

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

OSCE High-level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

Astana, 29-30 June 2010

EU closing statement

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EU would like to reiterate its gratitude to Kazakhstan for her hospitality and very good organization of this high level conference. We would also like to thank all participants for their contributions.

We have had interesting debates in the last two days, and many recommendations have been put forward. We appreciate in particular the advice of the many NGOs which have taken part in this conference, and we welcome their proposals.

No region of the world is free from racism and xenophobia. The European Union has adopted and implemented many initiatives to fight these phenomena, but as this conference has shown, we need to pursue and strengthen our efforts in order to reach our goal of eradicating them. All forms and manifestations of intolerance and discrimination should be addressed in all possible ways, while respecting fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression.

We have to show determination to address the problems that we face through action in all relevant fields: preventing, protecting, educating, and promoting human rights.

We encourage participating States to seek the assistance of ODIHR in responding to hate speech and other hate crimes, in particular in the field of data collection, which continues to be a critical deficit in many countries, but also in training law enforcement officers, strengthening legislation and developing educational programmes.

We are concerned that some groups do not enjoy the same protection against discrimination as others, and that some forms of discrimination receive less attention than others. We therefore call on all States to take action and to step up their efforts against multiple forms of discrimination based for instance on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation.

Diversity in our increasingly complex societies is a challenge. It is also an opportunity and an asset. In order to benefit from the potential that diverse and pluralistic societies have, it should be our aim to move beyond tolerance and non-discrimination to attain mutual respect and understanding. The EU stands ready to join hands with the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the United Nations to make this aim a reality.