



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1048 Vienna, 23 April 2015

EU Statement on Migration

We were all shocked by the dramatic events in the Mediterranean Sea over the weekend that have resulted in so many deaths. Events like these are unacceptable for those who value the principles of solidarity, respect for human rights and dignity for all. Human lives must be saved, while at the same time we need to protect our borders and to fight those who smuggle or traffic human beings.

The issue of migration was discussed by EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Interior in a joint meeting last Monday. The ministers sent a strong and clear message that Europe is ready to take determined action to prevent tragedies like the recent events that took place a few days ago off the Libyan coasts. Work will be taken forward along three strands: One, the fight against organised crime networks and human traffickers. Several options were discussed, including stepping up work on the traveling routes used by migrants and enhanced police cooperation on counter-measures against smugglers. Two, more efficient efforts to save lives at sea by reinforcing Frontex activities, in particular the operations Triton and Poseidon in the Mediterranean. For this, further funds for Frontex, and more assets for both operations will be needed. Search and rescue obligations should be approached in a sustainable and a more long-term approach. Three, a possible EU wide voluntary pilot project on resettlement offering a number of places to persons in need of protection is being considered.

Proposals have been conveyed to the European Council of Heads of State and Government which meets in an extra-ordinary session today to address the situation in the Mediterranean.

The root causes of migration also need to be addressed and most of all the instability of an area that is broader and broader, from Iraq and Syria to Libya. We recognize more than ever the need to address the humanitarian tragedies caused by the many

wars and conflicts in the region, to tackle the issue of poverty and inequality in a much more effective way as well as the issue of human rights across the Mediterranean region.

We need to work for an urgent resolution to the political process in Libya which is carried out under the good offices of the UN SG Special Representative for an unified and representative government. The resolution of the Libyan conflict would be an important step in the fight against smugglers and human trafficking.

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

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro 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.