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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 22 September - 3 October 2014

EU Statement for Working Session 10 and 11: Rights of Persons Belonging to a National Minority

Madame/Mister Chairperson,

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

The European Union warmly welcomes High Commissioner Astrid Thors to this OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. We highly appreciate her presence here to present to us her views on how she implements her tasks.

The European Union considers the office and the mandate of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) to be of the utmost importance for the whole concept of comprehensive security of the OSCE. This autonomous Institution is and should remain a core conflict prevention instrument for the whole OSCE area in providing early warning and seeking early action with regard to tensions involving national minorities.

The European Union attaches great importance to the work done in the areas of education, including in multilingual and integrated education, effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public life and policing in multi-ethnic societies. We also see the need for developing effective policies for integration of minorities as an essential aspect of a tolerant and stable society. We commend the High Commissioner particularly for her activities regarding these issues.

We also wish to underline the importance of the HCNM's recommendations, including the main principles of the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State relations regarding the primary responsibility of the state where the



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minority resides in guaranteeing the respect for and protection of minority rights, which are applicable to all participating States. Any concerns in respect to minorities should be addressed with full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourly relations.

Madame/Mister Chairperson,

We have particularly appreciated the High Commissioner's strong engagement in regard to the crisis in Ukraine both through her office's advice and visits including to Crimea. We share the concern previously expressed by the High Commissioner about the precarious position of both the Crimean Tatar and the Ukrainian speaking communities on the Crimean peninsula after its illegal annexation by the Russian Federation.

Madame/Mister Chairperson,

The European Union strongly believes that protection of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, is crucial to maintain regional peace and stability. We stress the importance to meet the commitment made by all OSCE participating States, without exception, to fully cooperate with the High Commissioner in order to enable the high Commissioner to fulfil the mandate. We look forward to fruitful discussions and reinforced commitment by all participating States in the field of protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Thank you.

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



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