



European Union

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

25th Session

(3 – 28 March 2014)

Item 6

Statement by

H.E. Mr Alexandros Alexandris

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Greece

on behalf of the European Union

Geneva, 21 March 2014

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU Statement

General Debate

Item 6

Universal Periodic Review

Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland†, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Liechtenstein‡, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

The European Union reiterates its strong commitment to the Universal Periodic Review, which has proven a truly universal and unique mechanism within the UN, addressing all human rights, and which is applicable to all UN Member States without distinction or discrimination. We appreciate its tangible contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms everywhere in the world.

The UPR is a State-driven process, its success relies to a great extent upon the willingness of States to ensure meaningful participation at all stages of the review. We reiterate our call on all Member States to continue ensuring that universal participation is maintained. As we follow the second cycle of the review, we do also note two more important ingredients for a successful UPR: recommendations to the State under review do best serve this State if they keep a human rights

* The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

† Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

‡ Liechtenstein and Norway are members of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.

focus; the report of the review should note all recommendations made during the review in the way they were made – there should not be place for negotiation or omission in this process.

Meaningful participation in the review needs to be followed by adequate action on the ground. We are pleased to note that States continue to make use of voluntary mid-term progress updates on the implementation of the agreed recommendations as a tool to monitor implementation. To date, the OHCHR has posted 41 such reports on its website with useful information on the state of play regarding the progress made. We encourage States to follow-up on their agreed recommendations, including through mid-term reports.

The European Union expresses its appreciation regarding the active role and engagement of civil society organisations and groups at different phases of the UPR, both in States under Review and in Geneva. The UPR would not be able to give a comprehensive picture without abundant information provided by the stakeholders on each State's fulfilment of its international human rights obligations and commitments.

In this vein, we condemn all acts of intimidation or reprisals towards individuals and groups who cooperate, have cooperated or seek to cooperate with the UN. In this context, the EU would like to pay tribute to the memory of a human rights defender Cao Shunli who was prevented from coming to Geneva and died last Friday as a result of several months of detention and insufficient medical care, which, as underscored by Special Procedures, is a tragic example of reprisal for cooperation with the UN. We urge all States to refrain from such actions that infringe the universality of the UPR process.

Thank you, Mr President.