



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

by

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*at the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of
the Role of the Organization (Thematic debate on the peaceful settlement of disputes)*

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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 European Union and its Member States are pleased to participate in this thematic debate on the means for the settlement of disputes, which will be focused on mediation.

We look forward for an interesting exchange.

The European Union is a peace project for its Member States, maintaining peace is its *raison d'être*. Peace is at the core of our international engagement. The EU Treaty guides the EU structures to "*Preserve Peace, Prevent Conflicts and Strengthen International Security*".

This gives the EU a strong mandate in playing an active role in peace mediation. Ten years ago, the Council of the European Union adopted a Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities defining the EU's approach to mediation. It states "EU will strive to establish and promote the use of mediation as a tool of first response to emerging or ongoing crisis situations". Over the past decade, we have sought to systematize our mediation engagement with the setting up of a dedicated team in the European External Action Service as a hub of expertise and support for EU engagements in peace processes. Today, the EEAS Mediation Support Team is a close partner to other such structures, including of the United Nations, OSCE, African Union and Regional Economic Commissions as well as of several member states.

As early as 2009, this Concept also provided guidance for the principles that EU engagements adhere to. These include coherence, coordination, assessment of risks, transitional justice and human rights, as well as promoting the participation of women. These principles are still valid today. We are also committed to the UN Guidance for effective mediation that the Secretary-General developed at the request of the General Assembly in 2012. This guidance still provides a universal baseline for our work in mediation and mediation support.

Our engagements are not always direct, or visible. The EU's activities in mediation come in several different forms. The EU is committed to promoting mediation based on our own experience as a peace project and its engagement for human rights and the rule of law; the EU is also ready to leverage mediation and the peaceful settlement of dispute making use of our political weight, and financial resources; the EU supports mediation that other international actors lead through capacity building, training, logistical support and the

provision of expertise to mediators and conflict parties; and the EU also provides substantial funding for mediation for formal, informal and grassroots processes. Lastly, the EU is also itself practicing mediation. Sometimes we do this prominently, as in the case of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. In other cases, we engage through quiet diplomacy and behind the scenes. Today, there is hardly a peace process where the European Union is not playing one of the roles described above.

Mediation can produce sustainable and lasting solutions only if it is inclusive. Civil society actors are key partners in mediation process. Women, in particular, play an essential role in reconciliation processes and in building inclusive societies and therefore a lasting peace as affirmed in SC Resolution 1325 (2000). In this vein, the role of the several Women Mediator Networks created in different parts of the world should be praised and encouraged. Several EU Member States were largely instrumental to the establishment for instance of the Mediterranean Women Mediation Network, the Nordics Mediator Network or the African Women Leaders Network.

Mr. /Madam Chair,

The EU and its Member States are committed to the multilateral, rules based international system in which the United Nations is at the centre. The UN Charter, and in particular its article 33, is more relevant today than ever before. We commend the increased attention paid to mediation. In August 2018, the first open debate for almost a decade on this issue contributed to galvanizing a renewed momentum, already initiated with the Secretary-General's focus on prevention and mediation. We support his reform agenda which places prevention at the heart of this organisation's work, and make more and better use of mediation in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

While we have the technical means to better support mediation, more political will is required, as we noted during the open debate in the Security Council last year. It is essential that we mobilise further funding, and enhance cooperation among our respective mediation support structures to exchange best practices, and lessons learned. As conflicts become increasingly complex, it is clear that no single actor can operate in isolation: no single envoy without a trained team, no single state alone, no single organization without partners.

The EU and its Member States are ready to play their role. We are ready to support our partners. When the EU and its Member States engages in a peace process, it is a commitment that stands, respects the values of the UN, and adheres to human rights.