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## **EU Statement – Session 6: Humanitarian Issues and other commitments (2)**

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Dear Mrs. Moderator

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The EU views human rights education as an indispensable and essential element for the efficient, enhanced and comprehensive protection and promotion of human rights. The main objectives of human rights education aim to enable each person to know their own rights and obligations towards other's rights. Education in human rights – in theoretical, practical, formal, informal and non-formal methods – play a vital role in the promotion and respect for the rights of all individuals, irrespective of any prejudice based on race, gender, language, religion or other circumstances. Effective human rights education and training can prevent human rights violations through the promotion of a culture of peace, non-discrimination and tolerance anchored in respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights education and training is also a potentially effective tool for conflict prevention, post-conflict transformation, reconciliation, consolidation and social rehabilitation, with a view to prevent a relapse into conflict. The new global challenges and threats the world is facing nowadays demand properly implemented human rights education and training in order to help address the complex situations in a manner that respects human rights.

In this regard, the EU welcomes the cooperation both with and between the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the UN and encourages all international organisations to even further enhance and strengthen levels of cooperation and coordination. The EU also highly values the existing levels of collaboration with numerous non-governmental organisations in this respect.

Following the conclusion of its first phase, the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education commenced this year. The second phase of the Programme focuses on human rights education for higher education and on human rights training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel. In light of this, the EU expresses its strong commitment to the Plan of Action for the second phase of the World Programme. We encourage all OSCE participating States to actively engage in the World Programme and to give special emphasis to the provision of adequate human rights education and training for agents of the state to ensure they perform their tasks in respect of human rights by preventing torture, discrimination on all grounds and intolerance, and by taking into account social differences.

Furthermore, the EU welcomes the high-level discussion on the draft UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training which took place in March 2010 and has launched the intergovernmental discussions on the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training. The EU is determined to play an active role in this process and will constructively engage in the endeavours towards the realisation of a better understanding and knowledge of human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE commitments in the field of human rights education are numerous and comprehensive and, in the past, exceptional progress has been made in their implementation. Notably, human rights education is now included as a goal in numerous national education laws, plans and regulations; human rights principles and values are incorporated in school, university and other training institutions curricula; participating States have developed and shared teaching and learning aids and methodological materials; there are many trained professionals who are able to conduct human rights education projects and programmes of a high standard all around the OSCE area.

In this regard, the EU commends the ODIHR's endeavours in promoting the value and importance of human rights education and fully supports and appreciates its activities in this sphere, especially the human rights training conducted for government officials, OSCE field staff and civil society, legal training, and education for the promotion of mutual respect and understanding. The new Compendium of Good Practice on Human Rights

Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America, prepared last year jointly with the Council of Europe, UNESCO and UNHCHR has already contributed to the First Phase of the World Programme on Human Rights Education. The EU encourages all participating States to take full advantage of this resource, as well as the expertise and support provided by the ODIHR in the field of human rights education.

The EU would also like to highlight the crucial role of the OSCE in bringing together governments and civil society on human rights education and training. As stipulated in the 2005 Ljubljana Ministerial Decision, we will only be able to make human rights a reality for each person in every community and in society at large with the cooperation of civil society. Since civil society, be it individuals or organizations, has a crucial role in promoting human rights to a broader audience in our countries, the EU encourages all OSCE participating States to implement their commitments.

The EU financially supports a variety of education and training projects within the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and thus complements our common OSCE efforts. These projects aim to empower children, vulnerable groups and other citizens to take action in defence of their human rights, to enhance the capacity of public officials to protect human rights and to develop networks of expertise in human rights and democracy. In addition, individual EU Member States supplement these efforts by their projects undertaken in third countries. Due to numerous initiatives involving NGOs, schools and universities, these activities have a high impact and long-term effects on the development of society.

In conclusion, while remarkable results have already been achieved during the past years in the area of human rights education, many challenges continue to lie ahead of us and require evaluation and reflection in line with our common objectives. The EU believes that, in the future, we should concentrate even more on the quality of human rights programmes, on enhancing training for teachers and other educational staff, and on the development of tools for the assessment of the effectiveness of human rights education programmes. We believe that more attention should be devoted to the identification of specific standards for teaching and learning about human rights for particular target groups; this could contribute to the implementation of the Second Phase of the World Programme on Human Rights Education.

The EU remains open and engaged in cooperating and coordinating our common objectives with all OSCE participating States.

Thank you for your attention.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA\*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\* and ICELAND\*\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN,

GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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