



European Union

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

19th Session

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Item 9

Statement by

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**Permanent Representative of Denmark
to the United Nations Office in Geneva**

on behalf of the European Union

Geneva, 20 March 2012

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EU Statement

General Debate

Item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance;
Follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding state Croatia*, the Candidate Countries, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro* Iceland† and Serbia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Over the years, the European Union has repeatedly stated its unfailing commitment to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in a comprehensive manner, both within the European Union and throughout the world.

Indeed the fight against racism and xenophobia remains a global challenge that demands a multilateral response. In the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination States have a meaningful and effective international legal instrument to combat this scourge. Sadly, too many States have yet to sign, ratify and implement the Convention and we take this opportunity to call upon them, once more, to do so.

Furthermore the EU wishes to stress the importance of addressing multiple discrimination because mechanisms that discriminate and exclude individuals are the same, regardless the ground of discrimination and based mostly on stereotyping.

Since 2000, the European Union has adopted comprehensive legislation to address the issue of discrimination. EU legislation has been implemented by all the Member States of the European Union and candidate countries also have a duty to adopt all EU legislation before they can become

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro and Serbia 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.

members. As a cornerstone of the implementation of EU legislation in the field of non discrimination, States have had to establish so-called "Equality Bodies", which function as independent organisations, with 3 different sets of duties. First of all, Equality bodies provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination and, as such, they provide information about anti-discrimination legislation and the possibility to take legal action to secure redress. Secondly, Equality Bodies conducting independent surveys, publish reports and make recommendations on any issue relating to discrimination. Finally, most Equality Bodies organise information campaigns aimed at the general public and provide support to employers and service providers in relation to good equality practice. In 2007, EQUINET, which is the European Network of Equality Bodies, was created with a view to bringing together 37 member organisations from 30 European countries in order to allow them to exchange views and practices.

Moreover, since 2009, the European Union has adopted a principle according to which, *"in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"*, thus enshrining the principle of non discrimination in the Treaties and mainstreaming non discrimination throughout to all EU policies and activities.

In the Human Rights Council, the EU has been actively engaged in several Durban follow-up working groups. In that respect, the European Union would like to praise the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Working Group, Ambassador Siad Doualeh for his excellent chairmanship and for his ability to create a very constructive atmosphere conducive to fruitful discussions. Indeed during the last session, the Working Group was able to adopt some conclusions and recommendations on two very important topics: Education and Sport as means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Similarly, the European Union would like to thank former South African Ambassador Matjila for taking over the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on complementary standards, last year, and for enabling the selection of the two themes that will be discussed during the upcoming session of the Ad Hoc Committee on Complementary Standards in April of this year, namely xenophobia and national mechanisms.

You can rest assured that the EU will remained fully engaged in those processes provided that they continue to focus on combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

I thank you for your attention.