



EUROPEAN UNION

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

It is widely recognised that torture is an abhorrent violation of human rights, human integrity and human dignity. We have, all of us, signed up to strong and far reaching commitments to prevent torture. And it is abundantly clear that the prohibition of torture is absolute and unconditional. Despite this, we continue to witness incidents of torture, enforced disappearances and capital punishment across our region. This is of deep and grave concern to the EU. We must redouble our efforts to eradicate all forms of torture and ill-treatment.

On 26 June, we marked the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. We express our sincere solidarity with the victims of torture. The plight suffered by victims of torture, their families and their loved ones is horrific - and unnecessary. The EU is committed to bringing this to an end, not only through the campaign to ultimately eradicate torture worldwide, but also by working towards full implementation of the right to rehabilitation for victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This right is clear and undisputed: States have an obligation to ensure full and effective redress encompassing fair and adequate compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition.

Over the last few years, the OSCE has become a valued and relevant actor in this fight. ODIHR has developed tools and initiatives to assist participating states in detecting and preventing torture; we, the participating States, have had many constructive and in-depth discussions - not least on the rehabilitation of torture victims - with the aim of improving our own efforts.

It is with great regret and disappointment that we note that despite prolonged consultations, today, one participating State blocked a PC declaration on prevention

of torture that would have sent an important signal of our political will. This begs the question of their genuine commitment to this important human right. And it is a great shame: the political will of all participating states and our joint work is essential to effectively prevent and ultimately eradicate torture.

Nevertheless, the EU will continue to remain engaged in working for full implementation of the obligations we have all undertaken, including in the OSCE. The rights and obligations are clear: now they must be implemented. We also expect that it will finally be possible this year to overcome the last hurdle to consensus on a comprehensive decision on torture prevention with new commitments. The EU remains committed to doing its utmost to contribute to the achievement of universal ratification and implementation of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by the year 2024 in the framework of the Convention Against Torture Initiative, the CTI, we look forward to continued discussions with the CTI within the OSCE. The valuable work that has been carried out in the area of torture prevention in the OSCE over the last three years must be continued and further strengthened, and we will remain strong supporters at the forefront of this work.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA, ANDORRA 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.