

International Criminal Court

**Twenty-third Session of the Assembly of States Parties
(World Forum, The Hague, 2 to 7 December 2024)**

Statement in the General Debate

on behalf of

Austria

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. In addition, we would like to highlight the following points:

Austria recognizes and supports the International Criminal Court as the primary institution at the international level to hold those responsible for the worst atrocity crimes to account, in many situations in different regions. While we might not always be of the same opinion as the Court, we will fulfill our legal obligations under the Rome Statute.

Madam President,

Over the last year, important progress has been made in strengthening the Rome Statute system.

In particular, we welcome the four additional arrest warrants that have been issued in 2024 in the context of the Ukraine investigation, against officials at the highest level of the Russian armed forces. An important aspect in this regard is the meticulous collection of evidence and information from witnesses and victims, to which also the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, hosted in Vienna, contributes.

Madam President,

Despite the progress that has been made over the past year, we have not achieved universality of the Rome Statute yet. In this context, we commend Ukraine for depositing its instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute on 25 October 2024 and welcome it as the 125th State Party to the Rome Statute as of 1st January 2025. We also warmly welcome Armenia as a new State Party. We call on others to join the Rome Statute system and make justice a universal value for all.

Madam President,

We commend the Court and its staff for its unwavering commitment to its mission, despite the increasing intensity of threats it faces, including the threat of sanctions and unfounded arrest warrants against judges, and attacks, including on the Court's IT infrastructure. Austria strongly denounces these attempts to compromise the practical functioning of the Court and intimidate its staff. We will work constructively with the Court and all States Parties to protect this important institution. We must ensure that the Court can continue to effectively, independently and impartially investigate and try perpetrators of atrocity crimes. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Registrar and his team in particular, for taking the necessary administrative steps to ensure the functioning and safety of the Court and its staff, and for working transparently and constructively with all States Parties in this regard.

Madam President,

For the Court to effectively implement its mandate, it needs to be equipped with adequate resources. In addition to States Parties' assessed contributions, Austria welcomes the opportunity for States Parties to provide the Court with additional resources through voluntary contributions to Trust Funds. Austria is pleased to have contributed considerable amounts this year to the Trust Fund for Victims, the Special Fund for Relocations and the new Trust Fund for Complementarity.

The same as the Court needs adequate financial resources, it also depends on the expertise and dedication of its staff. To this end, we owe the staff a positive, respectful and enabling work environment. The Court's zero-tolerance policy against harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority and other misconduct must be put into practice on a daily basis. To this end, we must also look into the existing oversight mechanisms with a view to ensuring that they are trusted by all staff and can effectively investigate and sanction misconduct, irrespective of the rank and status of those concerned.

Madam President,

Despite the many immediate challenges the Court faces, we must not forget its basic mission, namely to bring those responsible for atrocity crimes to justice. However, there is still a jurisdictional gap in the Rome Statute when it comes to the crime of aggression. Austria is looking forward to next year's review of the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression. Austria stands ready to work together with all States Parties in an open and constructive manner to achieve a practical solution with a view to harmonising the jurisdiction of the Court across all four atrocity crimes. We welcome a short, three-day Special Session of the Assembly of States Parties in the beginning of July 2025. The preparatory work for the Special Session

should take place in an intensive manner from now on, including through at least monthly meetings of the Working Group of Amendments in New York.

Madam President,

Apart from the important, high-profile investigations and cases of the Court, so many of its activities that make an equally important contribution to international criminal justice go unnoticed. Its work with victims and affected communities; its cooperation with and support of local civil society; its collaboration with national law enforcement and prosecution authorities. Let us work together to protect, support and strengthen the Court across all of its activities to reach our common goal: accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims.

Thank you.