



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

at the Sixth Committee

on the Agenda item 84:

"Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives"

United Nations

New York

10 November 2020

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Mr./Madam Chair,

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

The Candidate Countries 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 the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Mr./Madam Chair,

We thank the Secretary General for his report (A/75/168). As showed therein, breaches of international diplomatic and consular law persist. Violent incidents and attacks involving diplomatic and consular staff and premises continue to occur. This requires intensified common action. We urge all States to strictly implement the international law of diplomatic and consular relations. Respect for diplomatic and consular law contributes to building trust and confidence among nations, and it is at the core of diplomatic relations.

We strongly condemn attacks against diplomatic and consular missions. We reiterate that any kind of violent act against diplomatic and consular missions or their staff can never be justified, wherever they occur. Under the two Vienna Conventions, receiving States are under the duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the diplomatic missions and consular premises.

Mr./Madam Chair,

Diplomatic and consular law must be upheld in normal circumstances and crisis circumstances alike. We welcome efforts made by governments around the world to prevent and curb the spread of COVID-19, and acknowledge the duty of the diplomatic agents and consular officers to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State, including measures put in place to protect public health. However, this is without prejudice to their privileges and immunities.

In this context, we would like to stress that diplomatic agents cannot be subject to coercive measures to enforce health measures. Diplomatic agents shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention, and are exempted from measures amounting to direct coercion. We would equally like to stress that, the person of the diplomatic agent and the consular officer, as well as the premises of the missions and the consular premises and the private residences of diplomatic agents, shall be inviolable. Furthermore, health measures should not restrict the access of diplomatic agents and consular officers to the territory of the receiving State.

Mr./Madam Chair,

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

Receiving States may not take measures capable of affecting or interfering with the principle of free communication between diplomatic and consular missions and Headquarters. Free communication is one of the most important of all the privileges and immunities under diplomatic law. It is at the heart of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

We would like to underline that receiving States have the duty to accord full facilities for the performance of the functions of the diplomatic and consular missions. Equally, we would like to remind the principle of non-discrimination on which the two Vienna Conventions are premised. The EU and its Member States therefore expect that their diplomatic staff receive treatment no less favourable than that afforded to diplomatic staff accredited to the EU and its Member States.

Mr./Madam Chair,

The European Union and its Member States will continue to support efforts aimed at ensuring enhanced protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. We strongly encourage States to uphold their obligations under the two Vienna Conventions.

I thank you, Mr./Madam Chair.