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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 833rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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In response to the three personal representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office for tolerance and non-discrimination

The European Union (EU) welcomes the three personal representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office for tolerance and non-discrimination, Mr. Mario Mauro, Rabbi Andrew Baker and Ambassador Adil Akhmetov, and thanks them for their reports.

The EU thanks the three representatives for their activities aimed at promoting the OSCE's commitments to combating discrimination and at monitoring their implementation by the participating States. Their work is a useful complement to the central role of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Unfortunately, discrimination and manifestations of intolerance and hatred remain common in OSCE countries, as we were again reminded at the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-discrimination held in Astana in June 2010. Therefore the EU hopes that the three personal representatives will perform their mission, within the scope of their mandate, wherever discrimination occurs in the OSCE area.

We welcomed the visit to the EU institutions by the three representatives in June 2010. We hope it gave them the chance to gain an accurate impression of the EU's activities. The EU is committed to combating all forms of discrimination and objects to the notion of institutional discrimination against Muslims in the EU, which we feel is unfounded.

The EU attaches great importance to close co-operation being maintained between the representatives and the ODIHR, under the auspices of the Chairmanship. It also hopes that the three personal representatives will work together as closely as possible and organize joint visits. This is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of their work and the overall consistency of OSCE activities.

Combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance against Christians, Jews, Muslims and all other religions and all forms of discrimination is one of the EU's objectives within the OSCE. It hopes to see dynamic work in this area. In addition, the EU expresses once again the hope that our Organization will deal better with manifestations of hatred and intolerance based on sexual orientation. We also reiterate our determination to combat discrimination against the Roma and Sinti.

In conclusion, the EU confirms once again its support for the efforts of the three personal representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office and encourages them in carrying out their mission.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ and Iceland², the Stabilisation and Association Process countries 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.

1 Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.