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Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March 2013

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is an annual reminder that we must act more resolutely to tackle all forms of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and other types of discrimination. In times of economic crisis, the dangers of rising racism and xenophobia, fuelled in part by increasing unemployment, and insecurity about the future, are very real. It is in these challenging times that our commitment to combating racism must be relentless.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. With the aim of combating discrimination worldwide, the EU cooperates with all relevant international organisations, particularly the United Nations and its special mechanisms, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and civil society organisations. In this context, the EU remains committed to implementing the goals and objectives defined by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Xenophobia and related intolerance.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights explicitly prohibits all forms of discrimination. In addition, through the Strategic Framework on Human rights and Democracy adopted in 2012, the EU reiterates its commitment to fight discrimination, among others, on the grounds of race.

On this day, the EU once again calls on all states that have not yet done so, to become parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. States must take determined and effective measures at the national, regional, and international levels to prevent and put an end to this scourge.”
The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland† and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 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