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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Review Conference
Warsaw, 4 October 2010**

EU Statement – Session 3: Fundamental Freedoms II

Dear Mrs. Moderator

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

In this the 20th anniversary year the EU remembers the belief underpinning the Copenhagen document that democracy and the protection of human rights are the best guarantee for creating free and open societies, thereby preventing possible human security threats from emerging or from causing harm to the stability of the OSCE area. The EU firmly believes that respect for an individual's entitlement to human rights and fundamental freedoms is inherent to respect for individual choices and opinions. Respect for freedoms including peaceful assembly and association, the promotion and protection of human rights and freedom of movement are essential to the pursuit of tolerance and mutual understanding in society.

Human rights are universal and indivisible. States are responsible for ensuring that the rights of individuals are respected and protected within their jurisdictions. This includes taking firm action in response to serious

human rights violations. In the 1990 Copenhagen document we all reaffirmed that "everyone will have the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration". We all committed to "ensure that individuals are permitted to exercise the right to association, including the right to form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organisations which seek the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including trade unions and human rights monitoring groups".

The EU commends the efforts of ODIHR and its Panel of Experts on Freedom of Assembly in updating and revising its "Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly", in continuing to develop online guidance on legislation and good practice related to the work of non-governmental organisations and in building capacity for national human rights institutions and human rights defenders to protect, monitor and report on freedom of assembly. The EU encourages participating States make full use of this independent expertise which draws on best practice across the OSCE region.

The EU welcomes the continuing focus of the Council of Europe Commissioner on the situation of human rights defenders and encourages the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders to enhance and strengthen their co-operation.

In the 1990 Copenhagen Document we also reaffirmed "the right of everyone to leave any country, including his or her own, and to return to his or her country". The EU welcomes the fact that although some restrictions still remain in some participating States on freedom of movement from and

to, and even within, the state, the overwhelming majority of OSCE citizens now enjoy the freedom of movement as envisaged in the Copenhagen Document. The EU believes that increased people-to-people contacts over the past two decades has enhanced our collective security, as envisaged in the Helsinki Final Act. The EU now calls on participating States to make similar progress in meeting commitments on freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and on enabling people to promote and protect human rights.

The EU calls on OSCE participating States:

- to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights and all fundamental freedoms, including through enabling their relevant national authorities to effectively carry out their roles.

- to draw on the expertise of ODIHR and its field missions and take concrete action to enable individuals to effectively exercise their rights to peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression and freedom of movement.

The EU recognises the important work of OSCE field presences in strengthening civil society and calls on ODIHR and field missions:

- to assist the participating States in reviewing legislation and practice with regard to international and regional human rights

standards and OSCE commitments, particularly in the area of freedom of association and assembly.

- to continue to engage with national human rights institutions and Human Rights Defenders across the OSCE area, to strengthen their capacity to promote and protect, monitor and report on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mrs. Moderator

The EU believes that through the coordinated efforts of participating States to fulfil shared commitments on freedom of assembly and association, working with relevant national authorities including independent national human rights institutions, and drawing on the support and expertise of ODIHR and OSCE field missions, concrete progress in these areas can be achieved.

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.