



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on EU guidelines on human rights defenders

(2736th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting - Luxembourg, 12 June 2006)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

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1. The Council pays tribute to the courage of human rights defenders and expresses its sincere admiration for the invaluable contribution they make to advancing respect for human rights worldwide. The Council expresses its concern about the ongoing threats and attacks and strongly condemns killings of human rights defenders, as documented in the latest report by the UN Special Representative on human rights defenders. It calls on all states to ensure the safety and protection of the rights of human rights defenders and calls particular attention to the situation of women human rights defenders.
2. The Council welcomes the first review of the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (ANNEX II). The Council acknowledges progress made towards the implementation of the Guidelines but underlines the need to continue efforts to further increase the level of awareness amongst all relevant EU actors at the Brussels, capitals and mission level about the existence, purpose, content and operational application of the Guidelines. The Council therefore requests all relevant actors of the European Union to implement the steps recommended by the review.
3. The Council, its Member States and the Commission are committed to continued close cooperation with civil society in promoting human rights and in raising awareness about the content and the purpose of the Guidelines and to advance their full implementation. In this context, close cooperation with the European Parliament will also be pursued.
4. The Council stresses the importance of the mandate of the UN Special Representative and other relevant special procedures, and the crucial role played by the Special Representative in

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implementing the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and enhancing the protection of human rights defenders throughout the world. It reiterates the EU's full support for the UN Special Representative and is committed to continued close cooperation with this crucial mechanism. In view of the newly established Human Rights Council, the Council also underlines the importance the EU attaches to continued access and active participation of human rights defenders and NGOs from the outset.

5. The Council will continue to regularly review progress towards implementation of the Guidelines as well as action taken in response to the recommendations of this first review."

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