



**205<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO Executive Board**  
**European Union statement in the debate under items 4 and 15**

Mr President,  
Madam Director-General,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the Candidate Countries Albania, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

2. This Board represents the half point between the two sessions of the General Conference, and follows an active and forward looking year both at UNESCO and in the UN at large. We therefore take this opportunity to focus on a number of key issues which remain important for the European Union in this context.

3. Over the last year we have worked jointly towards a more transparent, focused, efficient and accountable UNESCO, and to address the challenges the organisation has faced over the last years. This has been based on our continued support to UNESCO and the recognition of its essential role in the UN system. We therefore welcome that the continued focus on the strategic transformation has now reached the operational stage. We look forward to regular updates as well as further engagement of member states in this process. We appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to this end, including further exchanges in the Executive Board and other formats for interaction with the DG, the DDG, the thematic working groups and the High-Level Reflection Group.

4. We appreciate the steps taken to improve UNESCO's management and administration, including the creation of an ADG for Management and the ongoing work to examine the status of implementation of the existing recommendations, audits and evaluations. We also agree that, after focusing on the capacities, frameworks and tools that enable the organization to run smoothly, we will need to concentrate on substance to better delineate the unique value that UNESCO can bring to the multilateral system to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. We strongly support UNESCO's mandate on education, science, culture and communication and information, in particular freedom of expression, including the safety of journalists. We will continue to engage to identify the comparative advantage and concrete impact that UNESCO can bring in these fields to the partnerships with other UN entities,

multilateral actors, civil society, and the private sector. We underline that human rights and gender equality are an inseparable part of UNESCO's mandate.

6. The entities of the UN Development System, including specialized agencies, will be in the driver's seat in the implementation of the UNDS repositioning, as set out by the UN General Assembly. We expect UNESCO to actively engage in this process. The success of the strategic transformation is grounded in its integration with this process the ongoing UNDS repositioning led by the UN Secretary-General.

7. We reaffirm the need to raise awareness of UNESCO's results and capacities in the UN system, its member states and with the public at large. We all have a role in this. We welcome the contribution of the first Partners' Forum in this regard. We also welcome the diversity of UNESCO's partnerships and strong networks the Forum presented, which UNESCO should further capitalize on, as well as the opportunities created for dialogue among stakeholders.

8. La confiance, la transparence et le dialogue sont des conditions essentielles pour atteindre ces objectifs communs. Nous insistons sur l'importance de tout effort favorisant ces principes au sein de l'organisation et avec les différentes parties prenantes externes.

9. Lors de cette session, nous nous pencherons sur un certain nombre de thématiques garantissant à l'UNESCO son rôle d'organisation moderne, efficace et répondant aux besoins actuels, telles que la coordination et le soutien au ODD4, la lutte contre l'extrémisme violent, la stratégie en ressources humaine, les propositions préliminaires pour le 40 C/5 ainsi que plusieurs évaluations du Service d'évaluation et d'audit interne. Nous attendons avec intérêt les commentaires de nos collègues sur ces sujets.

10. Parmi les points inscrits à l'ordre du jour du Conseil Exécutif, l'UE reste préoccupée par la situation dans la République autonome de Crimée et dans la ville de Sébastopol (Ukraine). La position de l'UE sur cette question reste inchangée. Nous continuons de soutenir l'attention portée par l'UNESCO à la situation de ce territoire et appelons à un suivi concret des décisions du Conseil exécutif en la matière.

Mr President,

11. The EU and its Member States remain close partners to UNESCO. We will continue to engage with all colleagues to achieve the clear objectives we have set to reinforce UNESCO as part of a strong multilateral system.

Thank you.