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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 857
Vienna, 7 April 2011**

EU statement on the occasion of the International Roma Day

On the occasion of the International Roma Day, celebrated on the 8th of April, the European Union reiterates its call for redoubling efforts to address the challenges faced by Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area.

Since 2007, Roma and Sinti issues have gained increased profile in the European Union, which translated into raising awareness, debates and, most importantly, commitments and actions to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti.

Earlier this year, the Hungarian EU Presidency outlined a Roadmap for the discussions regarding the social and economic integration of Roma. On 5 April, the European Commission published the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies focusing on four pillars: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. This document is being discussed at the meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion. The objective remains to agree on an enhanced basis for the comprehensive integration of Roma and Sinti.

We commend the work of OSCE institutions, notably the ODIHR/Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities in advancing the implementation of the OSCE commitments and assisting participating States to this end. We are pleased to see enhanced

dialogue between ODIHR/CPRSI and the European Union, as well as between CPRSI and OSCE participating States at expert level within the OSCE, to ensure coherence and complementarity of our actions.

We reiterate, on this occasion, our firm determination to further the efforts for the full implementation of all OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti, including the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area. We look forward to the in-depth discussion on Enhancing the Implementation of Commitments related to Roma and Sinti at this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.