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|  | EUROPEAN UNION  Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  and other international organisations in Geneva |

**Intersessional Seminar on Youth and Human Rights**

**EU statement**

**12 April 2021**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Young people are the key to building a better future. Their active engagement in sustainable development and peace efforts, as well as the building and strengthening of inclusive, just and democratic societies across the globe is fundamental. Hence, such youth power and inter-generational dialogue must be reinforced and protected.

States have to take appropriate measures to ensure the full realization of the human rights of youth and eliminate any form of discrimination or barriers that hamper young persons from achieving their full potential, whether we talk about education, labour opportunities and working conditions, access to health-care (including human rights-based mental health services) or inclusive participation in policy and decision-making processes.

The European Union’s Youth Strategy 2019-2027 is firmly anchored in human rights and the core principles of equality and non-discrimination, inclusion and participation. In its framework, the EU conducts an institutionalized dialogue between young people and decision-makers to ensure that the opinions, views and needs of young people are taken into account when defining the EU's youth policies.

Quality education and training remain an essential element of the EU’s youth policy. The iconic Erasmus+ as well as the European solidarity Corps programmes are the instruments aiming to ease the transition from education to employment. The focus is currently put on revitalising international youth mobility during the pandemic and beyond.

In this context, ensuring access to digital resources and digital education is also crucial, as envisaged by the European Commission in the new Digital Education Action Plan. At the same time, enhanced attention must be paid to the protection of youth, especially women and girls, against any harmful effect, including hate speech and any form of harassment, within the online space.

Furthermore, the EU has delivered several actions around the globe to promote young people in peacebuilding actions and amplify their voices and calls on other stakeholders to do likewise.

Finally, the Youth Sounding Board for International Partnerships was launched recently. This new initiative aims at meaningful involvement of young people in EU external action and international cooperation. Applications are now open and we strongly encourage all interested youth to apply.

So let me conclude with a following motto: Let’s invest in and work with youth!

I thank you.

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