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Organization of work

Statement by
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on behalf of the European Union

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union warmly congratulates you on your election to the Chair of the Fifth Committee, and through you the other members of the Committee's Bureau.

We are confident that under your leadership and with the support of the Bureau, the negotiations in the Fifth Committee during the 62nd Session of the GA will reach a successful and timely conclusion. We also look forward to working with the very experienced Secretariat of the Committee and with other Secretariat officials. Their input is essential for the full accomplishment of our programme of work.

We welcome the briefings organized by the Secretariat in the first days of this session, which we believe will usefully inform the Committee on these various issues and will contribute to saving time in the subsequent formal and informal sessions on these agenda items.

Mr. Chairman,

We note that the programme of work lists the 14th of December as the last day of this session. The European Union considers this deadline absolutely feasible and we pledge to do our best to allow all of us to enjoy the December holidays, as our colleagues in other Committees do. We believe the Committee can complete its agenda without the need for meetings outside regular working hours. We will strive to avoid to the maximum the trend to work on evenings, nights and weekends as the end of the session approaches. This leads to protracted discussions between physically and mentally exhausted delegations, resulting in less than optimal results. We favour making maximum use of our time, including starting meetings punctually.

* Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

On a related topic, we note with concern the continuing and worsening trend of very late submission of reports, sometimes beyond the scheduled end of the Committee's sessions. We object to such levity. For this reason, the European Union wishes to clearly state that it will not be ready to discuss any reports scheduled to be formally submitted on or after 14 December.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to the substance of the work ahead, allow me to single out, of the many issues we will have to deal with in the next weeks and months, a few which the European Union deems to be of the utmost priority. These are:

- The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, the main task of this main part of the session. We look forward to presenting our views on this crucial strategic and managerial tool of the UN on the occasion of its formal presentation by the Secretary-General.
- Likewise, the financing of International Tribunals and peacekeeping missions, such as UNAMID and eventually others that will be coming our way from November onwards.
- Finally, the broad issues related to management reform, including the Administration of Justice in the UN, Human Resource Management, ICT, Oversight, will also be high in our agenda. UN Management Reform remains a very important EU priority as the Organization and its Member States will all benefit from a better administration. We look forward to receiving the reports on the aforementioned issues, some of which have long been in waiting. We have ahead of us a long list of items and we welcome a constructive dialogue within the Fifth Committee on these important issues.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, allow me to reiterate that the EU looks forward to working with you and all our Fifth Committee colleagues in a spirit of collegiality and constructive cooperation during this 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.