

EUROPEAN UNION

Human Rights Council
6th session
(Geneva, 10-28 September 2007)

EXPLANATION OF POSITION on the draft resolution "Protection of cultural heritage as an important component for the promotion and protection of cultural rights" (L. 33)

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union Member States that are members of the Human Rights Council.

The European Union is fully committed to the protection of cultural rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We recognize that the protection of cultural heritage is an important component of the promotion and protection of cultural rights, and express our condemnation at acts of intentional destruction of cultural heritage in violation of international law.

However, the EU considers that the linkage established in this text between the protection of cultural heritage and human rights is not sufficiently clear and that the issues addressed therein can best be dealt with by other bodies, such as UNESCO or the International Conference of the Red Cross. We consider that this draft resolution is part of an undesirable proliferation of initiatives brought before this Council which have little connection with this body's mandate and do not contribute to advance the cause of human rights.

Despite these problems, and given the sponsor's willingness to accommodate some of our most pressing concerns, the EU shall not oppose the adoption of draft resolution L.33. We do so on the understanding that this issue shall not be brought before the Council in future sessions.

This explanation of position has been agreed by the European Union as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. President.