



**United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**Informal interactive debate on the Responsibility to Protect**

**Statement delivered by**

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**United Nations**

**New York, 6 September 2016**

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Mr President,

Thank you for giving the floor to the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro and Albania\*, the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate and the panellists for their insightful presentations. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on "Mobilising collective action: The next decade of the responsibility to protect". We share the views expressed that the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect now needs to be taken to the next level in a collective effort to truly deliver on our joint commitment.

The EU has over the years extended steadfast support to the Responsibility to Protect and its three reinforcing pillars. Responsibility to Protect has been reflected in our priorities for the General Assembly since 2005. Most recently the new Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy highlights the EU's commitment to promoting Responsibility to Protect and calls on UN Security Council members not to vote against credible draft resolutions in situations of atrocity crimes.

Today's reality is that too many atrocities are being perpetrated in far too many places. While governments continue to be the main perpetrators of atrocities against their own populations, the rise of violent extremism, fuelled by narratives of hate, underscores the urgent need to address the increasing role of non-state actors in the commission of atrocity crimes. Mustering real political will and acting accordingly is our joint responsibility in the face of on-going horrors as for example in Syria. The EU has repeatedly recalled the primary responsibility of the Syrian authorities for the protection of its people. In this context, we are supportive of 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. We also recall our support for efforts to reaffirm the Responsibility to Protect through a substantive consensus resolution in the General Assembly. We particularly value the proposal to include the implementation of Responsibility to Protect in the formal agenda of the General Assembly.

We want to re-emphasize the importance of prevention. As part of the Responsibility to Protect there is an obligation to do all we can to prevent crisis from occurring. It is clear that

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

prevention is the most efficient way to avoid the terrible consequences of war and conflict. Our efforts must therefore be focused on identifying the early signs that could lead to the worsening of a particular situation. The EU's Conflict Early Warning System, a tool for EU decision-makers to manage risk factors and prioritise resources accordingly, has been at the forefront of including the risk of atrocity crimes from the very beginning. We also support international and regional human rights mechanisms which play a crucial role in the implementation of Responsibility to Protect. The UN Human Rights system has been vital in identifying risks and preventing deterioration of human rights situations and we welcome and support the increased engagement between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

Our commitment to the Responsibility to Protect is engraved throughout the EU's external action. Our Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations work to protect civilians and build up more trusted and responsible security sectors. Our development cooperation instruments support inclusive and just societies, thereby making them more resilient to atrocity crimes. We strive to integrate Responsibility to Protect concerns even more systematically in all of these areas. The Responsibility to Protect also continues to be part of our work on human rights, transitional justice and our support to the International Criminal Court. We also wish to stress the importance of the Secretary-General "Human Rights up Front" initiative in this context.

The Framework of Analysis on Atrocity Crimes is a helpful tool for developing better early warning capabilities and capacities for atrocity prevention. We will continue our close cooperation with the UN Special Advisers on the Responsibility to Protect and on the Prevention of Genocide, 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. The 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. Furthermore, we should also ensure coherence with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Please be assured that the EU will remain 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.

Thank you.