



## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012  
Warsaw, 25 September 2012**

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### **EU statement – Session 2**

#### FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS II:

- FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION
  - FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT
  - NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY  
IN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
  - HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION
- 

The European Union believes that a vigorous and independent civil society is essential to the functioning of democracy and ensuring respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights.

Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right respect for which is the basis of EU migration policy and its relations with third countries. We reiterate our belief that everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of their own country and that everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and return to his or her country. We are resolutely opposed to the unnecessary denial or restriction of these rights of free movement. We are concerned about crackdowns in recent months in some OSCE participating States, which have seen the introduction of restrictive rules and regulations and the sometimes violent dispersal of peaceful protesters that go far beyond what is necessary and proportionate to maintain law and order.

It is the primary responsibility of the State to promote and protect human rights, but individuals, groups and society all have a crucial role to play. Moreover, we believe that human rights education is an indispensable and essential element for the protection and promotion of human rights. It can play a preventive role in the promotion of the universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

The EU welcomes the cooperation with and between the OSCE, Council of Europe and the UN, particularly in light of adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, last December by the UN General Assembly and encourages all international and regional organisations to even further enhance and strengthen the cooperation and coordination in this field.

National Human Rights Institutions can play an important role in raising citizens' awareness of their rights, providing recommendations to authorities and engaging in human rights education. We are disturbed to note, however, that there are still far too many instances in the OSCE area of human rights defenders being subjected to violence, intimidation and harassment. Such behaviour is unacceptable and incompatible with our common commitments.

We would therefore like to make the following recommendations:

- We call on participating States to ensure that all those seeking to uphold human rights are able to do so in a safe environment.
- Participating States to implement international standards pertaining to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.
- Participating States should follow the OSCE Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly.
- Participating States to simplify the registration procedure for those NGOs that wish to obtain legal entity status.
- Participating States should encourage systematic human rights education and training programmes designed to promote respect for human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

*\* Croatia, 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.*