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United Nations Human Rights Council

4th session

(Geneva, 12 - 30 March 2007)

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Special event

"Violence Against Children"

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Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

Geneva, 19 March 2007

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**HRC 4
Special Event: "Violence Against Children"**

Mr. President

The EU welcomes this special event to address the complex issue of violence against children. The EU attaches utmost importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of children, boys and girls, and appeals to all countries to support ongoing international efforts to this end.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration

Regrettably, multi-faceted forms of violence against children exist in all countries of the world. The consequences may vary according to its nature and severity – but the repercussions are almost always grave and damaging. The knowledge and readiness to act upon such violence varies from country to country; the impact on society is not always fully understood. Further awareness-raising is much needed, the issue deserves undivided international attention.

The EU welcomes all steps to improve the situation of children affected by violence and supports relevant international actors, most notably the UN and its special mechanisms, UNICEF, the Council of Europe and the OSCE but also OHCHR, UNHCR and human rights and civil society organizations.

The EU believes that the Human Rights Council can play a supportive role in addressing violations of the rights of children, thereby complementing existing international efforts to this end.

At UN GA 61, the UN SG put forward the report of Prof. Pinheiro, the independent expert for the UN study on violence against children - which for the first time provides a global picture of violence against children and – more importantly – proposes concrete recommendations to prevent and respond to this issue. With its wide participatory approach the study also provides a broad platform for further political action.

The EU is very grateful to Prof Pinheiro for his dedicated work and supports the thrust of the Study. Its concrete recommendations could provide a road map for coordinated follow-up action at the national and international level. The EU has – for its own part – always supported the process of promoting the rights of children, not least with a series of conferences held in Berlin (2001), Sarajevo (2004) and Palencia (2006).

The EU calls on all states to support the thrust of the violence study and proposes considering further discussions in the Human Rights Council on how to best implement it.

In view of the existing normative framework on children's rights and many additional political commitments to this effect we must pay increased attention to the practical implementation of its

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

recommendations through sustained and systematic action and building on existing international safeguards, most importantly the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" and its two Optional Protocols and the outcome document of the Special Session on Children of the UN GA in 2002 - A World fit for Children.

In its opening chapter, the UN study on Violence says: :*" No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable."* The EU looks forward to further discussions with interested countries on how this vision could be turned into reality.
