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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 10 - 21 September 2018

EU statement – Working Session 12 & 13: Rights of migrants (specifically selected topic)

Madam Moderator,

According to the Universal declaration on Human Rights, *"all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration"*. In 2018, the year that marks the 70th Anniversary of the Universal declaration, the European Union wants to reaffirm its adhesion to all its articles.

As noted by UN agencies, around 3% of the world population are migrants. It is important to distinguish between economic migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons and to understand the different factors that cause individuals to leave their home. Some migrants choose to leave their countries of origin in pursuit of opportunities. Among them an increasing number have been led to leave their homes for a wide range of reasons that are often linked, including poverty, lack of access to healthcare, education, water food, housing, and the consequences of environmental degradation and climate change. Whereas refugees are driven by the fear of persecution or effects of conflict and the subsequent search for safety, it has been documented that migrants can be particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and marginalization.

Respecting and protecting the human rights of migrants have always been at the cornerstone of EU migration policies and external action, basing our action on a range of principles including non-discrimination, upholding human rights, responsibility, non-refoulement, access to justice and the best interest of the child.

The actions of the EU and its Member States for promoting and protecting the rights of migrants have been multidimensional and include: humanitarian protection, fighting against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, facilitating integration processes in the EU member states, offering safe and legal pathways, addressing the root causes that lead



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people to leave their homes including by providing opportunities for people in their countries of origin.

Saving lives of migrants and preventing human tragedies is at the heart of the EU's migration policy. Since February 2016, EU maritime operations in the Mediterranean Sea have saved more than 375,000 lives. The EU has also been working closely with IOM and UNHCR to find sustainable solutions to reduce deaths at sea and save migrants lives. The concept of regional disembarkation in partnership with third countries, in order to develop a set of established procedures and rules to reduce deaths at sea and ensure safe and orderly disembarkation and post-disembarkation processing in full respect of international law and human rights is only one example of a potential solution. To save and protect lives of migrants along the migratory routes, the EU is also working in close partnership with countries of origin and transit, particularly through the joint Valetta action plan, the Marrakesh declaration, and the AU-EU-UN taskforce.

Cooperation on migration with North African partners has been significantly stepped up, and focusses on contributing to safe, secure and legal migration from, to and within the region, while supporting a migration governance approach based on human rights. We have started training the Libyan Coastguard to enhance their capacity to carry out search and rescue operations in Libyan territorial waters, where most lives are lost. An essential element of the training is dedicated to international humanitarian law, gender issues and the correct handling of migrants, delivered jointly with IOM and UNHCR. In addition, over 43,500 people were assisted to return to their home from Libya and Niger since January 2017 and over 1,800 refugees have been evacuated from Libya in view of further resettlement.

Migration is a global issue that can only be addressed effectively by the international community as a whole. The EU has worked relentlessly in close cooperation with Member States and international partners such as the UNHCR, IOM, civil society and local communities, to carry out this endeavour.

The EU and its Member States, taking into account the specific national approaches, have participated in the UN process on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, placing migration firmly on the UN agenda. The Global Compact presents an



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international cooperative framework based on shared responsibility and solidarity in line with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

Furthermore, the EU has been participating actively in political dialogue, but has also translated its political will in acts, for instance through our development cooperation, where the EU has channelled more than 3,3 billion Euro to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, in order to address root causes of irregular migration, to foster stability and to contribute to better migration management in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As we see regional cooperation as the fundamental way to protect migrants' rights, we firmly believe that the OSCE can complement international efforts to uphold migrants' rights and to address the root causes of migration. OSCE actions in this field should always be based on value-added, non-duplication, and should fall into the field of cooperative and multidimensional security.

The EU warmly welcomes the work carried out by OSCE executive structures in 2018 for supporting efforts on migration regulation (including efforts on preventing the abuse and exploitation of migrants, in particular children); facilitating regular migration (with the promotion of accessible legal channels for labour mobility) and for supporting people on the move and communities, especially with the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination.

In line with the OSCE Ministerial Decision 3/16 from 2016, the EU and its Member States value the role of the OSCE executive structures in coordinating exchanges of best practices on migration, and encourage all OSCE participating States to share expertise and use the OSCE platform as key fora of dialogue to share expertise and develop effective measures to protect the rights of migrants.

The EU particularly appreciates the complementary role played by ODIHR and its work on this issue by, inter-alia: legislative assessment and capacity building of national authorities and National Human Rights Institutions on migrations policies' compliance with human rights standards; awareness-raising campaigns (including on hate crimes against migrants); or its independent documentation and public reporting on the human rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.



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The EU calls all OSCE participating States to fully cooperate with ODIHR and request assistance to the institution when needed.

Thank you.

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, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA and ANDORRA 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.