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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1261st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

5 March 2020

On Zero Discrimination Day

On the occasion of Zero Discrimination Day, which took place on 1 March, the European Union emphatically recalls that combating all forms of discrimination is vital to ensure full respect for the inalienable principle that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights, a principle set forth in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Aggression or crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, hate speech and discrimination on the basis of origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability are serious violations of the basic principles of the European Union and of OSCE commitments. No one should be discriminated for what they are, whom they love and what they believe in.

We should thus resolutely and comprehensively combat discrimination as a whole, all forms of which are equally reprehensible, whatever their underlying motives. The principle of non-discrimination is therefore one of the founding principles of the European Union, which works purposefully in this domain.

Zero Discrimination Day this year focuses on mobilization to combat all forms of discrimination against women and girls. In that context, the European Commission is today presenting a new gender equality strategy.

We also welcome the holding of the Generation Equality Forum, a global gathering designed to promote equality between men and women organized by UN-Women, which will open in Mexico City on 7 and 8 May and end in Paris from 7 to 10 July. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, multi-stakeholder Action Coalitions will be launched to promote equality and combat gender-based discrimination. They will bring together governments, civil society and the private sector with a view to achieving concrete measurable results within five years.

Similarly, we welcome the holding of the third Gender Equality Review Conference on 29 and 30 June, which will make it possible to take stock of the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We look forward with interest to the recommendations formulated on that occasion for promoting gender equality.

In conclusion, in Madrid in 2007, all of the OSCE participating States acknowledged the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach in order to effectively combat all forms of discrimination. At a time when intolerance is on the increase, we must all redouble our efforts so as to better counter discrimination, also with the assistance of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, whose activities we fully support.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

1 The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.