



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 966 Vienna, 10 October 2013

EU statement on cancellation of Belgrade Pride parade

The EU would like to recall the statement of Commissioner Štefan Füle in response to the cancellation of the Belgrade Pride parade:

"I regret the decision of the Serbian authorities not to allow the Pride Parade march to be held in Belgrade on 28 September 2013, for the third year in a row, on security grounds.

It is a missed opportunity to show respect for fundamental rights. The march would have been the closing event of a successful full week dedicated to LGBTI population rights. I have been closely monitoring the situation over the past days, in close contact with the EU Delegation in Belgrade and with members of the European Parliament as well as representatives from EU member states. As Commissioner for the EU Enlargement policy, I am committed to seek from candidate countries that they fully embrace values such as freedom of assembly and freedom of expression that are amongst the core foundations on which the European Union project is built upon. This is particularly important in the context of Serbia's accession negotiations, in the framework of which this week the screening of chapter 23 on judiciary and fundamental rights was successfully held. The European Commission will continue to support Serbia's efforts in developing a climate of tolerance and respect conducive to every citizen being treated without discrimination on the basis of gender, racial or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability and age, in line with the EU Treaties and Charter for Fundamental Rights as well as the June 2013 Conclusions of the Council on LGBTI rights. In this respect, European Commission expects the government of Serbia to take all necessary steps to investigate threats of violence directed against the Parade and take necessary measures to ensure that the rights to freedom of assembly and expression are fully respected in the future."

We would also like to underline that freedoms of assembly and association are intrinsic to any democratic society and facilitate the fulfilment of many other rights including the freedom of expression; Participating States should avoid imposing restrictions on organisations' and individuals' right to associate and seek to facilitate the holding of assemblies rather than resorting to banning demonstrations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we took note of the announcement by the Serbian Delegation in the HDC that a Pride Parade has now been scheduled for the last week of May next year.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro 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.
