



## EU Statement – United Nations Security Council: Charter of UN

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**Summary: 15 February 2016, New York – Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States by H.E. Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, at the Security Council Open Debate on the respect of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as key element for the maintenance of international peace and security**

*As delivered*

Mr. President,

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\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Venezuelan presidency of the Security Council for providing the Council and the UN as a whole with this opportunity for reflecting on and reaffirming our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and their continued relevance in the twenty-first century. More than ever, the UN Charter needs to be respected and implemented.

This debate also gives us the opportunity to pay tribute to those who sacrificed themselves in the hope of a free, democratic and peaceful world, established on the basis of the universal values that not only built the UN but also inspired the foundation of the European Union.

Mr. President,

As we mark this year the 50th anniversary of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - and look ahead to the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2018 - it is apt to recall that the UN Charter has provided the bedrock on which an extensive network of international human rights obligations and commitments has been built.

The UN Security Council has increasingly embraced in its work the advancement of human rights as a critical element of advancing peace and security and preventing conflict and atrocities. From consideration of country situations to taking forward the women, peace and security agenda, such efforts should continue and intensify.

This Council also has an important power of referring situations in which genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes appear to have been committed to the International Criminal Court, as well as by deciding on targeted sanctions.

The Secretary General's "Human Rights up Front" initiative draws too on the founding human rights principles enshrined in the Charter in its aspirations to gear the entire UN system towards the advancement of human rights and to seek to ensure that mass atrocities become a thing of

the past.

Mr. President,

The Charter calls on all members of this organization to “refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”. It provides that all member states shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means and fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them. The European Union and its Member States are deeply committed to these core principles of the United Nations. We firmly believe that there is no place for the use of force and coercion to change internationally recognized borders in Europe or elsewhere in the 21st century. In this regard, the European Union recalls UNGA resolution 68/262 and remains strongly committed to upholding the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. In the same way, we are heartened by the positive momentum and atmosphere surrounding intensified unification talks in Cyprus under UN auspices and look forward to bringing the process to a successful conclusion and reaching a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible, on the basis of relevant Security Council Resolutions and in line with European Union principles.

Mr. President,

Nowhere are the purposes and principles of the UN Charter being tested more severely today than in Syria. The conflict continues to rage, with disastrous consequences for the Syrian population, for the neighbouring countries and the wider region, including for us in the European Union. We strongly condemn the use of starvation as method of warfare, which particularly affects the weakest and most vulnerable, in particular women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. As Secretary General Ban Ki-moon recently pointed out, “the use of starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime.” It is crucial, in this regard, to reaffirm our firm commitment to fight impunity.

The indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas is unacceptable. This has led to mass displacements and huge refugee flows. It has also encouraged recruitment by and the flourishing of terrorist groups in Syria. The European Union calls on all parties to cease all attacks on civilian objects and take all appropriate steps to protect civilians, including members of ethnic, religious and confessional communities, and to grant immediate access to humanitarian relief operations. They must fully respect international humanitarian law and implement the relevant UNSC resolutions, also recalling that the primary responsibility to protect its population lies with the Syrian regime. Where this responsibility is not fulfilled, there is a responsibility for the Security Council to take decisive action.

It is indeed urgent to halt the conflict in Syria and put an end to the suffering of the population. The European Union fully supports the UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and his efforts in Geneva to make progress in the Syrian political process, on the basis of Security Council resolution 2254.

Allow me in this context also to welcome the outcome of the recent London Conference convened by the UK, Germany, Norway, Kuwait and the UN on 4 February, which managed to raise more than \$ 10 billion. The EU has mobilised almost 5 billion euros so far. We already committed substantial support to Turkey and are putting together comprehensive support packages for Jordan and Lebanon.

Mr President,

Against the background of continued suffering in Syria and the significant challenges that still remain elsewhere, including in Libya where the EU strongly encourages all parties to fully implement the Political Agreement, it is important to highlight that there has been important progress in the region. Last July, after years of difficult and complex negotiations coordinated by the European Union, an agreement was reached on the Iranian nuclear issue. The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in October, endorsed in UNSC resolution 2231, marked another important milestone to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear

programme. The proclamation of Implementation Day on 16 January marks a further milestone in this process and demonstrates that diplomacy and multilateralism deliver effective results for peace and security. It shows that cooperation can prevail over confrontation.

Mr President,

The fight against all forms of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism continues to be of paramount importance to the European Union. The horrific attacks in Istanbul, Paris, Beirut, Garissa, ... serve as a stark and most grievous reminder of the unacceptable costs of collective failure to act swiftly and effectively.

We welcome the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism just released in January 2016. We look forward to its discussion and implementation, and trust that further preventive action will be taken by the Secretary-General and all bodies of the Organization, including by this Council as well as Member States. We are also looking forward to engaging in the upcoming 10th anniversary review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June 2016. It remains imperative that the UN ensures coherence and coordination of its actions in supporting Member States to fight this scourge. The European Union will continue to step up its efforts at home and with the external partners in this area, in line with the relevant UNSC and General Assembly resolutions as well as in accordance with international law, particularly human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law.

I thank you.

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

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