



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on
behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the fifteenth
anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the
International Criminal Court**

Today we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which marked a historic commitment to ensuring the prevention and deterrence of atrocities. The ICC is the first permanent international criminal court and the serious crimes within its jurisdiction are of concern to the international community as a whole. Delivering on this promise of justice to victims of these crimes is both a moral imperative and an essential contribution to peace, security and well-being of the world. The European Union and its Member States are strongly committed to preserving the independence of the ICC and to promoting the universality and integrity of the Rome Statute.

At the first Rome Statute Review Conference held in Kampala in 2010, the States Parties to the Rome Statute decided to celebrate 17 July as the Day of International Criminal Justice. While States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute atrocities, the ICC has developed into a key instrument in combatting impunity, preventing future crimes and promoting an international order based on the rule of law. International criminal justice is most successful if the national justice systems of each State function effectively, thereby enabling the ICC to serve its intended role, which is to be a court of last resort, complementing national jurisdictions.

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press>

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The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
