



European Union

**EU Statement on Agenda item 2:
Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the UNCAC**

Implementation Review Group (IRG)

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

Vienna, 8 September 2022

Mr Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.
2. Only three months ago, we met here for the last meeting of the Implementation Review Group. So let me take stock of what has changed in the meantime and what has not. What hasn't changed, of course, is that the review of Ukraine by Latvia and Paraguay is not moving ahead because Russia continues its unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. As we have said before, this consequence may pale in comparison to the unspeakable suffering in Ukraine and to the global food crisis that Russia has caused, but it shows that this unprecedented military attack has severe consequences everywhere.
3. In other areas, there has been more progress. In the framework of the **UNCAC implementation review**, the EU as a whole has continued its work on the self-assessment checklist for the first cycle, and intends to submit it before the end of this month. We have also started the direct dialogue with the peer reviewers (the Czech Republic and Niue) and UNODC on the logistics of the on-site visit.
4. The European Commission is also in talks with UNODC on the preparation of a **dialogue on anti-corruption**, including actions focussing on specific country needs identified in the course of the UNCAC reviews carried out in the past years, as well as possibly on the role of youth and education in anti-corruption.
5. On 13 July 2022, the European Commission published its annual **Rule of Law Report**. The Report, including its 27 country chapters, examines both positive and negative developments across the Member States, in four key areas for the rule of law: the justice system, the anti-corruption framework, media pluralism and other institutional issues related to checks and balances. The Report is part of broader EU efforts to promote and defend its values. As of this year, the Report also includes specific recommendations to all Member States. In line with the preventive nature

of the Report, the objective of the recommendations is to assist Member States in their efforts to take forward reforms, to encourage positive developments, and to identify where improvements or follow-up to recent changes or reforms may be needed.

6. As confirmed by a recent Eurobarometer survey on “Businesses’ Attitudes towards Corruption”, the EU remains one of the least corrupt regions in the world. Nevertheless, corruption remains a serious concern for citizens and businesses in the EU. The 2022 Rule of Law report examines developments related to the Member States’ strategic, institutional and legal anti-corruption frameworks, focusing on the effectiveness of national anti-corruption policies and assessing different key areas of action taken by EU Member States to prevent and fight corruption. Effective anti-corruption frameworks as well as transparency and integrity in the exercise of state power, will strengthen legal systems and citizens’ and businesses’ trust in public authorities.
7. Over the last months, we have also worked hard to strengthen the **voice of civil society** within the UNCAC processes. Unfortunately, efforts by the Egyptian Presidency of the CoSP to start informal consultations on a mechanism to better deal with objections were unsuccessful because some States Parties categorically excluded any such discussions. We then sought to bring this matter up for a decision of the Conference, in line with Rule 17(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference. Although a great number of States Parties from all regional groups supported this effort, too many remained silent. The topic will thus remain on the agenda and we will have to deal with it again, latest at the next Conference.
8. That **Conference of States Parties that will be held in the United States** in 2023 will also have to set the course for the future of the implementation review mechanism. Therefore, a discussion on the object and purpose of a possible next phase of the mechanism would have to start relatively soon, and we invite the Secretariat to facilitate the discussion in this regard. At the Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, we already made some suggestions, and we stand ready to engage with the other States Parties on the future of the review mechanism.

Thank you, Mr Chair.