



**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 86:**

**"The Rule of law at national and international level"**

**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\* 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.

Mr./Madam Chair,

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on ‘Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities’ (A/76/235) and for all activities undertaken by the United Nations to assist Member States to promote the rule of law at national and international level. Within the framework of ‘Our Common Agenda’, UN assistance to the promotion of the rule of law is essential to delivering on the promises made by the world leaders to future generations, including to provide access to justice for all.

As illustrated in the report, the rule of law remains at the centre of a renewed social contract, a contract that is anchored in respect for human rights and solidarity, and that leaves no one behind.

Promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels is also a key prerequisite for a rules-based multilateral order. And, as the High Representative of

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

the Union for Foreign and Security Policy has put it, ‘multilateralism matters because it works.’

We need to continue to protect and promote the rule of law, democratic principles, good governance, and human rights to address the multiple global challenges of today. This will strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation.

It is indeed a new kind of multilateralism. A multilateralism that is built on the principle of solidarity between people, between nations, between current and future generations, between people and institutions. We believe it is a multilateralism that must be underpinned - both at home and at the international level - by the principle of rule *of* law, and not by principle of rule *by* law.

The pandemic has put our health, economies and societies under severe pressure. As we build back better and greener and more resilient societies, we must ensure that respect for the rule of law also forms part of our response. On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN, the world leaders have agreed to abide by international law and ensure justice. They have committed to promote respect for democracy and human rights, and to enhance democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions. For the EU, the fight against impunity and support for all international mechanisms seeking accountability, including for the International Criminal Court, is also of key importance. We must deliver on these commitments and welcome the UN Secretary-General’s new vision for the rule of law that puts people at the center of justice systems.

In doing so, we must have in mind ‘we, the peoples’ – as the UN Charter states. The UN must deliver for all people, regardless of their means, for all citizens of the world from all walks of life. We must listen to and involve civil society, our youth, the private sector, and academia. Opening up the UN to them will result in a mutual gain for both sides. We should aim high, for a more inclusive multilateralism that engages with various stakeholders and capitalizes on their expertise.

Mr./Madam Chair,

The EU is based on a set of shared values including respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. These fundamental values are seen by Europeans as amongst the EU’s main assets, and safeguarding them is a shared responsibility of the EU institutions and all Member States. These values should never be taken for granted. Promoting and upholding the rule of law requires vigilance and constant improvement, because there is always a risk of backsliding.

The rule of law is essential for the very functioning of the EU: for the effective application of EU law, for the proper functioning of the internal market, for the free movement of persons in the EU, for maintaining an investment-friendly environment, and for mutual trust. The core of the rule of law is effective judicial protection, which requires the independence, quality and efficiency of national justice systems. The fight against corruption is also essential for maintaining the rule of law and preserving citizens’ trust in public institutions.

While we also had our moments of distress, we remain firm in our commitment to upholding these values both at home and abroad. In that regard, the EU has renewed its commitment in recent years to upholding the rule of law. In 2019, the European Commission announced the establishment of a comprehensive European Rule of Law Mechanism with annual reporting by the European Commission covering all EU Member States. This sets out concrete actions to strengthen the EU's capacity to promote and uphold the rule of law, to promote a common rule of law culture by preventing rule of law deviations and by having effective responses in place. In particular, in 2020, the European Commission published the first Rule of Law Report, which is publicly available and presents an overview of the rule of law situation in the EU and an assessment of the situation in each Member State. The second Rule of Law Report was published in July 2021.

Respect for the principles of the rule of law and human rights nonetheless remain a concern in far too many parts of the world. The targeting of political parties, human rights defenders and media, and the surge of authoritarian leaders are major setbacks for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. This is not and should not be considered as an internal affair. It touches the core of the rule of law at the international level, and it affects society as a whole. It is our common duty to prevent this from happening and to remain open to dialogue.

Mr./Madam Chair,

Last year's debate was focused on the subtopic '*Measures to prevent and combat corruption*'. We had fruitful exchanges on this highly relevant topic. We suggest continuing this good practice of more focused debates.

In that regard, for the next session we would suggest the subtopic “*Pathways to people centered justice systems*”.

In closing, I wish to reiterate the EU and its Member States’ commitment to the protection and promotion of the rule of law. We stand ready to contribute further to the debate on this topic and to support all efforts to advance the rule of law at all levels.

I thank you, Mr./Madam Chair.

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