



Europe has a key role in ensuring the future of the Responsibility to Protect principle at a time of increased conflict and gaps in leadership, Mr. Ivan Simonovic, the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Responsibility to Project said during a visit to Brussels for an annual expert meeting on R2P.

"Global trends regarding prevention are quite negative" said Mr. Simonovic. In the decade following the UN's commitment to the Responsibility to Protect Principle in 2005, the number of conflicts has tripled and the number of victims of conflicts has increased ten-fold, Simonovic told a meeting of experts at the European External Action Service.

Mr. Simonovic attributed the worsening plight of populations caught up in conflict to a deterioration in the global political climate, a weakening of multilateralism, a weakening commitment to human rights, attenuated leverage of the United Nations itself and countries ignoring the necessity of working together to prevent conflict and promote peace.

Since Responsibility to Protect is on the agenda of the General Assembly in 2018, Mr. Simonovic urged European countries to take action to ensure the principle continued to be on

the agenda in the future and to commit to shifting from a conceptual debate on the issue to implementation.

"I think the implementation of Responsibility to Protect is crucial for the credibility of the United Nations as an organization. If we are unable to protect populations from atrocity crimes, what are we able to do?" Mr. Simonovic said. "At the moment, the EU as well as Member States [of the UN] have an extremely important role to play."



The European Union has an opportunity to play a leading role in the diplomatic action needed to ensure a sustainable future for the Responsibility to Protect principle, which risks marginalization if there is not progress in implementation, he told the European experts.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has put prevention and mediation at the heart of his priorities, and atrocity prevention will figure in his upcoming report on Responsibility to Project expected in later 2018.

With the European experts, Mr. Simonovic discussed recommendations of a number of

measures including open debates of the Security Council on atrocity prevention as well the establishment of an Atrocity Crimes Prevention Committee. Development of early warning mechanisms, enhancing prevention ability by improving communications channels on early warning, and better coordination of preventive action were among other recommendations discussed.