



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1107
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**EU Statement on the International Day in Support of
Victims of Torture**

26 June marks the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On this important occasion, the EU wishes to reaffirm that the prevention and eradication of torture is a priority for the EU as set out in its human rights policy. Torture is an abhorrent violation of human rights, human integrity and human dignity. It runs counter to the principle of ensuring human security, upon which the OSCE concept of comprehensive security is founded. Our OSCE and international commitments are abundantly clear: the prohibition of torture is absolute and unconditional. International law does not allow for any exceptions.

Despite these commitments, sadly, incidents of torture – including enforced disappearances – continue to take place in the OSCE region. This is of grave concern to the EU. We must redouble our efforts to eradicate all forms of torture and ill-treatment.

As we mark this important day, we join ODIHR Director Link and UN Special Rapporteur Mendez in expressing our solidarity with victims of torture. The right to rehabilitation for victims of torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment is clear and undisputed: the State has an obligation to ensure full and effective redress encompassing fair and adequate compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition. This was recalled by 47 participating States in a joint statement on this day one year ago.

As was recalled by ODIHR Director Link and UN Special Rapporteur Mendez, we must also provide support to human rights defenders who assist States in working to restore victims' dignity, as they are often in a vulnerable position due to their sensitive role and the lack of protection available as human rights defenders. States

must prevent attacks, intimidation and harassment and effectively investigate, prosecute and punish all acts of reprisals against those providing these services.

These rights and obligations are undisputed: now they must be implemented. The EU remains committed to doing its utmost to contribute to the achievement of universal ratification and implementation of the Convention against Torture by the year 2024 in the framework of the Convention against Torture Initiative, the CTI. In this context, the EU welcomes the recent CTI seminar organised by Denmark in partnership with the German Chairmanship of the OSCE, where participating States came together to exchange best practices and assist each other in implementing the right to rehabilitation. This is a good example of how we can help each other to implement our common commitments.

While the full implementation by States of their obligations under the UN Convention against Torture thus remains of utmost importance, consideration must also be given to further signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), which commits states to establish or maintain independent and effective National Preventive Mechanisms to monitor places of detention. As we mark the OPCAT's 10 year anniversary and note that 41 participating States have ratified it, we welcome Canada's announcement that it, too, will begin the process to join the OPCAT.

The EU will continue to remain engaged in working for full implementation of the obligations that we have all undertaken, including in the OSCE. We thus fully support the efforts of the German Chairmanship to achieve consensus on the important draft decision on the prevention of torture, which we stand ready to adopt. Achieving this would mark an important step forward in the OSCE and constitute a welcome recommitment by all participating States to eradicate torture.

As was stated by HRVP Federica Mogherini on 26 June: political will and joint, global work is still required to effectively prevent and ultimately eradicate torture. The EU continues to be at the forefront of this work.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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