

**20TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**BELGIUM'S STATEMENT TO THE PLENARY SESSION ON COOPERATION**

**SEGMENT 2 - FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS, IDENTIFICATION AND FREEZING  
OF ASSETS; ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF OPERATIONAL POINTS OF  
CONTACT**

**(THE HAGUE, WEDNESDAY 08 DECEMBER 2021)**

Co-facilitators,

Thank you for giving us the floor once again.

Firstly, I would like to thank the representatives of the Court and civil society for their highly informative presentations which have enabled us to better grasp the challenges the Court faces with regard to cooperation in the field of financial investigations.

As we recalled in our first statement, since 2004 Belgium has had **specific national legislation** for processing cooperation requests. This law was recently amended to improve the provisions pertaining to the enforcement of fines and the confiscation measures ordered by the Court.

The cooperation law also enables us to follow up on orders of contribution with a view to recovering the costs of legal aid advanced by the Court.

On an international level, following on from the positive experience of the European Union's network to combat impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, we believe that developing a **coordinated mechanism of focal points responsible for cooperation with the Court** would play an extremely useful role in helping to strengthen the effectiveness of the Court. In 2013, Belgium placed on the table before the Assembly of States Parties a proposal to establish such a system, which States would have the option to voluntarily participate in.

This system could firstly encourage the exchange of knowledge, skills and best practice between participating States. Secondly, it would provide an ideal framework for discussions with the Court's organs to better understand the legal and practical challenges

it faces and also to provide essential information to the Court regarding the domestic legislation which cooperation requests would invoke.

Obviously such a network would not discuss or exchange detailed information about specific cooperation requests given their confidential nature.

Even if its scope were more limited than what we envisaged to start with, we fully understand the relevance of potentially implementing a network of operational focal points for financial investigations and the identification and freezing of assets. Especially since this request has been made directly by the Court's organs, as we have just heard.

We are therefore available to continue discussions on this subject and in particular to decide on the objectives of the planned network to determine its make-up, to define any other arrangements regarding how it operates and to identify ways of encouraging the broadest possible participation by States Parties to the Rome Statute, and even non-States Parties potentially.

Thank you for your attention.