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Committee: DISEC

Issue: Regulating the Use of Private Military and Security Companies

The issue of regulating the use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) has become increasingly critical due to their expanding roles in armed conflicts, peacekeeping, even in domestic law enforcement. Historically, the use of paid and contracted military services dates back to centuries, but the modern rise of PMSCs became featured after the Cold War, especially during conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Major countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia have comprehensively employed PMSCs to support military operations abroad, often citing efficiency and flexibility. However, their use has raised concerns about responsibility, human rights abuses, and the erosion of state monopoly on the legit use of force. The globe faces the challenge of establishing a clear legal frame to ensure transparency, oversight, and responsibility, as current international regulations, such as the Montreux Document, are non-binding and insufficiently enforced. As the delegation of Austria, we are fully aware of the importance of the issue regarding the regulation of the use of private military and security companies.

The globe has increasingly been recognising the need to address the challenges posed by private military and security companies (PMSCs) and has taken various steps to organise their operations. The United Nations has played a central role, particularly through the UN Working Group on the use of paid mercenaries, which monitors PMSC activities and promotes the development of binding legal standards. The Montreux Document, a joint initiative by Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has been a key milestone, providing a set of good practices and legal obligations concerning PMSCs, with Austria as one of its signatories. In addition, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has passed multiple resolutions urging states to improve surveillance of PMSCs and support a legally binding international instrument. The European Union has also emphasized the need for regulation, promoting transparency and accountability in the contracting of PMSCs through its external actions and common security policies. Several international conferences, such as those hosted in Geneva, have magnified dialogue between governments, NGOs, and industry stakeholders. NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch continue to advocate for stricter controls and human rights protections. Austria actively supports these initiatives and advocates for durable multilateral cooperation to establish enforceable global standards.

Austria has maintained a consistent and principled stance on the regulation of private military and security companies (PMSCs), advocating for strong international oversight and legal accountability. As a committed member of the international community, Austria was among the first states to support the Montreux Document in 2008, recognizing the need for clear legal guidelines and best practices in governing PMSCs. Austria has actively participated in discussions and conferences related to the issue, including those held under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), where it

has consistently emphasized the importance of upholding international humanitarian and human rights law. In its national policy, Austria prohibits the outsourcing of core military functions to PMSCs and ensures strict licensing and monitoring procedures for any private security providers operating within or on behalf of the state. Furthermore, Austria has supported resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council that call for increased transparency and accountability for PMSCs and has contributed to the ongoing dialogue on developing a legally binding international instrument. Through these efforts, Austria continues to demonstrate its dedication to responsible international security practices and the protection of fundamental rights in the context of private security operations.

To effectively regulate private military and security companies (PMSCs), Austria believes that the international community must prioritize the development of a legally binding international frame that ensures accountability, transparency, and oversight. One of the most pressuring gaps in the current system is the absence of enforceable international regulations, which allows PMSCs to operate in legal grey zones, often beyond the reach of national or international law. Austria supports the creation of a global registry for PMSCs, including detailed reporting requirements on their operations, contracts, and personnel. Licensing mechanisms should be standardized across countries to prevent companies from exploiting regulatory loopholes. Furthermore, Austria advocates for stronger monitoring mechanisms through an independent international body, possibly under the auspices of the United Nations, to investigate violations and ensure compatibility with international humanitarian and human rights law. Capacity-building programs and technical support should be offered to states that lack the resources to effectively regulate PMSCs within their territories. Finally, Austria encourages stronger cooperation between states, international organizations, and civil society to promote ethical standards and best practices. By addressing these key areas, the global community can ensure that PMSCs operate in a manner that upholds international law and contributes to peace and security rather than undermining them.

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