

**Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union**

**Regional restructuring of OHCHR**

**Jan De Preter - Counsellor**

**New York**

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Mister Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this statement:

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova.

I would like to thank Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, ASG and Controller, for introducing the update of the Secretary General's reports on the regional restructuring of the OHCHR. I would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee.

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

Madam Chair,

In November 2016, the member states of the European Union welcomed the report on the proposed regional restructuring of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

At the time, we noted that this report had been submitted on the basis of a recommendation of ACABQ as formulated in its report A/70/7 on the 2016-2017 Proposed Program Budget. This ACABQ recommendation requested the SG to provide a clearer and more detailed proposal as compared to the proposal presented to us by the SG in the framework of the 2016-2017 proposed programme budget. This particular ACABQ report was published in August 2015.

In March 2017 the SG has presented once again an updated proposal that takes into account all previous recommendations formulated by ACABQ as well as the views of a large cross regional group of member states. We understand many additional consultations have been held, including with potential host countries and we understand that the updated report of the SG addresses all of the concerns raised by experts in ACABQ and delegations across the board. It is now time for the 5<sup>th</sup> committee to take action and respond to this emerging consensus in the room.

We are convinced that this proposal increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the High Commissioner for human rights. We note that the proposal does not entail any change of functions, programmes or mandates of the OHCHR and is therefore of a managerial and budgetary nature only. We also note that no change in location of the existing regional offices would be proposed and that no additional layers of

supervision would be introduced as a result of this restructuring. We recognize the need for the regional offices to be led at the D-1 level. We note with appreciation that this exercise will be cost neutral.

For all these reasons we see merit in the proposal of the SG to strengthen the field presence of the OHCHR as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General and we look forward to a quick agreement on this issue, based on the emerging consensus in the room and the cross regional language introduced.

Thank you.