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**ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**STATEMENT BY ENNO DROFENIK**

**COUNSELLOR**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Peacebuilding Support Office**

**FIFTH COMMITTEE**

**New York, 15 March 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

We wish to thank the Secretariat and the ACABQ for presenting us with their reports on the revised estimates for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Support Office.

At the outset let me underline that the EU considers it essential that this important Office needs to be provided with adequate resources and considers the ACABQ report to be a good basis for our discussions in this regard, bearing in mind that the resource needs of the office, including staffing, will be reviewed within one year, and that requirements for consultants and travel that may materialise until then can be reported in the performance report.

The resource request in front of us represents a substantial improvement to the proposal contained in document A/60/537. We commend the Secretary General for his efforts to accommodate the staffing needs for the Office through redeployment and the use of staff seconded to the Secretariat on a non-reimbursable basis. We hope that efforts to provide staff through secondment and redeployment will continue in the future.

The EU accepts that the requirements for the Office are accommodated through provisions for special political missions appropriated under section 3, of the programme budget 2006-2007. We concur with the observations of the ACABQ that the provisions for special political missions should only be used for activities of limited duration. For the programme budget 2008-2009 different funding arrangements which will provide budgetary transparency should be explored. The EU looks forward to a review of the needs of the Office within one year.

The Office needs to be located in such a way, to ensure its integration in the Secretariat and the necessary interaction with relevant departments and other actors.

We understand that the Office will not possess direct operational capacities, but will be staffed by qualified experts, who will assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission and draw from the best expertise available from within the Secretariat. We would like to restate here our belief that it is crucial for the office to have a strong gender advisory capacity. We would like to hear the views of the Secretariat on this question and, if appropriate, the possibility for seconding staff with the necessary expertise.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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\* Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.