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**Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on
behalf of the European Union on the Human Rights Day, 10
December 2010**

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, on 10 December, the European Union pays tribute to the many human rights defenders worldwide dedicating their lives to promoting and protecting people's fundamental rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We recognise and support the work of these courageous individuals who work to put an end to human rights violations wherever they occur around the world.

This year's Human Rights Day celebration highlights the work of human rights defenders who fight against discrimination. The struggle against all forms of discrimination is a priority for the EU, be it at home or abroad. Discrimination can take many forms and the EU works closely with civil society campaigners worldwide in their fight against discrimination. The European Union calls upon all governments to ensure that laws and practices do not prevent legitimate and peaceful human rights work in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The European Union supports the work of human rights defenders politically and financially. In 2007-2013, the EU is providing € 40 million for human rights defenders' projects. This year alone more than 150 human rights defenders at high risk have received EIDHR (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights) support. The European External Action Service is strongly committed to continuing to protect and to support Human Rights Defenders.

P R E S S

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

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 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.
