



Preparatory Committee
Working Group for the UN Conference Plenipotentiaries on Prevention
and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity

New York, 19 January 2026
Trusteeship Council

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

H.E. Ambassador Stavros Lambrinidis
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

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

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina* and Georgia, as well as Monaco and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its Member States are honoured to participate in this first session of the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity.

At the outset, we wish to thank the UN Legal Counsel for opening this session, as well as the Office of Legal Affairs and the Secretariat for their continued support. We also congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. We once again acknowledge the important work of the International Law Commission and its Special Rapporteur, Mr. Sean D. Murphy, whom we are pleased to see with us today.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union and its Member States have supported this initiative from the outset as part of our steadfast commitment to ending impunity and ensuring accountability for international crimes. **We therefore reiterate our full support for this process and for its objective: the adoption of a Convention that will fill a long-standing gap in international treaty law.**

Alongside the crime of aggression – prohibited by the UN Charter -, the crime of genocide and war crimes, crimes against humanity are amongst the most serious crimes of concern to

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

the international community as a whole. Yet, unlike the the crime of genocide and war crimes – which are addressed by dedicated conventions – crimes against humanity remain the only ones of the international core crimes without a comprehensive treaty framework. This gap is particularly striking given that such crimes may occur outside situations of armed conflict and are no less egregious in their scale or impact.

It is time to fill this gap.

Throughout history, millions of women, men, and children have fallen victim to these crimes, which continue to be committed around the world to this day. Yet, many States still lack comprehensive domestic legislation to criminalize them, and the absence of a unified international framework hampers both prevention, repression and effective inter-State cooperation. The case for a Convention could not be clearer.

The Convention will require States Parties to criminalize crimes against humanity under national law; strengthen their capacity to investigate, prosecute, and punish such crimes; and oblige them to take measures to prevent their commission. It will provide essential tools for international cooperation and ensure better protection for victims and survivors. Above all, it will **send a clear and powerful message of condemnation by the international community as a whole.**

Mr. Chair,

Crimes against humanity are, by definition, a concern of the international community as a whole. Protecting humanity against these crimes is a **shared responsibility that transcends political, geographical, and ideological divides.**

The **Pact for the Future** calls on us to “redouble our efforts to end impunity and ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law, including crimes against

humanity.” **We must answer that call – particularly at a time when multilateralism and international law are under strain.**

When the international order based on international law is being tested, we must demonstrate that the United Nations remains capable of delivering on issues that unite us by their very nature and of advancing international law for the protection of all people. Few initiatives embody this imperative more clearly than a Convention to protect humanity from the most serious crimes.

As we begin our work, we believe it is essential to focus on substance and technical elements, drawing on the solid foundation provided by the ILC’s Draft Articles, engaging constructively, and avoiding politicization. A technically sound and widely supported Convention is the best safeguard against misuse. The active engagement of all delegations and a comprehensive participation of civil society organizations in this process is the surest way to achieve a widely accepted Convention; one that reflects the values of the international community as a whole.

We wish to underscore the **importance of the meaningful participation of civil society.** This Preparatory Committee is called upon to decide at this first session on the participation in the Conference of stakeholders beyond non-governmental organizations with ECOSOC consultative status. Civil society organizations have played a valuable role throughout this process, and their continued engagement – including at the Conference itself – will be essential, in particular **to ensuring a victim- and survivor-centred approach.**

Mr. Chair,

We participate in this open and positive spirit; to listen to other delegations, to civil society, and to all those committed to bridging differences.

In closing,

Let us work together to demonstrate, once again, what is possible when nations unite for the common good: to protect humanity and to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes.

I thank you.