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Finland's EU Presidency

General Assembly
61st Session
Third Committee
Agenda item 67 c
UNITED NATIONS

EXPLANATION OF VOTE
ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
Situation of indigenous peoples and immigrants in Canada
L.43

Mr. Janne Jokinen

Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

New York, 21 November 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

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

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Country former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Mr. Chairman,

The draft resolution before us is presented by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The European Union notes with interest the fact that this draft resolution was tabled after Canada, together with a large number of co-sponsors, had concluded that the continuing serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran would again need to be addressed by the General Assembly.

The European Union strongly believes that the international community cannot remain silent in situations where human rights violations are continuous, grave and widespread, and the countries in question do not demonstrate any willingness to address the situations or to engage in meaningful dialogue. Country resolutions are necessary in such cases to alert the international community to address the situation. However, country resolutions also contribute to the efforts to enhance the promotion of human rights in the countries concerned. Over the years, the EU has had constructive consultations with a number of concerned countries. The negotiation processes have offered a platform for a genuine dialogue on human rights concerns and measures to address them. Very often, these processes have led to concrete steps to improve the situation of human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

The two draft resolutions, one on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the other on the situation of indigenous peoples and immigrants in Canada, lend themselves to interesting comparisons. The first builds on previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. The text welcomes the positive steps that the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken in the recent past towards meeting its human rights obligations. Regrettably, it is also necessary for the draft resolution to draw attention to the persistence of grave and systematic human rights violations such as the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including public executions and the issuing of sentences of stoning; as well as

discrimination against women and ethnic and religious minorities - discrimination that has at times appeared in the form of violent crackdowns. All of these violations are well documented.

The text of the draft resolution on the situation of indigenous peoples and immigrants in Canada is of a different nature. Even the most cursory review of the sources used reveals the selective and misleading nature of the quotations. What the reading of these sources does affirm, however, is Canada's extensive dialogue with a great variety of human rights mechanisms as well as the impressive commitment to take into account and implement the recommendations received from them. The disparity between the two texts - and their authors - is glaring.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union urges all Member States to consider the text put forward by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the situation of indigenous peoples and immigrants in Canada on its own merits and treat it accordingly. The European Union will vote against this text.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.