



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

**European Union Delegation to the United Nations**

**74<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly**

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**Item 150.**

**Administrative & budgetary aspects of financing UNPKOs**

**Cross-cutting issues: SEA – Written Statement**

**New York**

**May 2020**

This statement is on behalf of the Member States of the EU. The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The Member States of the European Union continue to fully support the Secretary-General's zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse. In this regard, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Special Coordinator, the Victims' Rights Advocate at Headquarters and those in the field for their critical role in carrying out their important mandates.

Addressing the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensuring that vulnerable groups are not harmed by those who are meant to protect them, must remain a top priority of the Secretary-General as well as the entire leadership of the United Nations. EU and its Member States continue to call for zero-impunity for all civilian, military and police personnel whose conduct goes against the fundamental principles and values of the United Nations and zero tolerance for inaction. This extends to the United Nations' implementing partners and we encourage the Secretary-General's continuous efforts to strengthen their capacity, investigative and training gaps in order to prevent the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse.

We welcome the progress made in the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy, and we look forward to a truly system-wide and integrated response to sexual exploitation and abuse. It is important that the Organisation delivers as one, with a coherent, victim-centred approach. In this regard, the Member States of the European Union fully support the advancement of institutionalising a victim-centred approach across the UN with many thanks to the continued engagement of the Victim's Rights Advocate, the promulgation of the UN protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of SEA, as well as with the activities of the four Field Victims' Rights Advocates. We acknowledge the remaining challenges with regard to the lack of dedicated services for victims, gaps in the comprehensiveness of the services available and the need of

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

having a system-wide tool to track victims as well as the assistance they receive. We offer the Secretary-General our full support in these efforts.

The Member States of the European Union also welcome the Secretary-General's determination to strengthen accountability and risk management frameworks. We are confident that new initiatives, such as the launch of iReport SEA Tracker, will assist in the timely reporting of allegations and the consistency of data collection. The European Union strongly supports embedding the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse into the management and accountability frameworks and the terms of references of resident coordinators. We welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General to increase the level of submission of mandatory action plans on measures undertaken to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by all United Nations entities and in all contexts, while acknowledging that the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse goes beyond peacekeeping.

The Member States of the European Union remain committed to continue working on the long term with partners, troop and police contributing countries and stakeholders in a spirit of genuine cooperation on ensuring that prevention measures are strengthened, allegations are duly and timely investigated, justice is served, and victims are provided with the support they deserve. We urge the Secretary-General to keep this important issue high on his agenda and call on all Member States to support him in this effort. The European Union calls upon Member States to ensure appropriate follow-up to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and duly prosecute cases under their national jurisdiction. Lastly, the Member States of the European Union would like to express support for the work that is carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and look forward to discussing this report in the context of the cross-cutting informal consultations.