



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

**Mr. Thomas Ramopoulos, First Secretary, Delegation of the European
Union to the United Nations**

at the Sixth Committee

**on the Agenda item 86:
"Protection of Persons in the event of disasters"**

United Nations

New York

4 October 2023

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Montenegro¹, Serbia, Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Monaco align themselves with this statement.

We welcome the discussion of the current item in the Committee and look forward to further substantive exchanges in the Working Group. The EU and its Member States commend the International Law Commission for its work on the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, as well as on the commentaries thereto.

In recent years, we have witnessed across the globe an increase in the number and scale of natural disasters such as wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones that cause immense loss of life, suffering and damage. These disasters bring home the realisation that no country can respond adequately on its own. It is therefore important to work to strengthen **international cooperation** for disaster relief. Such cooperation needs to be **comprehensive**, encompassing disaster risk reduction, including anticipatory actions, prevention and preparedness and, finally, response. In light of the above, the draft articles and their commentaries are an important and timely contribution.

In its external action for disaster relief, the European Union is guided by its founding principles

D Q G R E M H F W L Y H V W K D W L Q D G G L W L R Q W R W K H S U R W
populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made G L V D V W H U V D Q G

promot[ing] an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global

J R Y H U Q D Q E u r o p e a n U n i o n d i s a s t e r r e l i e f f r a m e w o r k c o m p r i s e s t w o p i l l a r s ; o n e

covering humanitarieeee. I promot[ing] an international s7(e)7(e)7q0fe. e87()257(e)7q06and ti(h)-20(end)@fl

been selected to be associated with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team.

” What is more, humanitarian aid funding that was made available on 25 September to respond to the floods that have affected **Pakistan** in the past weeks, which have directly or indirectly affected some 900,000 people. This comes in addition to the funding already allocated for humanitarian assistance to Pakistan earlier in 2023, in order to assist the most vulnerable population affected by conflict and climate-induced disasters.

” Lastly, the (XURSHDQ 8QLRQ¶V FRIUWineQix Rs XagesV xS SRU W WR complex activation so far with a cumulative amount of over 96 000 tonnes of assistance delivered to date.

7KH (8¶V LQWHUQDO GLVDVWHU UHOLHI IUDPHZRUN DV ZH DUHD LQ SDUWLFXODU WKH 6HQGDL)UDPHZRUN IRU 'LVDV

engagement with the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters. We recall in this regard that the recent Mid Term Review of the Sendai Framework has called upon

21), the affected State has the **primary responsibility** WR SURYLGH GLVDVWHU UH WKURXJK LQWHUQDWLRQDO UHJLRQDO VXEUHJLRQDO W the draft articles strike an **appropriate balance** between the need to safeguard the national sovereignty of affected States, on the one hand, and the need for international cooperation and respect for human rights of persons in the event of disasters, on the other.

Secondly, we recall that in humanitarian emergencies the **humanitarian principles** and **human rights of affected persons** must be respected fully. We stress that in situations of armed conflict governed by **international humanitarian law**, the latter takes precedence as *lex specialis* as reflected in the relevant provision of the draft articles.

Thirdly, the European Union and its Member States welcome the focus of the draft articles on persons in need. As stressed previously, it is important that the draft articles expressly aim to effectively meet the **essential needs of persons affected** by disasters while complying fully with their rights.

Lastly, we would like to reiterate that given the important role of **regional organisations** in disaster relief, it would ensure legal clarity to add an express reference to such organisations in WKH GHILQLWLRQ RI µRWKHU DVVLVWLQJ DFWRU¶ HVSHFL effect was made in the commentaries to the draft articles.

Thank you.