**w

* * * *
* * * * *

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

Gilles Marhic

o

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Icelandt and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

We welcome the Report of the Secretary General (A/67/182) on the status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts.

The promotion and respect of international humanitarian law is crucial to ensure the protection of victims of armed conflicts. International humanitarian law is still disregarded in too many circumstances. Upholding international humanitarian law and protecting human dignity in situations of armed conflict remains a major challenge. Enhancing the protection of civilians must be our common goal.

The Geneva Conventions enjoy universal acceptance. Also many of the provisions contained in the 1977 Additional Protocols are today recognized as customary international humanitarian law. Furthermore, we stress that certain minimum standards of humanity, including those enshrined in common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, must be respected in all situations of armed conflict.

We also stress the obligations to respect and protect the wounded and sick, as well as health-care personnel and facilities, and medical vehicles, and to take all reason.able measures to ensure safe and prompt access for the wounded and sick to health care, in times of armed conflict or other emergencies, in accordance with the applicable legal framework, as recalled by the 31 st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Ensuring improved compliance with international humanitarian law remains a priority for the European Union and its Member States. To this end, at the 31 st International Conference of
the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 2011, we pledged to emphasize our
commitment to promoting dissemination and training in international humanitarian law. In
line with the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law,
the EU Member States also pledged to work towards further participation in the principal
international humanitarian law instruments and to support States in their efforts to adopt
relevant national legisoi1 (promotingged)l 0 11.3 95.26ft Tj 0.005 Tc .53 273.36 Tm Tj -0.0018 T7 27.44 Tm (co

We also welcome the decision by the Conference to invite the ICRC to pursue further research, consultation and discussion in cooperation with States and, if appropriate, other