



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1031 Vienna, 18 December 2014**

---

#### **EU Statement on the Swiss 2014 OSCE Chairmanship's Perception Paper on Prevention of Torture**

---

The European Union thanks the Swiss Chairmanship for their perception paper on the prevention on torture. The prevention and eradication of torture is a priority for the EU as set out in its human rights policy.

The EU welcomes that the Swiss Chairmanship placed the issue of the prevention of torture high on their agenda throughout 2014. Apart from the successful Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting in April, we had several opportunities to continue our discussions on this important topic at Human Dimension Committee Meetings during this year.

The EU values the Swiss tabling of a draft decision on the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. We had many difficult yet constructive negotiations on this draft, and we came a long way. The EU regrets that, ultimately, we were not able to reach consensus on this important decision.

The EU appreciates the Swiss focus on important aspects of preventing torture, such as ratifying and implementing the Optional Protocol to the UNCAT, ensuring effective oversight and monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty, and the establishment of National Preventive Mechanisms. These measures are all-important if we are to achieve the prevention and eradication of torture in the OSCE region.

In the perception paper, several other important aspects of combating torture are also emphasised. These include the recognition that capital punishment often leads to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as well as the fact that preventing and eradicating torture requires an integrated approach encompassing prevention, access to justice, redress and accountability. The EU welcomes the necessary focus on the requirement of redress in instances of torture or other cruel,

inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. We regret that this could not be accepted by all participating States.

The EU regrets, however, that the perception paper fails to address one serious form of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, namely enforced disappearances. Enforced disappearances continue to occur in the OSCE region and it is important that we address this within the OSCE.

The EU agrees with the conclusion of the Swiss Chairmanship's perception paper that the OSCE has a strategic role to play in the prevention of torture. We therefore encourage the incoming Serbian Chairmanship to retain this issue high on the agenda next year.