

Statement delivered by the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, at the United Nations General Assembly Thematic Panel Discussion on "From commitment to implementation: Ten years of the Responsibility to Protect," convened by the President of the General Assembly

26 February 2016

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting and the panellists for their presentations.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Albania*, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) is a strong supporter of the Responsibility to Protect and its three reinforcing pillars. This has been reflected in our priorities for the General Assembly since 2005. We are committed to implement this important principle through better use of the full range of our diplomatic, political, development, human rights and humanitarian instruments and our partnerships across the globe.

Following the insightful presentations, we would like to make three comments.

Firstly on the fact that too many atrocities are still being perpetrated in far too many places. It sounds obvious, but the prevention and halting of atrocity crimes need to become a real overarching political priority. Mustering political will and acting accordingly is our joint responsibility in the face of on-going horrors as in Syria. In this context, we are supportive of the cross regional initiative aiming at the adoption of a substantive resolution to mark the tenth anniversary of Member States' commitment to Responsibility to Protect. We particularly value the proposal to include the implementation of RtoP in the formal agenda of the GA allowing for a much welcomed discussion on this issue. We also welcome the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group and the work of France and Mexico regarding Security Council action to prevent or end mass atrocities.

Secondly, alongside capacity building, we want to emphasize the important aspect of prevention. As part of the responsibility to protect, there is an obligation to do all we can to prevent crisis from occurring. Prevention is the most cost effective way to save lives. Our efforts must be focused on identifying the early signs that could lead to the worsening of a particular situation. The development of better early warning capabilities, such as the Framework of Analysis on Atrocity Crimes, can help anticipate risks of potential atrocities and mobilise resources to respond preventively. The EU conflict early warning system has been on the forefront in including the risk of atrocity crimes from the beginning, but more could be done. International and regional human rights mechanisms are also crucial elements in the operationalisation of Responsibility to Protect. In this context, we reiterate our continued support for the Secretary-General initiative "Human Rights up Front", as well as for the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, as well as other international and regional actors and Civil Society Organization engaged in preventive action.

Finally, we wish to stress the importance of mainstreaming Responsibility to Protect and ensuring coherence with other processes, UN peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding activities have a critical role to play in assisting the host states in the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect. This needs to be fully acknowledged in the ongoing review of the UN Peace Operations. Furthermore, we should also ensure coherence with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda which is tying peace, security, development and human rights together, most prominently in the Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peaceful and Inclusive societies.

Thank you.

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