



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**by Mr. Fabio Cannizzaro**

**Counsellor**

**Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

**at the Sixth Committee**

**on the Agenda item 85:**

**“The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction”**

**United Nations**

**New York**

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**– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

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

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\*, Albania\*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina\* and Georgia, as well as Monaco align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chair,

We would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction (A/79/269). We welcome the comprehensive summary of the positions expressed so far in the debates of the Sixth Committee, which provides a valuable basis for continuing our discussion.

The report illustrates the complexity and diversity of views on the definition, scope, and application of universal jurisdiction. At the same time, we are pleased to see reflected in the report that delegations generally agree on the importance of universal jurisdiction as one of the tools to promote accountability and prevent impunity for the most serious crimes under international law, while recognising the need to ensure that its application remains exceptional and consistent with international law.

Many States have introduced and applied the concept of universal jurisdiction in their domestic law. As, regrettably, the occurrence of core international crimes continues to rise, we can expect an increasing number of investigations and prosecutions based on universal jurisdiction.

It is therefore essential to continue our discussion, notably on the conditions, criteria, and transparent rules, which are necessary to guarantee legal certainty in the exercise of that jurisdiction. We also emphasise the importance of fostering international cooperation as an essential element for the effective implementation

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

of the principle of universal jurisdiction, for example, as regards access to evidence.

Within the EU, cooperation among the national authorities of the Member States in this field is ensured also through the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (EUROJUST) and the European Network for the investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes (“Genocide Network”). The Genocide Network facilitates cooperation and coordination among its members, and also serves as a platform for sharing best practices and expertise. For example, the 35th meeting of the Genocide Network, which took place on 16-17 April 2024, was mainly dedicated to the topic of witness protection and support in core international crimes and universal jurisdiction cases before national jurisdictions.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, the European Union and its Member States reiterate their readiness to contribute further to discussions on this topic and look forward to participating in the working group in order to advance our thinking on the relevant elements of a working concept of universal jurisdiction.

Thank you.