

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION  
THIRD COMMITTEE

EXPLANATION OF VOTE  
ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
Composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for  
Human Rights  
L.23

Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

New York, 16 November 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union actively supports the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to improve the gender balance and geographical distribution in the composition of the staff of her Office, as reflected in the detailed and thorough report she presented to the Human Rights Council at its second session in June. The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, as enshrined in Article 101 of the UN Charter. Due regard should be paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. This affects a number of regions, including the East European region, from which the lowest numbers of staff are to be found in both absolute and proportional terms.

However, the EU has a number of concerns about the resolution before us. Any cross-cutting issues such as human resource policy are for the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly to take forward, not the Third Committee, as by their nature they need to take into account the wider objectives and developments across the UN system. In addition, we do not believe that it is appropriate for the UN's intergovernmental machinery to separately manage the human resources policy of the OHCHR, which forms part of the UN Secretariat and whose human resources issues thus need to be seen as part of the bigger picture.

Mr. Chairman,

In this context we wish to reaffirm the resolution 45/248B, where the GA reaffirms that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters. In the same resolution, the GA has also expressed its concern at the tendency of its substantive Committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters. For this reason we believe that the Fifth Committee remains the appropriate forum in which to address any issues of human resources policy, including improving geographical balance.

Despite these procedural and institutional concerns, the EU appreciates the efforts made by Cuba as the lead sponsor of this resolution to build a wider consensus. We understand that they engaged substantively on the issues it raises with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and took on board many of their views and suggestions.

The EU however firmly believes that by adopting this resolution in the 3rd committee the GA is about to violate its own rules and regulations. The EU can therefore only abstain from the vote.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.