

## ***Side event of the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council:***

### ***Tackling illegal adoptions and addressing the rights of victims***

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, 12:00 13:30  
Room XXI, Palais des Nations, Geneva

#### **Welcome Remarks:**

It is an honour to join Ambassador Ricardo González Arenas in welcoming you to this side event that we are very happy to support.

On behalf of the European Union I want to commend the SR on the accomplishment of her 3 year tenure by delivering on the priorities that were announced upon her appointment. Let me take this opportunity to reiterate our support to the work of the Special Rapporteur, including her role in advancing the implementation of SDG targets (16.2, 8.7 and 5.3).

We welcome her decision to address the issue of illegal adoptions, in particular large scale systemic and systematic illegal adoptions – a sensitive topic that touches upon many interests and concerns, and the consequences of which last throughout generations and affect whole societies.

In this regard, let me stress the importance of adhering to the international legal framework set out by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption as well as the European Convention on the Adoption of Children, as means to ensure that adoptions take place in the best interests of the child and with respect for their fundamental rights.

We acknowledge the need to enhance cooperation among countries of origin and receiving countries to prevent and combat illegal adoptions through joint, coordinated and timely responses, and welcome the specific recommendations

issued by the Special Rapporteur in this regard, which should assist States in this daunting task.

The European Union welcomes also the work carried out by the Hague Conference on Private International Law, in particular its expert group on the financial aspects of intercountry adoption and the working group on preventing and addressing illicit practices in intercountry adoption, and the need to increase support to the Special Commission on the practical operation of the 1993 Hague Convention.

Adoption is not regulated at the EU level, the Member States implement their obligation under the mentioned international and regional framework. Having said this let me emphasise that the Commission supports the correct implementation of the safeguards set out in the 1993 Hague Convention by participating on a regular basis in the Special Commission organized in the context of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. These meetings aim to improve the functioning of the Convention and serve to exchange best practices.

As a member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the European Union is actively involved in developing and promoting multilateral legal instruments for the protection of children's rights. In particular, the Commission monitors the developments in relation to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, to which all the Member States of the European Union are party.

I thank you

[For information: The EU as such is not entitled to sign and ratify the Convention.]