



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court
Nineteenth Session
The Hague, 14-16 December 2020

GENERAL DEBATE

National Statement

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Greece fully aligns herself with the statement made by Germany on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

At the end of this particularly challenging year, Greece would like to address this Assembly in order to reiterate its unwavering support to the Court and to its commitment to defend the independence, legitimacy and integrity of the Rome Statute. As the only permanent international criminal court and a key component in the quest for accountability for the most horrendous crimes of international concern, the deterrence of these crimes and the establishment of lasting and sustainable peace in conflict-torn countries, the Court must be able to fulfill its mandate within the parameters set in its founding treaty in an impartial way and without hindrance, external interference, pressure or threats.

Mr. President,

This Assembly, which started today its work under the unprecedented circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, has important decisions to make.

Regarding the elections of six new judges to the bench of the Court, Greece would like to stress once again that it is the responsibility of the States Parties to preserve the prestige of the Court and contribute to the quality of its work by nominating and electing the most highly qualified candidates, who fulfill all the relevant requirements set in the Rome Statute. In this respect, Greece is proud to have submitted the candidature of Dr. Viktor Tsilonis, who has been assessed as highly qualified by the Advisory Committee on Nominations. We firmly believe that, if elected, Dr. Tsilonis will be an asset to the Court and will bring added value to the important work of the ICC Judges.

As for the election of the next Prosecutor, who will be the face of the Court for the years to come, it is also our responsibility to elect the candidate most suitable to carry out this noble and, at the same time, extremely demanding task. In this respect, Greece would like to thank the current Prosecutor, Ms. Bensouda, for all the work done during her mandate and to appeal to all States Parties to constructively contribute to the relevant process, which has proven so far to be very challenging, since time is dangerously running out.

Mr. President,

Greece would like to thank the Independent Experts for their extensive and comprehensive report containing 380 recommendations aimed at improving the performance and enhance the efficiency of the Court and the Rome Statute system as a whole. It is now up to this Assembly to establish a flexible and effective mechanism in order to assess these recommendations and ensure appropriate follow-up. This assessment should be carried out in a thorough and transparent manner with the participation of the Court and all relevant stakeholders, in full respect of the judicial and prosecutorial independence and taking into account the initiatives already undertaken by the Court as well as the mandate and the work done by the various working groups and facilitations of the Assembly.

Mr. President,

Greece together with its EU partners will continue the efforts to promote universal adherence to the Rome Statute as well as to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court. Such adherence needs, however, to be accompanied by the adoption of the necessary domestic legislation allowing not only full cooperation with the Court, but also effective implementation of the principle of complementarity underpinning the Rome Statute system. Furthermore, in situations referred to the Court by the UN Security Council, the Court should not be left alone. The importance of adequate follow-up to referring resolutions, as well as to the findings of the Court on non-cooperation cannot be overemphasized.

Finally, Mr. President, regarding the financial situation of the Court, Greece is particularly worried about the trend of increasing arrears in recent years which, as has been highlighted by the Committee on Budget and Finance in its last report, resulted in a significant risk of liquidity shortfall. While acknowledging the difficulties and uncertainties caused by the current, unprecedented circumstances, Greece calls on the States Parties concerned to remedy this situation to the best of their abilities and contribute to the strengthening of the financial stability of the Court.

Thank you