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**Statement by**

**H.E. Ambassador Francisco Xavier Esteves**

**Permanent Representative of Portugal**

**on behalf of the European Union**

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**Item 9**

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance:  
follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration  
and Programme of Action**

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**Geneva, 25 September 2007**

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## **EU Statement**

### **Item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

Mr. President,

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

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, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

1. The European Union is fully committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We are deeply concerned about this continuing scourge that affects all our societies. It is the obligation of all States to strive for the elimination of every form of discrimination. The EU is ready to pursue its efforts at the national, regional and international level to fight these phenomena while ensuring equal treatment among victims.

2. The European Union and its Member States were among those who actively participated in the negotiations at the Durban World Conference, in 2001, and agreed on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We have since focused our efforts on the full implementation of the agreed principles and operational recommendations.

3. Last year, at the General Assembly, the EU was able to reach an understanding with the G77 and other delegations to convene for 2009 a Review Conference on the implementation of the Durban DPA within the framework of the GA. On the basis of this understanding, we are fully committed to the realization and success of this conference and we welcome the opportunity that it will give us to share with our partners what the European Union has done to implement the Durban DPA and to learn from the experiences of our partners from other regions.

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

Mr. President,

4. The EU was fully engaged in the work of the Organizational Session of the Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference that met 3 weeks ago and we appreciate the fact that it was possible to take by consensus crucial decisions on the future steps of this process. This was due to the very important role played by the President of the PrepCom and by those who accepted to facilitate negotiations and to the open and constructive spirit shown by all delegations. We believe that it is of the utmost importance to keep a consensual approach, since we are convinced that the Review Conference can only be successful if it is based on the broadest possible consensus. In fact, the major added value of the Durban DPA is its universality and for its follow-up to be successful the broad consensus achieved in Durban has to be maintained.

5. We therefore hope that all future draft decisions and resolutions to be presented on this issue will fully respect the understandings and constructive compromises that we all, in a joint effort, were able to reach 3 weeks ago.

Mr. President,

6. It is the view of the European Union that the development of international complementary standards might indeed be considered to address current challenges. But these must be elaborated on the basis of a comprehensive and consensual process of identification of gaps in international standards. It is also imperative that any complementary standards address real needs of the fight against racism and bring a real added value to the protection and promotion of human rights in general.

7. This Council has now an Ad-hoc Committee to work on this very particular issue. However, much work has been done in the last years regarding complementary standards, namely in the inter-governmental Working Group on the implementation of the Durban DPA, and we cannot simply ignore it. The Ad-hoc Committee must certainly base its future work in all the documents produced, namely the recent CERD and Five Experts' studies.

Mr. President,

8. We reiterate that combating racism is a top priority for the EU. Nonetheless, we have already expressed our concern for the disproportional high number of different mechanisms dealing with this issue in the HRC. In this yearly cycle, we have already 9 weeks of open-ended working groups dealing with racism, while we do not have more than 6 weeks outside the HRC and UPR sessions to deal with all other HR issues. Time and Conference Services are limited resources. Now that we have engaged in preparatory work for a Review Conference and that we have created a new Ad-hoc Committee, the EU expects that we will be able to diminish the intensity of meetings of the other mechanisms. This is important not only for a better management of our general workload, namely taking into account the smaller delegations, but also to

ensure that, when working on Durban-related issues, we are all fully committed to achieve meaningful results and that our common efforts are not dispersed.

Mr. President,

9. The EU cannot end the statement under this agenda item without a word of gratitude to Ambassador Martabit, from Chile, for the manner in which he conducted the IGWG on the implementation of the Durban DPA over the last years, for his strong leadership and his constant efforts to ensure that this group produced consensual and effective outcomes. The EU hopes that we all can continue to work with that same spirit on our common endeavour to fight and eliminate racism from our societies.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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