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**STATEMENT BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1035th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 January 2015

**In response to the statements by
Sir Andrew Burns, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance
Alliance, and Ambassador Roksanda Ninčić, Secretary of State of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia**

We should like to thank today's speakers for their moving presentations. We are grateful to Sir Andrew Burns for his successful Chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and welcome the decisive and unreserved support of its Member Countries, Observer Countries and Permanent International Partners for its founding document, the Stockholm Declaration of 2000. We also thank Secretary of State Roksanda Ninčić for her presentation and the commitment of the Serbian Chairmanship to this subject.

On the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, underlined this year by the 70th anniversary on 27 January 1945 of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the European Union would like above all to pay tribute to the victims of this tragedy. The policy of deportation and extermination in Europe during the Second World War is a crime against humanity and a serious affront to human dignity. Every year, this day commemorates the victims of the Holocaust who died but also those who survived and had the courage tell their story so that a tragedy of this nature can never happen again.

We should like to recall the duty of memory incumbent on all States and to call for international co-operation in commemorating together all of the victims of the Holocaust.

More than ever today it is the duty of all of us to be attentive to the dangers inherent in manifestations of intolerance that can occur within our societies. Recent events in France in the form of the attack on a kosher supermarket, and in Belgium with the attack on the Jewish museum in Brussels, as well as acts committed against other communities in response, demonstrate the priority that must be accorded to combating all forms of intolerance that could lead to such tragedies.

The European Union condemns and rejects all forms of racism and xenophobia, including anti-Semitism. We call for joint action to combat all forms of intolerance and hate speech. They must be countered by way of awareness-raising and educational measures and through legislation against hate-motivated crimes. It is our joint responsibility to ensure

respect between communities. For us, International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an occasion for recalling that the dangers are unfortunately not a thing of the past and that all participating States can and must combat all forms of intolerance within our societies.

The European Union would also like to recall that this fight cannot take place without the vital contribution of civil society to prevent manifestations of intolerance. The establishment of partnerships with civil society is vital as a means of identifying discrimination and raising the awareness of citizens and their leaders. We should like to reiterate our support for the participation of its representatives in OSCE events devoted to this subject.

We recall the commitments undertaken within the OSCE to promote education on the Holocaust tragedy, including the victimization of Roma and Sinti.

The European Union welcomes the discussions held in 2014 at the event commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism. It is our responsibility today to react without the slightest hesitation and we must ensure that these questions are addressed in the framework of our Organization.

The European Union thus welcomes the declaration adopted in Basel on combating anti-Semitism and urges that it be implemented in full.

Finally, the European Union welcomes the agreement reached during the budget negotiations to increase the resources allocated to the tolerance and non-discrimination activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The ODIHR's resources should be used wisely to establish common practices by the participating States in their opposition to hate speech and all forms of intolerance.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Iceland² and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

1 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania 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.