



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

2 October 2017

Item 109:

Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism”

Statement delivered by

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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 Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, , align themselves with this statement.

International terrorism continues to pose an extreme threat to global peace and security. Europe has been once again the target of horrendous terrorist attacks. And it is not the only one – weekly deadly attacks are reported all over the world. It is our responsibility to respond jointly by not only condemning but also working to prevent and counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We have now a new momentum in the United Nations General Assembly with the creation of the Office for Counter-Terrorism and the recent

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

appointment of the Under Secretary General Vladimir Voronkov to whom we reiterate welcome and support in his new endeavour.

The European Union and its Member states are fully committed to fighting terrorism, both inside and outside the European territory, with its prime objective being to eradicate Da'esh and other terrorist groups.

Our actions in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism are based on a criminal-justice approach, in full compliance with international law, in particular international human-rights law. As we have previously stated, it is of outmost importance to allow justice to follow its due course and in this respect, it is a matter of urgency to secure forensic evidence for the crimes committed by terrorists. Those responsible for such crimes shall be held accountable. We commend recent developments at the UN in this respect, in particular the unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2379(2017) establishing an Investigative Team to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL (Da'esh) accountable by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by the terrorist group ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq. We commend the Government of Iraq for its willingness to hold Da'esh accountable for its crimes and we will continue to support these endeavours.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year we presented extensively the actions that the EU is pursuing on preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism at home and abroad. I would like to reiterate our engagement with all our partners to eliminate this scourge as we know that strength lies in partnership.

EU priorities, as identified in The European Agenda on Security, adopted in 2015, are implemented through measures aimed at increasing the collective capacity to tackle the terrorist threat, and they include: Addressing the threat posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters; Preventing and countering radicalisation; Sanctioning terrorists and their backers; Improving information exchange; Strengthening the European Counter Terrorism Centre; Cutting the access of terrorists to firearms and explosives and funding; Protecting citizens and critical infrastructures and addressing the external dimension. As far sanctions are concerned, The European Union has also strengthened its legal framework with the adoption, in September 2016, of the EU autonomous ISIL/AQ sanctions regime. The European Union is also working to improve the cross-border access to electronic evidence among its Member States. Even though this measure does not only concern terrorism, it will improve the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute terrorist crimes.

The European Commission Action Plan to strengthen the fight against terrorism financing, adopted in February 2016, also identified a number of areas to improve the fight against terrorist financing which already resulted in the adoption of additional legislation at EU level: a new Directive was adopted on combatting terrorism which criminalises terrorist financing

and the funding of recruitment, training and travel for terrorism purposes. A proposal to amend the EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive is also being considered that will further improve the efficiency of the EU framework against terrorism financing, including by enhancing the transparency around the beneficial ownership of corporate entities and legal arrangements and thus limiting the risk of misuse of such entities and arrangements to channel funds for financing terrorist activities among others.

We also work very closely with our international partners, most importantly within the framework of the Financial Action Task Force where the Operational Plan against terrorist financing as well as the transparency of beneficial ownership are the two top priorities.

Following the adoption of the EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq, as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat, reviewed in May 2016, and in line with the newly adopted Foreign Affairs conclusions on counter-terrorism of June 2017, the EU has stepped up its bilateral and multilateral engagement with international partners, including MENA, the Western Balkans, Turkey, the US, the Gulf, the United Nations (UN), the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We have presented in detail these actions in our statements over the past two years and in our contribution this year to the report of the Secretary General. Work must be intensified in other regions of the world such as in Africa, Central Asia and South/East Asia where whole societies are affected by terrorist groups that partly also link with Da'esh. The common aim is to stem the spread of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, stabilize areas liberated from Da'esh, squeeze Da'esh finances and counter Da'esh messages, including by preventing terrorist use of the Internet. Combatting Da'esh in the long-term requires also addressing the political and socio-economic root causes that have facilitated the spread of terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU and its Member States remain equally engaged in the multilateral fora, and the UN remains central to our partnerships.

The adoption by the UN General Assembly of the resolution setting up the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism led by the Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov is an important step aimed at improving the role of the UN and its impact in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. We are confident that the Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and his Office will provide strategic leadership, participate in high-level decision-making at the UN and ensure that cross-cutting drivers of terrorism and violent extremism are taken into account in the work of the UN. Setting the preventing violent extremism and the counter-terrorism agenda in coherence with other UN policies, in particular human rights and development, is key for its success in the field. A comprehensive approach entails also involvement of youth, women, local communities and victims of terrorism in implementing these policies. The EU has recently established a High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation to facilitate the further development and to enhance the impact of EU policies in this area.

We reiterate our plea for effective and efficient coordination within the overall UN system and between the UN and other international organisations and forums. Within the mandates of the existing entities, it will be necessary to create more linkages and foster a spirit of systematic cooperation, as well as to evaluate and monitor the impact of the UN's work in the future.

The EU and its Member States want a strong and efficient UN that drives the important global agenda on preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism, taking a balanced approach across the four pillars of the UN Global CT Strategy. To achieve this, we are committed to closely cooperate with Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and his Office.

Mr Chairman,

The EU has long time advocated that the work and initiatives of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) should be better reflected in the UN's CT and PVE agenda. The EU is an active member and we encourage all UN Member States to actively participate to the meetings and benefit from the works of this Forum. The GCTF has proven its ability as an ideal forum to advance thinking, to share best practice, to identify shortcomings, and to work together in a united effort against terrorism. In the margins of this year's UNGA ministerial week, the GCTF has announced new initiatives on the nexus between transnational crime and terrorism, on the challenge of returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families, and on addressing homegrown violent extremism. They are all very pertinent and very timely to our UN debate and we trust that the new OCT and the CTITF-entities will enhance cooperation with this forum and utilize its work within the UN in order to maximize the impact.

We have long-established cooperation with the UN through the biannual political dialogues, as well as in the field. We will continue to support CTITF, CTED, UNODC with its Terrorism Prevention Branch, and UNICRI. The EU and its Member States have also engaged in co-funding various projects initiated or co-ordinated by the UNCCT. As regards the UN sanctions regimes, we reiterate our full support to the Office of the Ombudsperson of the 1267 Committee and call for an immediate replacement of Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel to whom we extend our gratitude for her dedication and excellent work. We hope that her successor will also have a strong judicial profile as we believe this is key to this position. The EU remains committed to promote the strengthening of due process and fair and clear procedures in the sanctions regimes. The EU has already taken steps to improve its procedures and will continue its dialogue with the UN and UN Member States in this area.

In view of the growing terrorist threat, we reiterate our call for all Member States to ratify and implement all UN legal instruments to counter terrorism and we recognize Member States efforts towards making progress on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. We remain committed to its successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me also recall that in our joint efforts, it is of utmost importance to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law. We firmly believe that the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential components of the fight against terrorism. Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law. In the face of the challenge of terrorism, democracies should never compromise their values.

As regards the resolution of the 6th Committee under the agenda item on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, we see certain duplication with the Plenary work during UNGA sessions where a resolution to review the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is being negotiated. We believe that our works could be rationalized, for example by including the item on Measures to eliminate international terrorism on the agenda on a biennial basis and alternatively with the review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. As we learned from the past session, delegations are not willing to duplicate in the 6th Committee's resolution discussions that just took place in the Plenary. We trust that all delegations are persuaded by the need to be efficient and to work towards delivering concrete results in this important endeavour we have embarked collectively.

Thank you.