



**Intervention on behalf of the European Union
by**

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**At the Informal GA inter-active dialogue
on
The Role of Regional and Sub-regional Organisations in implementing
the Responsibility to Protect**

EU speaking elements and questions

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address this informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on behalf of the European Union.

The EU would like to thank the President of the GA for convening this informal interactive dialogue on the role of regional and sub-regional organisations in implementing the Responsibility to Protect. The EU is grateful to the distinguished panellists for providing insights on the topic. The EU also thanks the Secretary-General for his recent report on the subject. The EU has a few questions for the panel, but allow me first some general remarks.

The European Union and its member States remain strong supporters of the operationalisation of the Responsibility to Protect. The political project that led to the establishment of the European Union was born as a reaction to the mass atrocities that last century had devastating consequences for our continent; the very history of Europe motivates the EU, both as a regional organisation and a global player, to contribute to the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect.

Built on a strong foundation, a regional organisation can be a powerful voice highlighting risks that a Member State may not be willing to acknowledge. The EU is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. A serious and persistent breach of these values by an EU Member State can lead to the suspension of certain membership rights. The EU has also a range of instruments to manage its diversity and prevent the risk of grave violations of human rights within its own borders.

In our immediate neighbourhood, the European Union developed a membership policy, with strict political criteria, which contributes to removing the conditions that could lead to mass atrocities in countries aspiring to membership. Encouraging and requiring judicial and human rights reforms to modernise state institutions, promote civil society participation and enable a better protection of human rights, including those of minorities, is a key component of the accession process and a powerful tool grounded in national ownership.

The EU is also interested to promote the Responsibility to Protect in the context of its foreign and development policies.

Prevention of violent conflicts is of crucial importance for RtoP. The EU comprehensive approach to conflict prevention has been further anchored in its new institutional arrangements. Within this context, the EU will continue its work in mainstreaming conflict prevention into EU programmes and political dialogues with third countries. For example, the EU seeks to address potential sources of conflicts of various nature; it promotes democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, active civil society as well as media pluralism and professionalism and protection of minorities. The EU also engages in preventive deployment of EU-missions if useful to prevent the risk of mass atrocities and to the protection of civilians. An important example is EULEX in Kosovo.

The implementation report on the European Security Strategy also underlines the need to mobilise the European Union's development assistance instruments to address the root causes of insecurity. In this vein, continuing support for the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development must be pursued.

Mr President,

The EU agrees with the suggestion contained in the report of the Secretary General that the focus of next year's GA dialogue could be an assessment of the different existing means at the disposal of the international community, and the UN in particular, to meet its obligations in implementing the third pillar of the responsibility to protect.

The so-called Third Pillar of RtoP is not just about military intervention, which remains only an option of last resort. Let's stress that other and peaceful means exist to respond to a government's failure to exercise its responsibility to protect its own population.

Political and diplomatic outreach can help building consensus and put pressure on governments to deliver on their responsibilities. Regional Organisations are uniquely placed to channel such efforts and to provide ownership and legitimacy. Mediation and dialogue activities, such as in Kenya in 2008, are useful means to lower the risk of escalation, whilst helping to build a sustainable political process. In this context, the EU is engaged in strengthening its own mediation and dialogue support capacity as well as in supporting the UN in its own effort. The application of targeted sanctions and arms embargoes can contribute to the efforts of the international community to ensure that governments meet their international obligations. Regional organisations also have a role in this field and can contribute to the effective implementation of sanctions.

The EU is determined to put an end to the impunity of perpetrators of mass atrocities. International justice, and in particular the International Criminal Court, can be a powerful tool to prevent the

most serious human rights violations as are other so called transitional justice mechanisms in accordance with international standards. The trial before the ICTY of Mr Mladić, accused of crimes against humanity, will contribute to reveal the truth and provide justice to the victims and to a lasting peace and security in the region. We also agree with the SG's report in stressing that the international justice system, and the Rome Statute, rest on the principle of complementarity. It is the primary responsibility of each individual State to investigate, indict and prosecute those who have committed serious international crimes. In this context, the EU calls on all States to accede to the Rome Statute and fully cooperate with the Court in its efforts to bring perpetrators to justice.

The EU considers that partnership with other organisations is also a key aspect to operationalise the responsibility to protect through the timely exchange of information, policy coordination and capacity building efforts.

The EU welcomes the work undertaken by the UN Joint Office to implement RtoP. The EU works with the United Nations through desk-to-desk cooperation, in particular with a view to conflict prevention. These exchanges focus, inter alia, on electoral assistance, preventive diplomacy, mediation and genocide prevention. It is important for the UN and other organisations to share information and analysis in a timely and effective manner. In this respect, we welcome the Joint Office efforts to update their Analysis Framework to include the four RtoP situations. The Framework of analysis should be taken into account by regional organisations in the context of their early warning systems.

The EU has also partnered with other regional organisations in its effort to promote RtoP. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, the EU cooperates closely with the OSCE police advisory mission and works with the Council of Europe on the legal framework for the implementation of the new constitution, to create the foundation for more balanced ethnic relations to avoid a backslide into mass violence.

The most advanced partnership the EU has developed in this area is with the AU in the context of the EU-Africa Strategy. Through a capacity building program the EU is partnering with the AU to develop an operational and functional African Peace and Security Architecture. The supporting effort of the EU is not limited to the continental level but extends to regional level as well. Early Warning, at continental and regional level, is being supported in order to provide the AU, through indicators and collection, analysis and dissemination of information, with a tool for the decision making process and possible actions by the AU itself. At the heart of the APSA is the Peace and

Security Council, a continental decision making body. The African Standby Forces (ASF) provides an operational possibility to implement, according to various scenarios, a decision made by the AU to engage in peacekeeping or conflict prevention. EU supports the operationalisation of the ASF at continental and regional level by further developing policies, concepts and capacities to plan and manage future Peace and Security Operations. Through the Africa Peace Facility, the EU is a major supporter of AU led PSOs in Somalia (AMISOM) and in Central Africa (MICOPAX).

To conclude, the EU would like to ask the panel the following questions:

- How can regional organisations better learn from each other and exchange their experiences?
- How can the UN system help regional organisations develop their capacity and responsiveness to address RtoP situations?
- Finally, what is the most effective manner for regional organisations to engage in a real dialogue with a member state that is experiencing the emergence of an RtoP situation?