

## **Declaration by the EU on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 2014**

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we wish to reaffirm the EU's commitment to the prevention and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Torture is clearly and unequivocally prohibited under international law.

We would like to commend the efforts by many NGOs and individuals, who work tirelessly to prevent torture, alleviate the suffering of victims and mobilise public opinion on this important issue. Through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the European Union offers substantial support to civil society organisations that strive for the eradication of torture and work to ensure accountability for torture and ill-treatment.

The EU calls upon all States to accede to the UN Convention against Torture and to its Optional Protocol (OPCAT) and to recognise the competence of the Committee Against Torture to receive and consider individual communications. We welcome the recent signature of the Optional Protocol by Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mongolia and its ratification by Burundi and Norway. The EU underlines the need to create and sustain National Preventive Mechanisms and to ensure their operational and financial autonomy.

The European Union expresses its appreciation for the work undertaken by international mechanisms, notably the UN Special Rapporteur, the Committee Against Torture and the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and urges States to implement their recommendations.

The EU has given every support to UN General Assembly Resolution 68/156, adopted on 18 December 2013, which stresses the importance of individuals' ability to freely contact the institutions working to prevent and combat torture and the right of torture victims to redress.

We must continue to work together to make torture a thing of the past.