



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on International Criminal Court (ICC): the contribution to conflict resolution through accountability

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi, President of the International Criminal Court, to the Forum for Security Co-operation, and thank her for her stimulating presentation. We commend the Polish FSC Chairmanship for putting this interesting topic on the FSC agenda.

The European Union is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court (ICC). All of the EU Member States are state parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The principles of the Rome Statute of the ICC, as well as those governing its functioning, are fully in line with the principles and objectives of the Union. The consolidation of the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as preservation of peace and the strengthening of international security – in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and as provided for in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union – are of fundamental importance to, and a priority for the Union. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the EU has provided political, technical and financial support to the Court.

The serious crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC are of concern for the European Union, which is determined to co-operate for the prevention of those crimes and for putting an end to the impunity of the perpetrators thereof. The universalisation of the Rome Statute is one of the key objectives of the updated EU Council Decision of 12 July 2011 defining the EU policy on the ICC. The Council Decision and Action Plan are the fundamental documents laying ground for a strong EU policy in support of the ICC.

The EU and its Member States continue to encourage the widest possible participation in the Rome Statute, as universal accession is essential to ensure the full

effectiveness of the Court. The EU continues to make every effort to further this process with third States, in particular during its regular human rights dialogues, through systematic demarche campaigns worldwide, the organisation of dedicated local or regional seminars, the systematic inclusion of an ICC clause into agreements with third countries, or financial support to civil society organisations lobbying for the universality of the Rome Statute.

The EU seeks to prevent violations and abuses of human rights throughout the world and, where these occur, to ensure that victims have access to justice and redress and that those responsible are held to account. Guided by these principles, the EU adopted on 16 November 2015 Council Conclusions and a Policy Framework on EU Support to Transitional Justice. Transitional Justice is a key priority for the EU when engaging in situations of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law and international criminal law. The EU recognises that transitional justice is an integral and important part of state and peace building and therefore must be integrated in the wider crisis response, conflict prevention, post-conflict recovery, and security and development efforts. The framework builds upon and complements the EU's existing strong policy in support of the ICC and takes account of the UN's framework and activities on transitional justice. In this context we welcome OSCE efforts in transitional justice and reconciliation to ensure regional stability and prosperity and to create sustainable peace. We appreciate especially OSCE's activities to this end in the Western Balkan region.

The OSCE concept of comprehensive security has proven that there can be no lasting security and stability without respect for democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context, we highly appreciate the work of the OSCE field missions and autonomous institutions in furthering the rule of law by providing assistance to pS in the area of reform of the justice sector, as well as institutional and legislative reform.

Finally, we thank once again the speaker as well as the FSC Chairmanship for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this important topic.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.