The Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law
Fifth round of state consultations
Workstream 2 - National IHL Committees

Statement by ROMANIA

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to all the co-chairs, Germany, Peru, Philippines and the UK for their work and for producing a very comprehensive document. It is particularly helpful in assessing the mandate, composition and activity of our National IHL Committee, which celebrates 20 years since its establishment.

The document is, in our view, well structured and provides useful recommendations to be taken into account in order to strengthen this important mechanism. We are pleased to find that many recommendations are already reflected in the mandate, composition and activity of the Romanian National IHL Committee. We would like to share some of these findings, as well as some specific features, which might be taken into account in a revised version of this document.

Establishment

The Romanian National IHL Committee has been established 20 years ago, as an advisory body of the Government. It has a strong legal and institutional basis, with a clear mandate, which has been further reinforced throughout the years, including through legislative amendments.

We will not go into detail, but rather draw attention to efforts with a view to creating synergies and avoiding duplication with other structures. To that end, taking into account Resolution II to the 1954 Hague Conference, which recommended the establishment of a national advisory body with competences in the field of protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, the Commission has also taken up this task, which fully concurs with its attributions, composition and expertise. *Such an approach may be taken into account in Annex 1 point 2 ("Competence and responsibilities") of the document.*

Structure and composition

The Romanian National IHL Committee is composed of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests.

From our perspective, the participation of a representative of the Ministry of Environment is important for the activity of a National IHL Committee; *therefore, we suggest adding to Annex 1, point 4 ("Structure and composition") letter e) of the document such a possibility.*

The Committee meets at least four times a year and submits its annual activity reports to the Prime minister. It benefits of a Permanent Secretariat hosted by the Ministry of National Defence through the Centre for International Humanitarian Law within the "Carol I" National Defence University.

We would like to underline an important legislative amendment aimed at reinforcing the National IHL Committee and empowering its members. According to this amendment, the designation of these members (one representative and at least one alternate) takes into account both continuity and IHL expertise.

Cooperation with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The representatives of the Romanian Red Cross are often invited to the meetings of our National IHL Committee and we constantly seek ways to organize and promote IHL events together, but we highly value our cooperation with all parts of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The most eloquent example is the signing of the *Agreement between the Government of Romania and the International Committee of the Red Cross on the privileges and immunities of the ICRC in Romania* and of *the Agreement between the Government of Romania and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the legal status and establishment of a Delegation of the IFRC in Romania.* Both agreements were signed on 19 March 2024, during a meeting of the Romanian National IHL Committee.

Method of operation

Another specific feature of the Romanian National IHL Committee is its rotating Presidency. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Education and Research hold the presidency of the National IHL Committee, at State Secretary level, for one year at a time. From our experience, this rotating Presidency encourages the involvement of different ministries in coordinating the discussions on IHL issues and increases their commitment to IHL. *Therefore, such a method of operation may be taken into account in Annex 1, point 5 of the document.*

International cooperation

We strongly support global, regional and bilateral engagement between national IHL Committees, as provided in *Annex 2 of the document. We are pleased to report that we actively participate in the regional meetings (such as the ones in Vienna and Warsaw), as well as in bilateral meetings.* The Romanian National IHL Committee had a joint meeting in Chișinău, in July 2023, with the National IHL Committee of the Republic of Moldova.

Other significant achievements and initiatives

- The adoption of a National Strategy for the implementation of IHL (2007);
- The elaboration of a Voluntary Report on the implementation of IHL at the domestic level (2021). It was drafted within the National IHL Committee, which offered the appropriate institutional framework to undertake such process. The Committee is currently working on an updated version of this voluntary report;
- The adoption of Law no. 177/ 2013, through which the 14th of May was declared, upon the initiative of the National IHL Committee, as "*International Humanitarian Law Day in Romania*".
- The annual organization of an inter-university contest of international humanitarian and refugee law. The UN Refugee Agency in Romania and the Romanian Red Cross are among the co-organizers of this event. The contest helps bolster the IHL profile and the students' interest for this subject matter within the academic community.

Thank you!