



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1006
Vienna, 3 July 2014**

**EU Statement on the International Day in Support of
Victims of Torture**

In view of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the European Union wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the prevention and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Torture is clearly and unequivocally prohibited under international law.

We would like to commend the efforts by many NGOs and individuals, who work tirelessly to prevent torture, alleviate the suffering of victims and mobilise public opinion on this important issue. Through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the European Union offers substantial support to civil society organisations that strive for the eradication of torture and work to ensure accountability for torture and ill-treatment.

The EU calls upon all States to accede to the UN Convention against Torture and to its Optional Protocol (OPCAT) and to recognise the competence of the Committee Against Torture to receive and consider individual communications. We welcome the recent signature of the Optional Protocol by Mongolia and its ratification by Norway. The EU underlines the need to create and sustain National Preventive Mechanisms and to ensure their operational and financial autonomy.

The EU expresses its appreciation for the work undertaken by international mechanisms, notably the UN Special Rapporteur, the Committee Against Torture and the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and urges States to implement their recommendations.

The EU has given every support to UN General Assembly Resolution 68/156, adopted on 18 December 2013, which stresses the importance of individuals' ability to freely contact the institutions working to prevent and combat torture and the right of torture victims to redress.

The EU welcomes the focus the Swiss Chairmanship has placed this year on preventing torture and we believe consideration should be given as to how the recommendations emerging from the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting in April can be taken forward.

We must continue to work together to make torture a thing of the past.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

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