



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

**Ms. Simona Popan, Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to the
United Nations**

at the Sixth Committee

on the Agenda item 167:

"Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country"

United Nations

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– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair,

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

We thank the Committee on Relations with the Host Country for the report on its activities conducted during the reporting period. The Committee remains an efficient, open, and transparent forum of discussion of all matters arising in connection with the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement.

The primary purpose of the 1947 Headquarters Agreement is to enable the United Nations, as well as the Permanent Missions and their staff, to fulfil their tasks in the host country. Under the Headquarters Agreement, but also under the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the delegations, and missions accredited to the United Nations enjoy privileges and immunities in order to function efficiently and independently. As this year's Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country indicates yet again, the observance of privileges and immunities is an issue of great importance and cannot be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country. This is in the interest of the United Nations and of all its Member States.

During the reporting period under examination, we welcome the resolution of banking issues that have enabled two Member States to make their financial contributions to the United Nations and have their voting rights restored. We also note the lifting of the more stringent travel restrictions that had been imposed in July 2019 on representatives of one Mission, while noting with concern that numerous other issues raised before the Committee remain unresolved, including as regards travel regulations and the issuance or renewal of entry visas. In this respect, more remains to be done to find acceptable solutions consistent with the UN Headquarters Agreement and international law and we urge all parties to work in this direction.

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

On the matter of the issuance and/or renewal of entry visas to representatives of certain Member States, we wish to stress the importance of the full participation of all delegations in the work of the UN. In this context, we recall the UN Legal Counsel's statement at the 300th meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, where he emphasized that the nature and number of delayed or non-issued visas remained of particular concern and required urgent action. We also recall the statements of the United Nations Legal Counsel at meetings of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country during the 74th session of the UN General Assembly where he confirmed the legal position expressed in 1988 regarding the host country's obligations with respect to the issuance of visas to persons covered by the Headquarters Agreement. According to this position, "the Headquarters Agreement makes it clear that there is an unrestricted right of persons mentioned in section 11 to enter the United States for the purpose of proceeding to the Headquarters district."

Concerning travel regulations, despite the lifting of the more stringent travel restrictions applicable to one Mission, we note the long-standing position of the Committee conveyed to the host country, namely that there is no room for the application of measures based on reciprocity in the treatment accorded to permanent missions accredited to the United Nations in New York.

Mr./Madam Chair,

We express our support for the work and active engagement of the Office of Legal Affairs in addressing those serious matters pending before the Host Country Committee and we welcome the increased and active involvement of the Legal Counsel to this end, including with the host country authorities, but also the involvement of the UN Secretary-General himself.

We also recognize the commitment of the United States to engage on all matters related to its status as host country and to uphold its obligations under the UN Headquarters Agreement. We are aware of the ongoing challenges the Covid-19 pandemic continues to pose and appreciate the efforts of the Mission of the United States to the UN to respond to specific requests and accommodate the needs, interests, and requirements of the diplomatic community in New York.

The EU and its Member States are strong supporters of a multilateral rules-based order, with the United Nations at its heart. We are concerned that issues related to the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement may affect the work of the United Nations. We therefore encourage the Committee, together with the Secretariat and the host country to continue to discuss and identify solutions to those issues. We urge the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel to continue engaging, in consultation with the Permanent Missions of the affected member states and with the assistance of the Chair of the Committee, with the authorities of the host country in order to resolve outstanding issues in line with the Headquarters Agreement. We believe that dialogue, in a spirit of good faith and in full regard for the interest of the Organisation, on the full range of issues discussed in the Committee, remains the best avenue for finding acceptable solutions in line with international law.

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair
