



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Review Conference Warsaw, 6 October 2010

## **EU Statement – Session 8: Tolerance and non-discrimination II (2)**

---

Dear Mr. Moderator

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

A central goal of the OSCE is to prevent conflict. The European Union regards the Organization's collective efforts to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and discrimination as vital to this aim. Whatever the causes, manifestations of intolerance cause fractures within societies. This undermines their inclusiveness, cohesion and capacity to develop. The OSCE region is multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic. It could become a model of tolerance for others to follow. That should be our collective goal.

Realizing this ambitious goal will require constant vigilance and effort. Discrimination remains widespread in the OSCE area and takes many different forms. Across our region we witness discrimination based on grounds of race, colour, national, social or ethnic origin, sex, language,

religion or belief, political or other opinion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and other forms.

The EU firmly believes that all forms of intolerance must be challenged, wherever it occurs. In this regard we expect the OSCE to pay as much attention to combating manifestations of hatred and intolerance based on sexual orientation as it does to other forms of discrimination.

We also wish to underline that freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, and freedom of religion or belief are key elements in the pursuit of tolerance and mutual understanding. In this regard we also stress the importance of full respect for the rule of law.

The OSCE has developed an impressive body of political commitments on tolerance and non discrimination. But, as the High Level Conference held in Astana earlier this year demonstrated all too clearly, implementation of these commitments is lacking. Better implementation is the challenge we all now face.

The European Union has adopted a Charter of Fundamental Rights which explicitly prohibits discrimination based on any grounds. We have also set up a Fundamental Rights Agency to support the implementation of legislation to fight racism and discrimination. Despite our efforts, racist, discriminatory and xenophobic attitudes persist in the European Union. But we remain firmly committed to addressing this.

The EU supports the OSCE's work to combat intolerance and discrimination. It has developed a unique approach, combining high-level political attention with practical measures and mechanisms. The OSCE institutions in particular have played a central role in assisting us to fulfil our shared political commitments.

The EU commends the ODIHR for its broad range of activities on promoting human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination. We particularly value the focus it has placed in recent years on education, awareness-raising and combating hate crime. ODIHR's expertise in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination is unmatched. We encourage all participating States to draw upon this valuable resource.

We also support the work of the Field Missions and the Offices of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Special Representative on Freedom of the Media. The EU also supports the work of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office in combating intolerance and discrimination.

The OSCE, for all its good work, will not succeed alone. So we welcome the OSCE's co-operation with other European and UN organizations such as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the Fundamental Rights Agency, and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The EU would also like to recall that national and international NGOs contribute greatly to the struggle against intolerance and discrimination. We call on all countries to engage seriously and constructively with NGOs in a joint effort to tackle this problem in all its forms.

The ultimate responsibility, however, lies with Governments. There needs to be greater political will to fulfil the shared commitments which we have all freely entered into. One of the lessons we have learned in recent years is the need to develop specific approaches tailored to individual forms of discrimination. There is no uniform approach.

The EU is particularly concerned about the rise in hate crime. The Ministerial Council Decision taken last year in Athens on Combating Hate Crime is an important step forward. We committed ourselves to take a series of measures. We must now do what we said we would do:

- Collect, maintain and make public reliable data on hate crimes;
- Enact tailored legislation to combat hate crimes, with effective penalties;
- Encourage victims to report hate crimes;
- Introduce professional training and capacity-building activities for officials dealing with hate crimes;
- Explore ways to provide assistance and effective access to justice for victims of hate crimes;

- Investigate hate crimes promptly and ensure that the motives of those convicted of hate crimes are publicly condemned; and
- Ensure co-operation between police forces to combat violent organized hate crime.

The EU is committed to encouraging a universal, open Internet that promotes fundamental liberties including freedom of expression. But the EU is concerned by the rise in the use of the internet to advocate views that constitute an incitement to commit hate crimes. Individual countries cannot tackle this problem alone. So we welcome the commitment we made in Athens to co-operate with each other to combat the dissemination of such material and to reduce the harm it causes.

By way of conclusion, the EU underlines once again that tolerance and non-discrimination, and human rights as a whole, are indispensable pillars of security and cooperation in Europe. We reaffirm our commitment to work towards achieving our common goal of societies that are tolerant and inclusive, and based on respect for diversity and mutual understanding. We encourage others to do the same.

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, 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.