



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from:	Presidency
to:	delegations
Subject:	Draft European Union Declaration on the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

In view of the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Counsellors on 15 September, delegations find in annex a draft of a Declaration of the European Union on the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Draft European Union Declaration on the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

In order to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the European Union, founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity and fundamental rights, reaffirms its commitment to this unique instrument as the foundation of the international regime for the protection of refugees.

The European Union recalls its commitment to the development of a common policy on asylum based on the full and inclusive application of the 1951 Convention, and reaffirms its attachment to the absolute respect of the right to asylum, as recognised in particular in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The European Union underlines the progress it has achieved in this respect in the last ten years: the completion of the first phase of the creation of a Common European Asylum System, the establishment of the European Refugee Fund and of the European Asylum Support Office, enhanced practical cooperation, reinforcement of the rule of law through inter alia important rulings of the European Courts as well as in further approximating the rules on the recognition and content of international protection on the basis of higher standards. The European Union reiterates its commitment to further developing the Common European Asylum System based on high protection standards combined with fair and effective procedures.

The European Union remains committed to continue developing instruments to express solidarity with third countries in order to promote and help building capacity to handle protracted refugee situations in these countries.

The European Union calls on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, and calls on those States which have made geographical limitations and others reservations to reconsider these, so as to ensure universal application of its provisions. In this respect, the European Union recalls its commitment formulated in the Stockholm Programme of 1 December 2009, to seek accession to the Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol subject to a report of the Commission on the legal and practical consequences.

The European Union recognises the unique mandate of UNHCR and the importance of its efforts to protect, and promote durable solutions for refugees and other people in need of international protection who are of its concern. It notes the significant importance for Contracting States to cooperate with UNHCR in order to facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of the 1951 Convention. The European Union stands ready to continue its work in close partnership with UNHCR in order to ensure effective international protection and assistance.

In this anniversary year, the European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to assist and protect all those men, women and children, who are compelled against their will to leave their homes and their countries in order to escape fear of persecution and serious human rights violations.