

EU Statement: Informal Consultations of the Plenary on the Peacebuilding Commission

Statement by Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom Mission of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations on behalf of the European Union, 7 October 2005

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding 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, the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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

Mr President, from the outset, the European Union has been a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The need for a body like the Peacebuilding Commission is, in our opinion, undeniable. For too long, the international community's efforts at peacebuilding, in Africa and elsewhere, have been marked by piecemeal and uncoordinated interventions, often lacking national ownership by the affected countries.

The statistics speak for themselves - about a half of all countries recently emerged from conflict can be expected to relapse into conflict within a decade. We have a moral, political and economic duty to improve our approach and to help these countries establish a lasting and sustainable peace.

The Peacebuilding Commission will fill this gap. It will ensure that the international community helps a country make the transition to long-term development, right from the very outset of a peace agreement. And through its country-specific discussions, which will involve all relevant actors, the Peacebuilding Commission will consolidate coherent strategies for peacebuilding, taking into

account not only immediate peace and security issues, but also questions of the re-establishment of the rule of law, governance, human rights and social and economic recovery.

Mr President, the European Union judges that we must certainly meet, and ideally beat the end-of-year deadline for establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, agreed by our leaders. We fully agree with your target of completing discussions by early November. If we fail to do this, we will be failing to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in the world and to deliver what our leaders agreed.

Mr President, we believe it is possible to finalise the remaining details of the Peacebuilding Commission rapidly. The European Union welcomes the substantial level of agreement that we have already accomplished. This is the basis on which we should work. Action should certainly not be stalled to await progress on other issues. We must reach agreement quickly, so that we are better equipped to face current realities on the ground.

Mr President, in this vein, an important backdrop to our discussions today, and subsequently, should be the practicalities of peacebuilding. The EU has extensive experience in post-conflict countries around the world in civilian, policing and military capacities. And in most of these countries, the development programmes of the European Commission and EU member states contribute substantially to peacebuilding efforts.

The European Union believes that the Peacebuilding Commission should draw on the experience of all relevant actors. And its design must reflect the action needed in response to the real needs of post-conflict countries as they evolve.

Mr President, your letter of 6 October outlines your assessment of the issues that we now need to work through and it is an assessment that we broadly share. Many, indeed most, of these issues were covered in successive drafts of the Outcome Document, which the EU has largely endorsed. The agreements reached in the Summit Outcome Document should be maintained. They are a solid basis for setting up the Peacebuilding Commission. Our hope is that, following this

debate, you and your co-chairs might help us to define these issues further. On behalf of the European Union, I want to offer you and your two co-chairs our full support and co-operation for the work over the coming weeks.

Finally, Mr President, a word on the Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund.

The European Union recognises the need for stronger strategic oversight of peacebuilding activities within the UN system and to this end, welcomes the establishment of a Peacebuilding Support Office within the Secretariat. The Office should serve the Secretary-General, to reinforce and catalyse effective co-ordination between all relevant parts of the UN system, at Headquarters and at the field level. It should also support the Peacebuilding Commission in its work.

The EU also recognises the importance of sustained, assured and predictable financing for peacebuilding. We welcome the proposal for a Peacebuilding Fund, and pledge to work with the Secretary-General, to establish the Fund in a timely manner.