



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

**Ms. Daniela Gauci, Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to the
United Nations**

at the Sixth Committee

on the Agenda item 114:

“Measures to eliminate international terrorism”

United Nations

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– 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 Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EFTA country Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by thanking you Chair of the Sixth Committee. We very much appreciate your commitment to its work.

The threat from terrorism and violent extremism is constantly evolving and such threats have not diminished during the pandemic. COVID-19 has magnified several emerging challenges at a time when many

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

Member states have had to shift resources and focus from counter-terrorism efforts in order to address needs in response to the pandemic.

Because of this, we think that the need for international cooperation in countering terrorism is more important than ever, underlining the special value of consensus in this regard. We welcome the consensual adoption of the Seventh Review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy last June, addressing the threats and challenges we face today.

We think that the implementation of the Strategy is essential in order to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, and therefore we want to reiterate our commitment in this regard.

CT remains at the top of the EU agenda.

It is important to address all forms of terrorism, including the major and persistent threat from terrorist groups such as Al Qaida and Da'esh, as well as the threat from politically motivated violent extremism and terrorism, including the threat from far-right and far-left. Recent events in Afghanistan show the urgent need for further cooperation and

coordination. We must act collectively within the United Nations, as well as with the Global Coalition to Defeat Da'esh and the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), to ensure that Afghanistan does not serve as a base for the hosting, financing or exporting of terrorism to other States.

It is also important to address all phases of counter terrorism, which reduces vulnerabilities, strengthens work on eliminating root causes, enhances capacity to protect our citizens and brings terrorists to justice. This approach mirrors the four pillars in the EU CT Agenda: anticipate, prevent, protect and respond.

Efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, though, must never serve as a pretext for human rights violations. On the contrary, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures.

The EU insists that any measures taken to counter-terrorism must comply with the rule of law, and all obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. That is key. Not only is it a legal prerequisite, it also gives necessary legitimacy to the development and implementation of new important tools required to address the threat of terrorism.

The EU fully supports a whole of society approach to preventing and countering terrorism, and calls for strengthened collaboration and cooperation between governments and its different agencies, the private sector and civil society. The Christchurch call, launched by France and New Zealand in 2019, serves as a good example of what can be achieved with unified efforts. Its dynamism is reflected in the constantly growing membership between States and online service providers. A whole of society approach facilitates counter-terrorism efforts at all

stages, from prevention to administration of justice, while protecting human rights.

The EU specifically insists on the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. It is fundamental to build well-integrated societies where gender inequalities and any other form of discrimination are addressed. It is crucial to invest in education, to foster intercultural and interfaith dialogue and to develop programs aimed at preventing radicalization and enhance resilience to terrorist propaganda.

In addition, the rights of victims of terrorism have to be protected and promoted. Victims of terrorism are entitled to specialised, gender-sensitive assistance, protection and support. Victims of terrorism can also play a very important role in countering terrorism, by countering terrorist's narratives and by sharing their experiences. The EU has created a Centre of Expertise for victims of terrorism which provides guidelines and training, and acts as a hub of expertise. The EU has also

adopted the first European strategy on victims' rights for 2020-2025. This strategy aims at ensuring that all victims of all crimes, including victims of terrorism, can exercise their rights, no matter where and in what circumstances the crime took place. We also look forward to the First Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism scheduled for 2022.

We cannot insist enough that the 'humanitarian space' must be protected. There is ample evidence of the unintended negative impact of counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian actors. We must work harder to ensure that counter-terrorism measures do not impede humanitarian action. In this regard, the EU, together with France, Germany, Mexico, Norway, Niger, and Switzerland, hosted a discussion series on the protection of humanitarian and medical workers in armed conflict and remains committed to step up its efforts to protect humanitarian and medical personnel from attacks and to safeguard humanitarian space in CT contexts.

Let me recall that the GCTS review earlier this year called on Member States and the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to engage with civil society and support the role of civil society actors in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. It encourages Member States to create and maintain an enabling environment for civil society, including a legal framework that protects and promotes human rights, in accordance with international human rights law. Meaningful partnership with civil society must be at the forefront of counter-terrorism efforts and we must adapt to ensure that this objective is fulfilled.

In April, the EU adopted a regulation addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online. Among many measures, terrorist content has to be removed, or access to it disabled, within one hour after a removal order has been issued by a competent authority. As we face an increased use of smaller platforms by terrorist organisations, these provisions apply regardless of the size of the hosting service provider. Safeguards with regard to freedom of expression apply which is a fundamental right we always must be committed to protect.

Not only shall we tackle the manifestations of terrorism but we shall also address the threat at its origins. Not the least by trying to dry up sources of terrorism funding. The EU is committed to maintaining a strong international mobilization to cut off sources of such funding. At the EU-level it has built one of the most robust anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks in the world.

The need for improvement regarding information exchange remains, including not only operational analysis but also sharing of best practice. However, such information exchange has to be fully compliant with fundamental rights and the rule of law.

The EU has developed a CT/Security experts' network in EU Delegations for the purpose of, inter alia, facilitating cooperation and promoting capacity building which remains essential in this field.

The EU reiterates its full support to the Office of the Ombudsperson to the 1267 Sanctions Committee. The legitimacy and efficiency of sanctions relies on fair and clear procedures for all sanctions regimes.

The EU remains committed to the finalisation of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. A comprehensive convention is important to strengthen the international legal framework aimed at preventing and countering terrorism.

To conclude, let me reiterate that:

- the EU remains committed to multilateralism and our collective efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, with human rights and a gender-sensitive approach as a bedrock of such action.
- the importance of addressing all forms of violent extremism and terrorism must not be neglected.
- there is a need to address all phases in countering terrorism as mirrored in the four pillars of the EU CT Agenda: anticipate, prevent, protect and respond. The protection and the promotion of rights of victims of terrorism as well as the protection of

humanitarian action in counter-terrorism contexts must be strengthened.

Thank you.