

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 963
Vienna, 26 July 2013**

EU Statement on the adoption of HDIM agenda

The European Union and its Member States welcome the adoption of the decision on the agenda of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and commend the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship for its efforts to reach consensus.

It is very important to adopt agendas in a timely manner to allow ODIHR sufficient preparation time and to attract high quality and high level participation by governments and civil society.

As is the case for all OSCE Institutions, we attach high importance to the work of the HCNM and welcome the appointment of the new High Commissioner, Ms Astrid Thors. The fact that the HDIM 2013 begins with her address is an acknowledgement of the work of this important OSCE Institution and it will be an opportunity for the new High Commissioner to present her views on how she intends to implement her tasks, similar to 2007 when Ambassador Knut Vollebaek was appointed.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential to establishing the lasting order of peace, security, justice and cooperation. We believe that the HDIM should start with discussions on the implementation of our commitments relating to fundamental freedoms. It is not a matter of prioritizing some commitments over others, but of ensuring the efficiency of our discussion and the consistency of our recommendations throughout the HDIM with a view to fostering implementation of and further developing our OSCE commitments. We believe that this approach enhances our ability to thoroughly review all human dimension commitments.

Finally, we would like to note that agreement on a standing agenda would greatly improve the decision making process and allow us to devote more time to substance rather than process. We look forward to engaging in further work on this matter.

Mr Chairperson, we would kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as GEORGIA, align themselves with this statement.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.