

## **Intervention on behalf of the European Union and its Member States for the plenary session at the 22nd Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute in December 2023**

Madam President,

I am honoured to address the Assembly of States Parties on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia\*, Serbia\*, Albania\*, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, the potential candidate country Georgia, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

Marking the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute, the EU Foreign Ministers on 26 June reiterated the European Union's and its Member States' unconditional support for the International Criminal Court and reaffirmed their commitment to promote the principles and values of the Rome Statute and defend the Court's independence.

We count on the Court to bring justice wherever needed across the world in situations under its jurisdiction, in line with the principle of complementarity, as well as reparations to victims. All situations where the most serious crimes of concern to the international community appear to have been committed deserve equal attention.

At a time when international criminal justice is needed more than ever, the ICC, its judges and its staff continue to face unacceptable attacks and threats by those who want to prevent the enforcement of international law. Any threats or attacks against the Court, its personnel or those cooperating with it, its systems or its independent functioning are unacceptable.

The European Union will continue to provide its full support and contribution to ensure the protection of the Court and its staff against external pressures or threats. We also urge all States to support and protect human rights defenders and civil society organisations, who work to bring justice to victims. Threats and

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

intimidation directed at civil society organizations cooperating with the ICC are unacceptable.

Madam President,

We urge all States to cooperate with the ICC, including by granting access to the Prosecutor and his Office to conduct investigations as well as for the execution of arrest warrants. In this regard, we urge all States to refrain from any action that would frustrate the activities of the Court or undermine its decisions.

Adequate and sustainable resources are needed to enable the Court to fulfil its mandate and respond to the increase in its workload. We therefore urge all States Parties to provide the ICC with the necessary financial resources, and to fulfil their obligation to pay their annual contributions in full and on time.

We commend progress made in the review of the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system. We encourage the ICC and States Parties to conclude the assessment and continue working on the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Experts, while preserving the integrity of the Rome Statute and respecting the prosecutorial and judicial independence of the Court. We place particular importance on promoting good governance and a healthy work culture that ensures inclusion, geographical representation and gender equality.

The European Union also calls on States Parties to contribute to the Trust Fund for Victims, as it plays an essential role in providing justice by ensuring that thousands of victims receive reparations and essential assistance.

Madam President,

The universal ratification of the Rome Statute remains our ultimate goal. The European Union congratulates Armenia on having recently ratified the Rome Statute. The European Union and its Member States will continue to promote the ratification and full implementation of the Rome Statute through the various means at their disposal, encouraging all countries that have not yet done so to accede to the Rome Statute in order to end impunity for the most serious crimes worldwide.

The European Union further invites States Parties, having considered their national circumstances, to consider whether to ratify or accept the Rome Statute's amendments.

Madam President,

We have great expectations for the ICC. We look forward to the next 25 years and to what the Court can and will accomplish. For the victims. For the next generations. For justice.

I thank you.