



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2013  
Warsaw, 3 October 2013**

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### **EU statement – Working Session 17 DISCUSSION OF HUMAN DIMENSION ACTIVITIES**

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The EU continues to attach great importance to the work of the OSCE in the Human Dimension. As we declared in Astana, we are convinced that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security, we reiterate that human rights and fundamental freedoms are inalienable, and that their protection and promotion is our first responsibility. As the largest regional security Organisation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE is unique in making the protection of human rights an integral part of its comprehensive concept of security. The need to preserve, respect and fully implement the commitments undertaken by the OSCE participating States in the Human Dimension is of paramount importance in building confidence, resolving conflict and attaining lasting and comprehensive peace and security in our region.

Within its Human Dimension, the OSCE has established unique autonomous institutions, such as the ODIHR and the RFoM, the HCNM, with the necessary expertise and methodology to assist participating States in upholding their OSCE commitments. The EU welcomes to this effect the key role of the Organisation's

institutions, not least when it comes to all the efforts undertaken throughout the year to prepare programme proposals and implement a wide range of project activities.

The EU strongly supports the essential work for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights including in election observation, and would in that regard like to reiterate its unwavering support for ODIHR's observation methodology. The EU also particularly values ODIHR's work on trial monitoring, National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Association and Assembly.

We strongly support the invaluable work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in monitoring, drawing attention to and addressing attacks or arrests on journalists, as well as promoting freedom of expression in the OSCE region. The EU supports further urgent measures to strengthen safety of journalists and others who defend the rights to freedom of expression, both offline and online, including in social media.

The High Commissioner on National Minorities continues to serve a crucial function also in the Human Dimension, and the EU welcomes Ms. Astrid Thors in her role as High Commissioner.

OSCE field operations are an essential tool of the organisation and we strongly support the important role they play in assisting participating States to implement their OSCE commitments also in

the Human Dimension, and to undertake reforms which benefit the host countries and their people. Coordination and cooperation with other relevant international or regional organizations in the field is imperative, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to create effective synergies. All participating States have a responsibility to assist in the implementation of projects in the Human Dimension, through their facilitation on the ground or the provision of expertise, personnel or financial and other material resources. The EU urges all participating States to take account of and properly follow up recommendations made by the OSCE institutions and field operations.

OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as participating States, are encouraged to extend the participation of civil society in the human dimension activities of the OSCE and develop additional programmes and projects to strengthen the protection of civil society, including human rights defenders.

In order to effectively face new challenges, the regular review and update of existing Human Dimension commitments is necessary, without, however, undermining the existing acquis. Therefore, the EU continues to support the idea of strengthening the OSCE Human Dimension through improving the organization and modalities of the human dimension meetings, so that these become more focused, more attractive and more effective.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, 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.*