



General Assembly Third Committee
5 November 2012
Item 67:
Elimination of racism, racial discrimination,
Xenophobia and related intolerance
Statement delivered by
Rafael de Bustamante
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Check against delivery

Mr Chair,

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

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, 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, Armenia, and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

Mr Chair,

The EU has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which remains a priority in our human rights agenda. These phenomena run counter to the principles which underlie the EU, namely respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, undermine those principles and are a challenge which the international community must face together.

The European Union has as one of its fundamental founding principles the concept that all men and women are born free and equal in dignity and in rights. All members of our societies, irrespective of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, must be treated equally.

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

Mr Chair,

In the European Union, racial or ethnic discrimination is prohibited by the Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as by several Regulations and Directives. The EU has also adopted legislation which bans incitement to racist or xenophobic violence or hatred.

Under EU legislation, EU Member States are required to introduce laws to fight racism and xenophobia through, for example, penalising the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred on the basis of race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin; banning incitement to racial hatred in audiovisual media services and the promotion of racial discrimination in audiovisual commercial communications; prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in many areas of life, including employment, education, healthcare, and housing; prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation in the field of employment, as well as prohibiting discrimination at border controls. In addition, all EU Member States have been required by the EU law to set up a national body for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin. These bodies, among their other tasks, provide assistance to victims of discrimination.

Additionally, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights plays an important role by collecting, analysing and disseminating objective and comparable information about the situation in the EU. The agency cooperates with the United Nations system (namely OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP or UNICEF), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and other international organizations. This cooperation very often consists in expert consultations, conferences and seminars as well as common data collection.

The EU also supports a wide range of civil society organisations in their work against racism, xenophobia and non-discrimination through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and has furthermore implemented a wide number of public awareness measures, increasing the exchange and the analysis of information on racism and xenophobia, and improving judicial cooperation and cross-border training in this area.

Mr Chair

The European Union reiterates the fundamental importance of ratifying and fully implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Convention constitutes the universal foundation for efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate racism.

The EU also emphasizes the important role which regional mechanisms play in this issue as well as the dialogue between regional organisations. In this respect, we would like to highlight the African Union– European Union workshop on this topic (held in Geneva on 5 June) where it was concluded that the absence of effective implementation and the lack of political will remain major obstacles despite the existence of legislation and mechanisms established in both continents at the local, national and regional levels.

The EU welcomes the contribution of the Special Rapporteur, Mutuma Ruteere, on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance

as well as the call on States to pay close attention to early signs of racism that may eventually lead to conflicts and grave human rights violations. He alerts against the use of the internet for propagating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance but we would also like to underline the positive contribution of the new technologies in the fight against this scourge. We believe that education and in particular human rights education plays a very important role in promoting mutual understanding and respect for diversity.

Mr Chair,

The EU remains fully committed to the primary objectives and commitments undertaken at the 2001 Durban World conference in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We see frightening examples in all our societies of incitement to discrimination, hatred and violence on the basis of perceived racial, ethnic, religious, and other differences. It is vital in these challenging times that we tackle hatred and extremism in all its forms by building respect for difference and unity in the face of these threats.

In conclusion, the EU believes that the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, without singling out any region, is an issue that concern us all and in which the international community must be united.

Thank you Mr Chair.