



Delegation of the European Union



**Permanent Mission of Spain
to the United Nations**

**Statement
on behalf of the European Union
by**

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at the 32nd Session of the Committee on Information

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(Check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman, I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Croatia¹, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan, align themselves with this statement.

Let me, Mr. Chairman, congratulate you and the other members of the bureau for your good work so far, and also the newly elected vice-chair who I am sure will fulfill his duties with the same dedication as you. I would like also to commend the work of the Under-Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Kiyoo Akasaka, Director Paula Refolo, head of the committee liaison unit Hassan Ferdous and their colleagues. I would also like to express our appreciation for the informative reports on the work of the DPI's divisions as well as for the efforts to keep us continuously informed on the activities of the Department, including the two discussion fora on social media that preceded this session. We look forward to the continuation and perhaps even intensification of this practice of the Department staying in touch with the committee members between the sessions.

The mission of the Department of Public Information is to broaden an understanding of the work of the United Nations among the widest possible audience. The role of the Department and consequently this Committee is to reach the international public with information on challenges that we jointly identify and measures that we all agreed on.

Let me assure you, Mr. Chairman and the other members of the bureau, the DPI, the G77 (submitting the draft resolution) and other member states of our readiness to search actively and constructively for ways to support the DPI in its important mission through the mandate that this thirty-second session is to provide. Having experienced, already in the preparatory phase, the support of the DPI and representatives of other member states (starting with Mr. Mohammed Al-Hadhami, chairing the Group 77 and China), which I appreciate, I have all the confidence in our ability to succeed.

Over the last years, the European Union has advocated for the **streamlining of the resolution**. We believe that a clear and well structured resolution goes for the benefit of all of us. That is why we encouraged during the last session the creation of a Task Force within this Committee to address this issue, as stated in paragraph 29 of the report A/64/21. I am proud to announce that the EU, the G-77 and China, and other COI members have agreed to some amendments which would serve to give a clearer mandate to the DPI. We believe that this Task Force has been a really good experience and that it should continue its labor in the coming years.

Regional and local information centers continue to be an important tool in the service of the DPI's mission. The Centers are the most direct means of communication with the

¹ Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

world public. We welcome the steps taken in the areas of coordination and cooperation between centers worldwide that hold a promise of savings and, at the same time, do not limit their capacity to pay attention to local specifics. In this regard, we look forward to seeing further progress in **multilingualism**. The current capacity of information centers to work in 48 languages and produce information materials in over 130 languages is certainly an impressive example to be built on. The coordination of these materials could provide multiplied effects in conveying the message of the United Nations to the world. The work in partnership with non-governmental organizations and civil society should help to avoid the budgetary constraints and get the message delivered in as many languages as possible. In particular we call for new partnerships between DPI and academic institutions to be undertaken in order to increase the number of web pages available in all languages of the United Nations.

The European Union has also been highlighting the importance to focus on **further enhancing of the effectiveness of the work of the DPI within a limited budgetary framework**. We note with appreciation the efforts to coordinate the information activities of the UNICs, UN Resident Coordinators' Offices and UN field missions, if present in one given area. System-wide coherence is an important part of the reform process and continued attention will need to be paid to the consistency and coherence in the information activities of different UN agencies and institutional units in the field and furthermore to the elimination of duplications in capacities and outputs.

We acknowledge the importance of **new information and media technologies** in enabling the DPI to spread the United Nations messages rapidly and in a cost-effective manner. The new technologies and electronic publications should be promoted where possible, in order to prevent unnecessary printing and transport. In this regard, we support further development of the use of the Internet, a medium that continues to reach a large audience around the globe. We would also like to note the increased value of web-casting in delivering the UN messages live and on demand on multiple platforms and devices.

Freedom of media is at risk anywhere where the independence of thinking is under pressure. All UN member states made their commitments to respect the fundamental freedoms, to guarantee full respect for freedom of expression and access to information, and to ensure the unhindered movement of press representatives. The EU considers it of paramount importance that these commitments are fully adhered to.

Every year our resolution reaffirms our joint commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media. Yet, every year we are over and over again confronted with a tragic and most compelling evidence that, by far, not enough has been done and achieved.

2009 has been the deadliest year for journalists according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which started its statistics back in 1992. An alarming number of 71 journalists were killed in 2009 and 7 already this year. They either died in the line of duty or were deliberately targeted for assassination because of their reporting or their affiliation with a news organization. More than 15 years ago, the General Assembly

declared May 3 to be World Press Freedom Day to raise awareness of the importance of freedom of the press and to remind governments of their duty to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression. Let us make a good use of the opportunity for this critical message to be heard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.