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**EU Statement on
“The youth employment crisis: Time for action”**

**Committee on Youth Employment
(Discussion on employment, economic and sectoral policies)**

30-31 May, 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman/Madam Chair,

I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*¹, Iceland+² and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

Youth employment is closely bound to the overall economic situation. Since the 2005 ILC resolution, we have seen youth employment developing in different directions. We would like to recall the main trends of EU in order to put the challenge we are confronting today into a context.

As the report from the office shows, a considerable reduction in youth unemployment was achieved between 2005 and early 2008. This positive trend meant a reduction of average youth unemployment in the EU by over 3 percentage points to a level of nearly 15%. Strong labour demand, improvements on the supply side through better educational outcomes and increased efforts for matching supply and demand taken together – accounted for the positive development.

The impact of the financial crisis and the sovereign debt crisis on the European economy and consequently the labour markets accounted for a sharp increase in unemployment in the EU, and young people were among the most affected groups. Young people who are neither in

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

² + Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

employment, nor in education or training (NEETs) constitute one of the most important problems. In the third quarter of 2011, 14.3 pct. of all young people in Europe were in the NEET category.

From early on after the onset of the financial and economic crisis the EU and its Member States has reacted by trying to continuously adapt economic, employment and other sector policies to the new realities. We need to take a two-pronged approach with measures to ensure financial stability and fiscal consolidation as well as action to foster growth, competitiveness, employment and to tackle the social consequences of the crisis. Particular attention is paid to improving the employment situation of youth.

In 2010 the EU and its Member States entered into a new cycle of long term economic policy strategy with the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. The need for a coherent approach of policies concerning economic, employment and other sectors is emphasised in the Europe 2020 in order to respond to the diverse challenges Europe are facing including the major challenge of youth employment.

In 2011 the sovereign debt crisis affected the EU. Therefore the EU and its Member States aim to achieve a wide response to the sovereign debt crisis. Policies promoting youth employment need to be fully embedded into this response; the EU has therefore taken action to support in particular those Member States confronted with very high youth unemployment in a reinforced partnership approach. It is based on the consensus that we must employ all means possible in the most efficient way for helping young into the labour market.

Tackling youth unemployment calls for a coherent approach where macroeconomic-, employment-, education- and social policies all play a part. The EU and its Member States are strongly committed to continue investing in young people's education and training, and into policies helping their transition to the labour market. We look forward to sharing experiences on these topics in the Committee.

Thank you Mr. Chair.
