

General Assembly

Informal Consultations of the Plenary
on the
Peacebuilding Commission

UK STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Accessing Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Co-chairs, the European Union would like to thank you for the latest excellent paper you have provided to us, and for the open, transparent and inclusive manner in which you are taking forward this process. Your efforts are helping us through the issues that remain outstanding and the EU believe we have already seen some good progress. We are fully committed to finalising the details of the Peacebuilding Commission as soon as possible in the month of November so that it can be established well before the end of the year.

Co-Chairs, let me now run through your paper, which the EU is glad to accept as a basis for working towards resolutions that establish the PBC. I shall focus in particular on the five original outstanding issues.

But I can say that on a first reading the EU is already broadly content with your proposed preambular language and particularly welcomes the language on protection of civilians and on the role of women. We would also want one operative paragraph on the role of women.

The resolutions establishing the PBC should also make clear, perhaps in the preambular section, that a gender perspective should be integrated into its recommendations, reports, activities, strategies and best practice analyses, in conformity with the provisions of SCR 1325. Gender advice should be included in PBC consideration of all country situations.

Also, the EU considers that the resolutions should reflect, again perhaps in preambular language, that the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence must be respected for provision of humanitarian assistance, as part of peacebuilding efforts.

I now turn to the issues highlighted in your paper for the main body of the resolution.

On your **first paragraph**, our leaders decided in September to establish a Peacebuilding Commission. We need now to implement that decision by finalising the detailed arrangements. We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission should be the object of concurrent resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council, as you have proposed. We can therefore accept the formulation in **paragraph one** your paper.

The European Union supports the functions as set out in paragraph 2 and the procedure as set out in paragraphs 3-6 of your paper.

Specifically, on **involvement of the country under consideration**, the European Union believes that the language contained in **paragraphs 4 and 5** of your paper strikes the right balance. The Peacebuilding Commission should always act in co-operation with national or transitional authorities where that is possible. But we also need to recognise that in certain circumstances, there may be no national or transitional authority to deal with. So from a practical perspective, the European Union agrees on the inclusion of the phrase "where possible" and on the goal of promoting national ownership of the process. We are pleased that both aspects are reflected in **paragraph 4** of your paper. We also welcome the reference **in paragraph 5** to the involvement of regional and sub-regional actors.

Turning to **agenda setting**, as set out in **paragraph 7** of your paper, the European Union agrees with the provisions that the Security Council can bring situations before the PBC and that the Secretary-General can request its advice. We support the idea that a member state in an exceptionally difficult situation should be able to apply direct to the PBC for advice, rather than needing to submit its application via ECOSOC or the GA. For the EU it is important that the direct route is preserved in the final outcome.

On mechanisms for interaction with other bodies, which, in our view, is covered in paras 8 to 12 of your paper, as the European Union has stated before, peacebuilding is a multifaceted task requiring the involvement of many different actors. The European Union believes that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission should promote coherent and complementary action by UN bodies and other actors involved in operational activities in the field.

It will thus be important that the PBC contributes to the exercise of operationally effective peacebuilding. For this to happen, in the EU view, the PBC's interaction with other UN bodies needs to respect the multi-dimensional nature of peacebuilding and for action to be taken in parallel by a range of bodies. It also needs to respect fully and be consistent with those bodies' Charter responsibilities, and other relevant Charter provisions, especially when the UN is operating on the ground.

Co-Chairs, the European Union agrees that the provisions and options set out in **paragraphs 8 to 12** of your paper should constitute the general framework for our consideration of these issues.

In our view, the following reflects the key elements:

- the reports of the PBC will be made widely available, so that UN bodies and others can exercise their respective responsibilities;
- as the Outcome Document has already provided for, and as reflected in paragraph 10 of your paper, the PBC will report annually to the General Assembly. This will be the opportunity for an important debate, which will enable the Assembly to make a contribution to the work of the Commission, not least through the uniquely wide range of experience of its membership, while respecting of course Article 12 of the Charter.
- the roles of ECOSOC and the Security Council should also be set out, in addition to that of the GA, which is already covered in your paper. We see these as follows:
 - (i) ECOSOC should highlight the medium and long-term economic, social and environmental dimensions of post-conflict situations, as the EU has argued in its proposals on ECOSOC reform, given the importance of these being integrated as soon as possible into peacebuilding strategies. This will enrich the PBC's deliberations on country situations, which will in turn be able to inform the activities of ECOSOC, including evaluating generic lessons learned in the economic, social, humanitarian and environmental fields of peacebuilding and integrating these into policy guidance for the UN Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies. Activity by ECOSOC and other bodies can also support the PBC's efforts to ensure that international attention to countries' recovery from conflict is sustained well beyond the immediate stabilisation phase.
 - (ii) Members of the ECOSOC will form part of the PBC organisational committee. As the Outcome document recognises, without prejudice to the arrangements the ECOSOC will make for determining how such members are chosen, due consideration should be given to those countries with direct experience of post-conflict recovery.
 - (iii) The Security Council, given its primary responsibility for international peace and security and its involvement in peacebuilding activity on the ground, has a central role to play. The advice of the PBC should ensure, for the Security Council, as for other organs, that its decisions are taken in light of the best available advice on peace and security issues and on the range of related factors, for instance in the field of reconstruction and development.

On the **country-specific composition of the PBC**, as set out in your **paragraph 13**, the EU would underline the importance of the UN representatives referred to in subparagraph (d) including a gender adviser.

On **membership of the Organisational Committee**, the EU strongly supports the four categories of membership, as set out in paragraph 101 of the Outcome Document, and in **paragraph 14** of your options paper. The EU considers that:

- The organisational committee of the Peacebuilding Commission should not be so large as to be unwieldy, but large enough to allow for appropriate involvement of countries in each of the four categories;
- In general, particular emphasis should be placed on those countries making an effective contribution to peacebuilding and, in addition to those countries with direct experience of post-conflict recovery, those who have experienced political and socio-economic transition more generally should also be considered;
- As necessary, it should be for the different bodies and categories of members to determine arrangements for their participation;
- The principle of rotation should apply as far as possible and tenure should be for a period of two years, with terms being staggered so that there is partial turnover each year, rather than a wider rotation every two years;
- Member states and organisations participating in the PBC should bear in mind the desirability of gender balance in all PBC meetings.

Thank you.

** Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

