

**STATEMENT BY  
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1030th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 11 December 2014

**In response to the Chairperson-in-Office's Personal Representatives**

The European Union thanks the Chairperson-in-Office's three Personal Representatives for their statements. The acts of hatred you describe, be they anti-Semitism, stigmatization of Muslims, exclusion of Christians, racism directed at Roma populations or discrimination against women, including in European Union countries, run counter to all human rights values. They must be combated with determination. This is not only a necessity but also an obligation for all participating States, resulting from the OSCE's unequivocal commitments to combating all forms of intolerance. Your unremitting advocacy alongside the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) helps to keep this item on the agenda.

Within the framework of this combat, the European Union welcomes the efforts undertaken under the aegis of the Swiss Chairmanship to harmonize your activities. The European Union firmly believes that the measures embarked on by you to link up more effectively with each other, in particular through joint visits, and your activities in co-operation with the ODIHR help to enhance effectiveness. Your concern to develop a closer working relationship with other bodies in the Council of Europe and United Nations that combat racism reflects the need for a concerted effort, which is required more than ever in the face of the multifaceted manifestations of hate. You may rely on our full support in your continued efforts in this regard.

While bearing in mind the specific nature of certain forms of intolerance, we believe it essential to avoid any division of the OSCE's activities that would result in the fight against certain types of discrimination being given priority to the detriment of others, at the risk of increasing these or even creating counterproductive rivalry between victims of intolerance. We must maintain a common approach in our fight to check hatred, for whatever reason, of others because of their differentness and to recall the equal dignity of every human being.

In that regard, the European Union is particularly concerned at the political manipulation of certain forms of incitement to hatred and the denial of fundamental freedoms to particular individuals or communities with the OSCE region. In the past year we have had cause on several occasions to lament the failure of the public authorities in certain participating States to intervene to combat acts of intolerance on account of nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity; their silence or even adoption

of openly stigmatizing measures encourages such behaviour. Laws ostensibly aiming to suppress “homosexual propaganda”, recently adopted or under discussion in the OSCE region, are a specific example of measures that foster discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed persons in violation of their fundamental freedoms. We, the OSCE participating States have a historical duty to ensure that the ethnic, cultural, religious, political, social, geographical and other diversity that shapes our region remains an asset and not a reason for and instrument of conflict.

This duty includes the adoption of a comprehensive approach involving not only active opposition by our public authorities to all forms of intolerance, including prejudice, but also the strict implementation of commitments relating to hate crimes. The ODIHR’s resources should be used intelligently in this regard. The European Union also draws on the information collected by the Agency for Fundamental Rights to fine-tune its policies in this area. The establishment of partnerships with civil society is vital for identifying discrimination and raising awareness among citizens and their leaders. In that context, we welcome the organization of the conference on 12 and 13 November in Berlin and the adoption of the declaration last week in Basel to mark the 10th anniversary of the declaration against anti-Semitism.

In conclusion, the European Union reiterates its determination to implement the OSCE’s commitments to combating all forms of intolerance and discrimination and to take full advantage of the technical assistance provided by the ODIHR as well as the work of the Personal Representatives.

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

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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.