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## EU-Colombia Human Rights Dialogue

8th session, Brussels, 17 June 2013

### Joint Statement

The 8th session of the Human Rights dialogue mechanism between the EU and Colombia took place in Brussels on 17 June 2013. The meeting was co-chaired by EEAS Managing Director Americas Leffler and Colombian Deputy Foreign Minister Patti Londoño.

The meeting was the first session of the dialogue to take place in Brussels following the adoption of new terms of reference for the dialogue in September 2012. It was held in an open and cordial atmosphere and provided a very useful opportunity to exchange views, as well as best practices on various issues of mutual concern and common interest.

The parties noted that the new and improved human rights dialogue was part and parcel of the new sort of relationship the two sides had built in the past few years: a partnership of equals, based on their common commitments and shared principles of human rights and democracy.

The two sides discussed a number of multilateral issues, including the respective priorities in UN Human Rights fora, such as the Human Rights Council, and the recent Universal Periodic Review. Colombia provided information on its position regarding the reform of the Inter-American system of Human Rights, as well as the extension of the mandate of the Bogotá Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The parties shared their experiences on the fight against impunity, with special emphasis on the rights of victims to truth and justice. They also referred to the EU Colombia cooperation in this area, i.a. for the strengthening of the justice system. Moreover, the prioritisation criteria adopted by the Prosecutor's Office for the investigation of serious human rights violations were presented.

## P R E S S

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The parties exchanged views and best practices on military criminal justice systems, application of human rights and international humanitarian law standards, and relevant trends in Colombia and EU legislation in this area.

Another part of the dialogue was devoted to the challenges faced in the integral protection of vulnerable population segments, such as women, children, migrants, human right defenders, trade unionists and ethnic minorities. The two sides recognised efforts to enhance the welfare of these groups.

Colombia presented the achievements made with the adoption of the National System for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. In this context it provided an update on the progress made in the establishment of the Technical Group on Trade Agreements and Human Rights that will contribute to implementation of Article 1 of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement signed on 26 June 2012.

The parties exchanged views about efficient strategies and best practice for the reduction and eradication of extreme poverty. Colombia presented results from Colombian poverty reduction programmes, whereas the EU outlined European mechanisms for poverty reduction targeted at vulnerable groups, such as children, young people and migrants.

In concluding the meeting, the parties expressed their commitment to continue working together on these subjects and decided that a technical meeting of the human rights dialogue would take place in Bogotá in the near future.

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