

**Declaration by High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the European Union
on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2015**

This year, Human Rights Day launches a one-year celebration by the United Nations of the 50th anniversary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), signed in 1966.

These two core treaties set out the civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights that belong to human beings from their birth and throughout their life, and have changed the destiny of many people.

Against the background of the current increasing challenges to human rights and the rule of law, and in the context of a global economic crisis, poverty and ever increasing inequalities, these treaties remain the bedrock of the EU's work on promoting and defending all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and are the vital international legal basis for their universality, indivisibility and interrelatedness.

The new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, which the EU adopted last July, places equal importance on all those rights and engages, through concrete actions, to promote them and ensure their fulfilment for all. Moreover, the EU is as dedicated as ever to assisting civil society organisations and all other actors, in advocating for the protection and respect of human rights, whether civil and political or social, economic and cultural. The EU has a strong record of support for human rights defenders around the world; and the EU itself is a compelling example of the benefits which flow from a vibrant civil society.

Our network of EU delegations and EU Member State Embassies throughout the world, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis, and our teams in EU Capitals, join forces today to celebrate Human Rights Day, and will continue to advocate, defend and promote human rights in any place in the world where they are under threat.