



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Review Conference Warsaw, 8 October 2010

EU Statement – Session 2: Intolerance against migrants

Dear Mr. Moderator

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

Combating intolerance, and in particular racism and xenophobia, is essential for the prevention of fracture and conflict within modern, increasingly pluralistic societies and for enhancing diversity and protecting those who are socially vulnerable, especially migrant workers.

The European Union is based on common values and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The protection of these rights and freedoms is a challenge for every society and the EU and its Member States are committed to providing a safe environment where differences are respected and those that are most exposed to discrimination and acts of intolerance, many of whom are among the migrants legally residing in EU Member States, are protected.

In recent years the EU has enhanced efforts to set up a framework of legislative and other measures aiming at combating relevant forms of intolerance. In 2008 the EU Member States adopted a legal instrument whose purpose is to ensure that racism and xenophobia are punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties in the European Union, while improving and encouraging judicial cooperation in this field. Furthermore, the 2009 Stockholm Programme for an Open and Secure Europe Serving and Protecting the Citizens provides for the full use of a number of existing financing programmes to combat racism and xenophobia.

In this context, the EU strongly believes that the most extreme form of intolerance, i.e. crimes that are committed with a hate motive and on the basis of differences in, inter alia, race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin and religion or belief needs to be urgently tackled, including through the adoption of legislative measures. It is crucial that politicians and public officials speak out against and condemn any act of racist violence and xenophobia and that States prosecute effectively perpetrators of such violent acts.

The collection of relevant data is an important means of making informed policy decisions and evaluating the implementation of relevant legislation. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights contributes to this effort since 1999 by collecting data, conducting analyses and publishing relevant comparative reports, such as the 2005 report on racist crime and violence and the 2009 EU-MIDIS survey of migrants and minorities experiences of racist discrimination and crime.

While stressing the need to fully respect freedom of expression, free media and information that constitute an essential element of all democratic societies, the EU underlines that public incitement to racist or xenophobic violence or hatred directed against groups of persons is clearly detrimental to the enhancement of pluralistic societies respecting diversity.

The EU emphasizes that a key element to effectively combating discrimination and intolerance is integration and the prevention of the creation of parallel societies. The EU considers integration as a dynamic, two-way process of mutual interaction, requiring not only efforts by national, regional and local authorities but also a greater commitment by the host country and the migrants themselves. Integration may be seen as the common commitment to uphold the fundamental values and principles of the EU and as the acquisition by the migrants of those skills and abilities that can facilitate their access to public goods and benefits and their participation as members of the host society. In this perspective, the EU has set up a European Fund for the integration of third country nationals. Employment, education and social inclusion are key policy areas closely linked with integration efforts.

Poorly managed immigration may disrupt the social cohesion of the countries of destination. Managing migration flow and tackling illegal migration through an enhanced dialogue and close cooperation with countries of origin and transit is a key prerequisite. With this in mind, the EU has adopted in October 2008 the European Pact on immigration and asylum, a global approach to migration, aiming at promoting legal migration, preventing illegal migration and linking migration to development,

in a manner that can be beneficial to all stakeholders, including by enabling migrants to take full advantage of their potential.

Lastly, the EU strongly supports the cross-dimensional approach to migration issues in the OSCE provided for in the 2009 Ministerial Council Decision on migration management. Such a comprehensive approach is best suited to the specificity of migration issues and is fully in line with the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.

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 country and member of the European Economic Area NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA 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.