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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1221st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 March 2019

### **On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March also marked the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Convention has proved to be an effective instrument, leading governments to account for their actions to their citizens and on the international stage. On the basis of the Convention, several countries have adopted laws and policies to prevent and eradicate racial discrimination. This is also our case: the European Union and its Member States have established strict legislation and policies.

In spite of this progress, however, racial harassment and hate speech against many members of our societies on account of the colour of their skin, their ethnic origins or their religion are too common. This is still the case in many places in the world, including the EU region.

This year, which marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, we have launched an appeal for its universal ratification and invited all countries that have not yet accepted the individual complaint procedures to do so as soon as possible. Progress in the implementation of the Convention also goes hand in hand with the follow-up to international commitments in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Within the EU, we continue to combat all forms or manifestations of racial discrimination or hatred and to mobilize all possible means to ensure the respect of diversity. As part of our external action, we co-operate with partner countries, representatives of civil society, international organizations, including the OSCE, of course, and regional organizations to promote non-discrimination, social inclusion and equality for all, and universal respect for the prohibition of racial discrimination. We welcome the work carried out by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in this regard.

Non-discrimination is one of our priorities, as confirmed by the adoption last week of EU human rights guidelines relating to non-discrimination in external action. We are determined to play a leading role in this area as a political duty.

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

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