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11th Session

(2 - 18 June 2009)

Update by the High Commissioner

Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Tomáš HUSÁK

Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to

the United Nations Office in Geneva

on behalf of the European Union

Geneva, 3rd June 2009

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**United Nations Human Rights Council
11th session
(Geneva, 2 -18 June, 2009)**

Update of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic
on behalf of the European Union**

Geneva, 3 June 2009

Mr. President,
Madam High Commissioner,

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

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

Thank you for your update on human rights themes and on situations of particular concern that rightly draws our attention to individual victims of violations of human rights.

We thank your office for the continuous work in support of the functioning of the Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies and of the Council itself, including the demanding Universal Periodic Review.

At the beginning of the 11th Session of the HRC, we would like to also reiterate that we are aware of the need to curb the number of requests of the Council to the OHCHR, which has grown considerably during the existence of the Council.

As you reminded us, Madam High Commissioner, racism, intolerance and discrimination not only prevent the full enjoyment of human rights, but also represent a threat to democratic societies and their fundamental values. They remain to be incompatible with the principles on which the European Union is founded and, therefore, the fight against discrimination will continue to be part of the EU struggle for human rights

As to the rights of migrants, we reiterate, that in particular in the context of the financial crisis, we are fully committed to upholding their human rights and fighting any discrimination or violations of their human rights. We continue to

¹ * Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

recognize and appreciate their positive contribution to countries of destination and of origin alike.

We agree with your assessment that situation of civilians in armed conflicts in many parts of the world remains cause of grave alarm and the HRC must not forget these individual victims of violations of human rights.

All the situations you named in this regard need transparency, access to the media and humanitarian organizations and accountability for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, such as independent investigations and punishment of those responsible, reparations for victims and effective measures to ensure non-repetition of future violations. All of them constitute however an essential part for the establishment of sustainable peace and successful reconciliation processes within conflict-torn societies

We heed your call for all involved to ensure their utmost attention to protection of civilians and minimizing numbers of civilian victims in compliance with the international humanitarian law.

We continue to fully support the strengthened country engagement of the OHCHR. We very much appreciate efforts of your office to assist in post conflict situations and reiterate your call to ensure in particular protection of internally displaced persons, women and children, human rights defenders, journalists and also humanitarian workers in this regard.

We welcome and reiterate your call for an independent international inquiry into human rights violations committed by all sides to the conflict in Sri Lanka and recognize your offer of assistance in the process ensuring justice and reconciliation through accountability.

The EU takes note of your visits to Nepal and India in March, where you encouraged the respective governments to take effective measures to eliminate caste-based discrimination and to show global leadership in this regard. We would like to ask if you could elaborate on the plans of your office in contributing to the elimination of this form of discrimination.

We welcome the role your office continues to play in Nepal in support of the processes towards sustainable peace and development. We strongly encourage the imminent renewal of the mandate between the Government and the High Commissioner. Appreciating the consultations that the Office has carried out to adjust its work to the shifting political environment, we believe that the renewal of the mandate of the Office will represent crucial support to the Government in the field of human rights.

Madam High Commissioner,

We acknowledge the continuous efforts of your office to keep all of us well informed and with numerous formal and informal opportunities for dialogue with your Office, as for example the briefing at the occasion of launching your 2008 report on Activities and Results which we find very useful.

We would like to conclude by reiterating once more our full support of the independence, integrity and impartiality of your Office in compliance with your mandate outlined in resolution 48/141. We are satisfied that the relationship of the Council with the Office is well defined in the resolution establishing your mandate and the one creating the Human Rights Council.

Thank you.
