



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding – Follow-up to the Cordoba Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance, Bucharest, 7/8 June 2007

EU Closing Statement

Excellencies, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. At the end of this conference, the European Union would like to once again express its gratitude to Romania for her gracious hospitality and the excellent organization of this event. We would also like to thank all participants for their active engagement in the debates.

Mr. Chairman, many recommendations were made during this conference. We appreciate the advice of the many NGO' s which have taken part in this conference and we welcome their proposals. The European Union can subscribe to many, if not all of these recommendations. Thanks to many years of dedicated work, we have in fact today a sizeable array of methods, practices and new proposals to combat intolerance and discrimination at our disposal. Arguably, even before this conference there was no shortage of sound proposals and good practices. But we are far from having achieved our goals. Clearly, we need to step up our efforts. What counts is implementation of all relevant OSCE commitments and standards. We need to apply in practice what we agreed upon.

The European Union has made clear its determination to implement these standards in all member States, *inter alia* on the basis of the new EU Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia. We need more concrete and thorough action to prevent, protect and educate, and that requires determination, resolve and political will. We call upon all participating States to overcome critical deficits, for instance in data collection. Informed policy choices are possible only on the basis of reliable data.

The European Union is resolved to make progress in this and other areas, and stands ready work with others in this regard.

As we have said in the opening session, we consider diversity a challenge, but also an opportunity. It should be our aim to go beyond tolerance and non-discrimination. Mutual respect and acceptance are more ambitious goals. Promoting mutual respect and understanding is an ethical issue and a security issue, but it is also a complex means to benefit from the rich resource pool that diversity brings with it. It is our duty to respect and protect diversity, but it is also in our own best interest.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Candidate Countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Montenegro and Serbia, EFTA country Norway, a member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.