

General Assembly
Sixtieth Session

Second Informal Plenary Meeting
on Mandate Review”

Statement on behalf of the European Union

Ambassador Gerhard Pfanzelter
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

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(check against delivery)

Mr. Co-Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Serbia and Montenegro and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area as well as Moldova align themselves with this statement.

First, I would like to thank ASG Orr for the responses he just provided to the questions raised by member states last week when we had a first exchange of views on the Secretary General's report on Mandate Review.

In today's meeting I would like first to state several principles which underlie our thinking on Mandate Review. Then, following the timetable indicated by the Co-Chairs, my substantial remarks will focus on the first part of the SG's report, entitled "Key challenges".

Mr. Co-Chair,

For the EU, Mandate Review is an essential element of the Summit reform agenda which would make the Organisation more relevant, more efficient, more effective and more accountable. We share the goal of making the United Nations more effective by identifying and consolidating obsolete, redundant or unnecessarily duplicative mandates and using the resources freed up to focus on priority areas of work. We believe that a successful Mandate Review will enable all member states to make better use of the UN's capabilities.

For Mandate Review to produce meaningful results, the EU believes that it should review all mandates older than five years originating from resolutions of the GA and other organs, which would be complementary to the existing periodic review of activities. Even when looking only at mandates older than five years old, to place them in context, we would need to look at newer mandates. That said, as the Co-Chairs summed up last week, we recognise that politically sensitive mandates should be approached with appropriate sensitivity and we are ready to work on this basis.

We would also encourage the Secretary General to adopt, as soon as possible, any measures within his competence that serve the goal of Mandate Review. Coordination between units in the Secretariat should be improved, with the assistance of the Registry of Mandates, to avoid possible duplications among these units.

Mr Co-chair,

Let me now turn to the substance of the report. In the short term, we strongly support reducing the volume of documentation produced by the Secretariat including - but not limited to - reducing the length, standardising the format and reconsidering the necessity for certain documents, reports and records while fully respecting multilingualism. The Secretary-General has given us some concrete examples of nugatory and overly burdensome reporting. We think these examples offer a good initial basis for taking forward our considerations. We would therefore ask the Secretariat to provide, as soon as possible a more detailed and comprehensive set of proposals on reports and

reporting obligations that could be consolidated across the full range of thematic GA priorities. We agree with the premise that it should be left to the Secretary-General to determine which entity or department is the most competent to be the lead agency for implementing a given mandate. We also believe that we can identify in the short term areas of institutional overlap that require further in-depth examination.

For the longer term, we would encourage the SG to put forward more detailed suggestions on how "a set of core policy reports on each of the Organisation's priority areas" could alleviate the burden placed on the UN's staff. Furthermore, the EU supports the SG's suggestions to pursue a process among the member states to consider which intergovernmental organ should be the primary forum for consideration of certain issues and items. The same is true for his appeals to consider consolidating resolutions and reconciling items, and to consider ways of improving coordination between the principal organs on issues that are of concern to more than one of them. Shortly, as we deal with each of the thematic clusters, the EU will put forward more detailed proposals for practical measures to be taken.

Looking forward, the UN will need to durably improve the way new mandates are adopted. We welcome the Secretary General's suggestion to improve the institutional cycle in which mandates are generated. The use of the Mandate Registry for reference purposes should be generalised since this new tool is now available to all. We also see a lot of merit in a "mandate impact assessment" provided by the Secretariat ahead of the adoption of new mandates. In the same sense, we agree with the premise that all new mandates should be periodically reviewed. Therefore, a durable consultation and decision mechanism for continuously reviewing mandates should be set up.

Mr Co-Chair,

The time-frame for this process should clearly define objectives for the short term as well as the medium and long term. Following the SG's suggestion, the EU welcomes focussing our efforts first on examining "those issues for which problems are clearly identifiable and decisions can be made in the short term". We recognise that it would take time to look at UN mandates in a comprehensive way. The database the Secretariat has provided contains close to 9000 mandates, which we will need to look at in detail. Similarly it is easier to identify duplication than to identify solutions for solving duplication. But with any process of change it is important to build momentum through changes in the short-term.

We understand that beyond the first phase, we will need to establish mechanisms to pursue the review of issues "for which clear answers are not immediately apparent". In this context, we envisage the various reform-efforts taking place within the organisation at the same time as necessary, coherent and mutually reinforcing.

Mr Co-Chair,

We appreciate both Co-Chairs' earnest efforts to build confidence and momentum around Mandate Review at this stage. Let me again assure you of our support to a process which is to be inclusive and transparent. The EU will contribute its effort towards achieving a successful outcome.