed jointly by the EU and the WHO, to be better prepared globally for preventing and responding to future pandemics.

This said, we praise the Department's **continued engagement on all UN pillars**, not least because the pandemic has accentuated the further urgency to act, as shown by the dedicated calls and reports by the Secretary-General. From the broad human rights and gender equality agenda, to climate and environment action, from the

realization of the SDGs to peace and security, you can count on the EU and its Member States' continued support to the Secretary General and to the DGC's activities that foster compassion and solidarity among nations and people.

Madam Chair,

In his recent report on “**Our Common Agenda**”, the Secretary-General stressed the need for more global solidarity, a new Social Contract to rebuild trust; improved global governance to deliver better global public goods; as well as a focus on the future and future generations. We stand ready to engage actively in addressing these challenges. We encourage the DGC to expand in the implementation phase the remarkable efforts deployed during the consultation, which had allowed reaching an unprecedented number and variety of stakeholders and world citizens.

Youth representatives in particular were very powerful during this process – they urged us to involve them in our decision-making, because what we decide now will determine their future. There are over 1.8 billion young people in the world today, 90% of whom live in developing countries. **Young people are an essential target audience of our communication activities**, but it is also high time we **give them a seat where it counts: at the decision-making table**. We must work not only for youth, but also with youth, empowering and involving them in shaping the world in which they want to live. Nearly all policy decisions have an impact on youth, and they need to be consulted in a systematic way, using appropriate structures and sufficient resources. We welcome the adoption of the "Youth 2030 Strategy" led by the UN SG Special Envoy on Youth in cooperation with the whole UN System, and we encourage its full implementation. This starts with our communication activities – and you can count on the EU's contribution to making this a reality in the months and years to come.

Madam Chair,

**Multilingualism** is a core value of the Organisation and a necessary condition for the inclusiveness, efficiency and transparency of the multilateral system. We have noted the efforts deployed to recover from the major disruption caused by the pandemic, and appreciate the multilingual activities deployed, notably on the UN website and social media. However, we call on the DGC to ensure a fully equitable treatment of all official languages of the UN in all the activities of the Organisation and to pursue efforts to disseminate information in the other languages used by the Department. We are convinced that multilingualism can and should be used as leverage for a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system – a reflection of the universality of the UN and our own linguistic diversity, including within the DGC's personnel.

Among the greatest achievements of the Department in recent months has been your work to fight **disinformation and misinformation**. COVID-19 has shown the importance of empowering citizens and enabling them to operate in the information environment, both online and offline, wisely, safely and ethically. The **Verified campaign** launched by the SG is a model of its kind, in which the EU and its Member States have taken active part. Member States also collectively recognized the need to do more: The resolution proclaiming a **Global Media and Information Literacy week**, adopted earlier this year and co-sponsored by all EU Member States, creates a new space for further international cooperation. **Our North Star must remain the protection of fundamental rights**, including the freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom of the press. There is no easy answer, but the way forward is a

“whole-of-society” response, including civil society, media, academia and the private sector (including online platforms and advertisers). We thus praise the DGC for the broadening thematic scope of activities against the ‘infodemic’, as well as for the multiple partnerships developed with civil society and the private sector. Online platforms in particular are among the main routes for spreading disinformation and misinformation. The EU strongly supports calls for them to deliver on their commitment to address harmful content, as they have a major responsibility in informing and protecting citizens.

We welcome the SG’s roadmap on digital cooperation and are committed to cooperate with the **UN initiatives in the digital arena** – not least to address the digital divide. The EU promotes a human-centric, multi-stakeholder approach including civil society and the private sector, where human rights, including the right to privacy, democracy, good governance, accountability and the rule of law are protected online and offline.

You can count on the European Union's continued support moving forward.

Thank you for your attention.