**Talking points for a possible EU intervention at the Twenty-fourth session of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council**

18 February 2020 at 11:15, Palais des Nations, Room XX

**"Global call for the total elimination of racism and the DDPA"**

Madam Chair, Esteemed Members of the Advisory Committee,

The European Union and its Member States are committed to the total elimination of racism. Nineteen years after the DDPA, we can still not be entirely satisfied with the state of affairs in fighting racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Racial discrimination still occurs in European countries, for example when it comes to access to the labour and housing markets. Sometimes rules appearing to be neutral in fact disadvantage persons belonging to stigmatized groups, and at times outright racial bias is at work with landlords, recruiters or employers. In the educational realm, immigrant children and children of colour tend to be overrepresented in schools with fewer resources, or are not valued to their full capabilities because of racial bias, ending up with lesser qualifications than their peers, complicating their access to competitive job markets. Racial and ethnic profiling still exists in law enforcement agencies, often in connection with security and immigration policies.

All this gives us reason to continue to take concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

At the same time, the General Assembly did not make matters much easier by requesting the Human Rights Council to tackle this challenge through a study focusing on the situation of racial equality in the world in its Resolution 72/157. In fact, whereas “racism”, “discrimination” and “racial discrimination” are well-understood and well-defined concepts in international law, notably through the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, it is not so easy to define “racial equality”, which is not a normative concept explicitly referenced in human rights instruments. Action involves not just the eradication of all forms of racial discrimination but also the adoption of measures ensuring formal and substantive equality between human beings irrespective of “race”.

It is often said that we can only know the things we measure. The measurement of discrimination enables us to adopt legislation and combat racial inequality. But how will we measure racial equality? This is not only a problem of the absence of disaggregated data ‘per race’ in certain countries, but also one of generalization of ethnic statistics. Besides, it is not easy to identify who should distinguish individuals on the basis of race and: is it the State, or the individuals who auto-designate themselves racially? All options bring new problems, and in any event the very notion of “race” is not comprehensively or uniformly defined. It remains a highly controversial notion, which some countries including certain EU member states forbid to define as such. We therefore look forward to finding out whether the Advisory Committee can shed some light on this complex matter of the “situation of racial equality in the world” in the months ahead.

Thank you.