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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 851st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 17 February 2011

### **In response to the statements by the United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism and the United States Special Representative to Muslim Communities**

The European Union (EU) welcomes to this meeting of the Permanent Council Ms. Hannah Rosenthal, the United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and Ms. Farah Pandith, the United States Special Representative to Muslim Communities, and thanks them for their statements.

Discrimination and manifestations of intolerance and hatred are still frequently encountered in the OSCE countries, including EU Member States. The OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination held in Astana last June once again reminded us of this fact.

In this context, the European Union welcomes the initiatives taken by the United States with regard to tolerance, notably the “2011 Hours Against Hate” campaign that has been mentioned.

For its part, the European Union will continue to promote and protect the fundamental rights of everyone and to combat all forms of discrimination, both internally and through its foreign policy. The EU has recently adopted a Charter of Fundamental Rights, which prohibits any form of discrimination, and created an Agency for Fundamental Rights, which supports the activities of Member States against racism and discrimination.

Combating any form of discrimination is one of the European Union’s key objectives within the OSCE. The EU supports the work undertaken by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to which the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office for tolerance and non-discrimination provide a useful addition. This work must be carried out in a comprehensive and transparent manner so as to ensure maximum efficiency and credibility.

The European Union also supports the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations, which represents an important political platform for dialogue among cultures and the promotion of tolerance.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia<sup>1</sup>, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup> and Iceland<sup>2</sup>; the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway; as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

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1 Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.