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**STATEMENT BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 145th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 December 2023

**In response to the two Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in Office on
tolerance and non-discrimination**

The European Union thanks the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office for their reports to the Permanent Council.

The OSCE participating States committed themselves in Copenhagen in 1990 and in Madrid in 2007 to combat all forms of discrimination, whatever the grounds. These commitments recall the need to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms apply universally to all human beings, in law and in practice. In that regard, we express our concern about the danger of compartmentalization in the fight against religious intolerance in our States, which risks undermining the coherence of our commitments and the effectiveness of their implementation.

The European Union is committed to combating discrimination and all forms of intolerance, in terms of both its internal policies and its external action, also within the OSCE. This priority has been reaffirmed many times, notably in the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020–2025). The European Commission has also adopted the Gender Action Plan III (2021–2025), the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy (2020–2025), the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021–2030), the EU Roma strategic framework (2020–2030) and the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021–2030).

It is important for the work of the Personal Representatives to be closely co-ordinated with all responsible stakeholders, in particular the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, with the support of the Chairmanship. In addition, we advocate the closest possible co-ordination between the two Personal Representatives so as to facilitate a universal approach to human rights.

We echo the Personal Representatives' condemnation of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine.

We reaffirm the importance of systematically and explicitly condemning hate speech. Combating all forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia requires adequate legal responses but also preventive and educational measures promoting the values of tolerance, social inclusion and the equality of all before the law. In the current volatile climate, our shared values – the affirmation of the equal dignity of human beings and opposition to intolerance of others because they are different – are the best bulwarks against the spiral of hatred. These values are at the heart of the OSCE's commitments and should guide us more than ever in our work.

On 10 December, we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human Rights Day is an opportunity to recall once again the importance of the contribution of civil society and human rights defenders to the promotion and protection of fundamental rights.

The candidate countries North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹, Albania¹, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina¹, the potential candidate country Georgia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

1 North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.