Mr Chair,
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.
The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, 
Iceland† 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 statement.

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.

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. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
† Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.
intolerance, undermine those principles and are a challenge which the international community must face together.

Mr Chair,

As highlighted in the Special Rapporteur report, no country is immune to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The EU is no exception; we have witnessed such episodes against Roma and immigrants. This discrimination is regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination.

At the same time, the EU is also equipped with an arsenal of policy and legislative measures to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. 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 and provides evidence of racism and related intolerance, as well as the unequal treatment of ethnic minorities in the EU. Recent reports by the Agency show that racism, xenophobia and hate crimes remain a matter of concern across the EU. This matter is particularly worrisome as a good number of hate crimes remain unreported and as such they are not prosecuted and those committing them are not punished. 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. In this respect, we would like to underline the importance of regional organizations and mechanisms in addressing this scourge.

The EU also supports the work of civil society organizations on this area 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 welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur, Mutuma Ruteere, on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance [as well as the contributions of Governments intergovernmental and non-governmental organisation on the relevant activities undertaken pursuant to resolution 67/154. We also welcome the SR’s reminder of the role of the media in representing the diversity of multicultural societies and thus fighting against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Mr Ruteere also urges States to implement fully and effectively their legal and policy measure to protect the individuals who are discriminated. Words must be followed by deeds.

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.