

**EU Presidency Statement
on**

Item 69

Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination

by

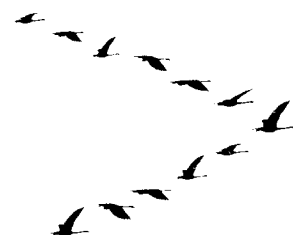
**The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the
United Nations**

on behalf of the European Union

**Third Committee, Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly
of the United Nations**

**New York
7 November 2005**

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Mr Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union has as one of its fundamental founding principles the concept that all men and women are born free and equal in dignity and in rights. Numerous UN consensus documents have affirmed the fundamental unity of the human race and the fact that all human beings belong to a single species. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, undermine those principles and are a challenge which the international community must face together.

International human rights standards relating to non-discrimination underpin the fight against racism. The International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination is the core international legal instrument in this respect. This Convention is a living document. Through its work, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has demonstrated the pertinence and usefulness of the Convention to address new and contemporary forms of discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. We urge all states to ratify this Convention and implement its provisions as a matter of priority, and to adopt effective measures at a national level to combat the symptoms and causes of racism and discrimination.

The European Union would also like to take this opportunity to express its support for the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and notes its most recent work on justice and also on genocide prevention, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, as well as the work of the OHCHR Anti-Discrimination Unit. We urge all states to fully co-operate with and support these bodies.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action provide us with a series of tools to tackle the scourge of racism. We must all work to give practical effect at national, regional and international levels to the commitments we undertook at Durban in 2001.

In this regard, the European Union was pleased to be able to participate actively in the work of the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Working

* *Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

Group on Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in October 2004. We welcomed the opportunity to share experiences and join a forward-looking consensus on the follow-up to Durban. We pay tribute to the work of the Chair, H.E. Mr Juan Martabit in this regard. The European Union regrets, however, that the Member States of the Commission on Human Rights were unable to respect this consensus and firmly believes that more understanding and improved dialogue should guide our efforts in this important area of work.

Mr. Chairperson,

We constantly face new challenges as acts of intolerance and violence find new ways and means of expression.

Our newest and most urgent challenge is terrorism, which seeks to subvert fundamental human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles, and how we deal with it. We must all ensure that our global efforts against it are in conformity with international human rights law and do not breed new forms of discrimination. There is a risk of identifying entire groups of people with terrorists or their supporters. In these testing times, we are all forced to take stock and consider our actions. It is only through global co-operation and understanding that we can put paid to those who would attain their objectives through violent acts of hatred.

As the Special Rapporteur notes, there is an increasing interweaving of issues concerning race, ethnicity, culture and religion, as well as the emergence of violent movements based on racist and discriminatory ideas directed against certain communities. The European Union reaffirms its support to the call of the Durban conference to take concrete action against all forms of intolerance.

Victims of racism can suffer multiple discrimination on grounds of, inter alia, gender, language, religion or belief, disability, political or other opinion, social origin, property, sexual orientation, birth and other status. This can lead to poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation, social exclusion and economic disparities. Racism reveals itself, for example, in a differentiated manner for women and girls. As such, the European Union wishes to stress the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the development of all policies against racism to ensure that they effectively target the diverse situations of women and men.

The protection of persons belonging to minority ethnic groups and indigenous people from racism is a particular priority for the European Union. This is one of the four priority areas in the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, with the aim of ensuring that people from minorities participate in public life, have access to goods and services and can fully enjoy their human rights. Activities to combat caste-discrimination, a form of discrimination which the EU condemns, are also eligible for support.

It is necessary to understand and fight against the deep roots of racism that stem from economic, social and political conditions. Education can play a central role by fostering knowledge of and respect for the world's different cultures and peoples. Politicians must also play their part in preventing the spread of racist ideologies. We are witnessing a rise in the number of movements taking up overtly racist and xenophobic positions under the guise of defending national identity. It is our responsibility to foster a culture of tolerance and respect. With the tools of moderation and understanding on the basis of respect for human rights, we can all play our part in tackling the hatred that fuels racism and the violence that we have sadly come to see as a partner of intolerance.

Against this background, the European Union expresses its concern about the misuse of media, including the Internet, to disseminate messages of racism. We call for all States to take the necessary measures to combat this phenomenon whilst guaranteeing the right to freedom of opinion and expression as protected by international standards.

Mr. Chairperson,

The EU has made the fight against racism a key aspect of its external policy. But this does not mean that we overlook the challenges we have within our own borders.

The EU has put in place legislation prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination, as well as harassment, on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. This legislation requires the establishment of specialised equality bodies in each Member State to assist victims of discrimination. The EU also provides funding for initiatives designed to tackle racial and other forms of discrimination, in particular through the Community action programme to combat discrimination.

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) supports the efforts of national authorities and civil society in the EU. It plays an important role in terms of gathering information and data, as well as awareness-raising. The EUMC cooperates with the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which is the Council of Europe's principal body in combating racism and intolerance in wider Europe. Through its country reports, ECRI monitors and analyses progress made towards combating violence, discrimination and racial prejudice in each of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe and puts proposals to governments for addressing the problems it identifies. In implementing its activities, ECRI co-operates with the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).

The Member States of the EU have also established national anti-discrimination bodies. The EU urges other States to take steps to establish similar institutions, as recommended by the Durban Conference.

We also work with the OSCE in tackling racism in the European area. In 2004, there were a series of three OSCE events on tolerance: a conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin; a meeting in Paris on Hate Speech on the Internet; and a conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination in Brussels. Building on the outcome of these events, three representatives were appointed: one on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, including a focus on discrimination against Christians and other religions; one on combating anti-Semitism; and one on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. The EU would like to underline its appreciation of the mandate of the three representatives in the fight against discrimination and in the promotion of tolerance. The EU believes a well co-ordinated approach among the three Personal Representatives will make a valuable contribution to ODIHR's tolerance and non-discrimination programme. As such, we are determined to give them our full support in the implementation of their function. More recently, the EU gave its support to the OSCE conference on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance held in Cordoba in June 2005.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, the European Union urges all states to unite against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We see frightening examples in all our societies of incitement to discrimination, hatred and violence on the basis of perceived racial, ethnic, religious, and other differences. It is vital in these challenging times that we tackle hatred and extremism in all its forms by building respect for difference and unity in the face of these threats.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.