

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1006****Vienna, 3 July 2014**

EU Statement in Response to the Address by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay

The European Union is delighted to welcome the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay, to the Permanent Council and we are pleased to be able to hear from her before she completes her term in office.

We appreciate the candid assessment Ms Pillay has provided of the human rights situation in the OSCE region. Protecting and promoting the rights of the individual is a responsibility for States and for communities of States, such as the OSCE and the United Nations. Effective protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms also lie at the heart of the EU's external action and we remain convinced that there can be no lasting security and stability without respect for these basic rights. We are therefore deeply concerned by the worrying trend of human rights and fundamental freedoms being increasingly challenged in parts of the OSCE region. These challenges are best met through a combined effort, supported by shared values. UN resolutions, and OSCE commitments and its comprehensive approach to security, embody this approach and bind us together in it. When these commitments are violated by States, they represent not simply an attack on the human rights of the individuals concerned, but also an attack on our community.

Human rights and the values that underpin our organisations are currently under threat in Ukraine. Illegal activities of armed separatist groups supported by Russia have led to human rights violations, including killings, abduction and torture. Media freedom is under threat. The targeting of persons belonging to national minorities in Crimea, particularly the Crimean Tatars, is also of grave concern. These issues have all been highlighted in the valuable assessments by the

autonomous OSCE Institutions and the UN Missions to Ukraine. We once again commend both the OSCE and the UN for their response to the crisis and encourage them to continue supporting the Ukrainian government in addressing it.

The work of the OSCE and the United Nations must be mutually re-enforcing. The UN Charter and the International Bill of Human Rights are the foundation for OSCE commitments in the human dimension. We must continue to reflect UN resolutions, particularly those agreed by consensus, in OSCE commitments, not least to support their better implementation. Unfortunately, such an approach continues to be resisted by a few participating States. Their stance calls into question both their commitment to globally agreed standards and to working together more broadly on the issues which these resolutions address.

Mr Chairperson, the OSCE's autonomous institutions, its field missions and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are significant resources at the disposal of OSCE participating States as they seek to implement their human dimension commitments. We encourage all participating States to draw on their expertise. The European Union remains concerned that some States are not engaging fully with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and we call on them to do so. We also believe assessments by the High Commissioner and UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights issues in specific participating States and across our region, are an important reference for OSCE discussions on the implementation of our human dimension commitments. In turn, discussions in the OSCE could play a useful role in following up the universal periodic reviews of participating States at the Human Rights Council.

We welcome the recent declaration signed by the Office of the High Commissioner and ODIHR, reaffirming their commitment to work closely together and their desire to enhance this cooperation. We also support the good working relationships that exist between other OSCE Institutions and the Office of the High Commissioner and expect these will continue and deepen.

In concluding, the European Union would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the tireless work by Ms Pillay over the last six years to protect and promote

human rights globally. She has spoken up and spoken out for countless victims of human rights abuses, making their voices heard at the highest levels. She has spoken boldly and clearly on many pressing issues that continue to confront the OSCE region. These include: the persecution of human rights defenders; the ongoing practice of torture; the need to address all forms of discrimination, including gender based discrimination and discrimination against LGBTI persons; and the continued application of the death penalty. The European Union commends Ms Pillay for the courage and impartiality that has characterised her outstanding work as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. She departs leaving a remarkable legacy. We wish to express once again our deepest gratitude for her efforts, and we wish Ms Pillay all the very best in her future endeavours.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.