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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1219th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

7 March 2019

On the occasion of Zero Discrimination Day

On the occasion of Zero Discrimination Day, which took place on 1 March, the European Union strongly recalls that combating all forms of discrimination is essential to ensuring full respect for the inalienable principle that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights – a principle enshrined in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 70th anniversary of which we have just celebrated.

Violence and crime motivated by racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, and hate speech and discrimination on the grounds of origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age and disability are serious violations of the fundamental principles of both the EU and the OSCE. No one should be discriminated against because of who they are, who they love or what they believe.

It is up to us to fight uncompromisingly and universally against all forms of discrimination, which are all equally reprehensible, whatever the grounds. That is why the principle of non-discrimination is one of the founding principles of the EU, which has acted decisively in that area, for example by adopting legislation on combating racism and discrimination in the workplace on the basis of religion or belief.

In 2007, in Madrid, all OSCE participating States recognized the importance of taking a comprehensive approach in order to effectively combat all forms of discrimination. Against a backdrop of rising intolerance, we must collectively redouble our efforts to better combat discrimination, with the help of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), whose activities we fully support.

The candidate countries North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate 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 and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

1 North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.