



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

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at the Sixth Committee

on

**Agenda item 78
"United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, study,
dissemination and wider appreciation of international law"**

United Nations

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr Chairman,

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

The Acceding Country Croatia^{*}, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Iceland[†] and Serbia^{*}, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

It has been almost half a century since the UN Programme of Assistance in Teaching, Study, Dissemination, and Wider Appreciation of International Law was established, with the goal of contributing towards a better knowledge of international law as a mean of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and co-operation among States. Such assistance also contributes to strengthening the rule of law, as appears in paragraph 38 of the Declaration on the Rule of Law adopted by the UN General Assembly on 24th September 2012.

This goal remains just as central to the role of the United Nations today as it did at that time. Indeed, knowledge of international law is a basic prerequisite for establishing the “conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained,” as envisaged in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations.

We therefore strongly support the Programme of Assistance as a key tool within the framework of the rule of law activities of the United Nations. By providing international law training and resources, the Programme of Assistance has made an important contribution to advancement of rule of law and to the work of the international legal community over the past 45 years.

We welcome the Report of the Secretary General concerning the implementation of the Programme of Assistance in 2012, as well as the adoption of Resolution 66/97.

We commend the Office of Legal Affairs, and in particular the Codification Division, for its efforts to strengthen and revitalize its activities under the Programme of Assistance in order to meet the changing needs of the international legal community in the 21st century.

We are particularly pleased to note the use of modern technology for this purpose. The establishment and continuous expansion of the Audiovisual Library of International Law is an especially significant achievement, offering easy access to a vast range of legal resources, free of charge. We note that, as set out in the Report of the Secretary General, the Audiovisual Library has been accessed by over 350,000 users in 192 member States. This statistic accords with our view that the Audiovisual Library has already become an important resource for the legal community, including students, international law practitioners and even historians and we encourage continued attention by the Codification Division to this project.

^{*} 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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area

Furthermore, we note with appreciation the achievements of the Codification Division with respect to its publishing programme, in particular the desktop publishing initiative, which has greatly enhanced the timely issuance of its legal publications. We also welcome the efforts of the Codification Division to achieve greater cost-efficiencies with respect to the International Law Fellowship Programme, including by inviting contributions from universities and other institutions. In this regard we welcome the contributions made by regional organizations, in particular by the African Union. We note that the Division has been successful in its efforts aimed at the resumption of regional courses in international law, and to this end organised a regional course in international law for French-speaking lawyers from countries in Africa, held in Addis Ababa earlier this year. In this context we also welcome the organisation of a Regional Course in International Law for Asia-Pacific in November 2012, the intention to hold a Regional Course for Africa next year, and the possibility being explored of conducting a Regional Course for Latin America and the Caribbean also in 2013.

In addition, we also note with appreciation the important contribution of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea to the capacity building of developing countries and the promotion of the law of the sea.

The need for international law training and dissemination of legal resources is a constant and ongoing one. As is clear from the above, we are of the view that the Programme of Assistance should be regarded as a core activity of the United Nations in this area for the benefit of all States, whether developing or developed. It is crucial to ensure that the Programme of Assistance has adequate resources, within overall existing resources, to continue to meet the needs of the international community in the years to come.

In light of the importance we place on it, many EU Member States have made significant voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance. We commend those States which have similarly made voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance to date, and encourage others to consider such contributions in future.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.