



**COUNCIL OF
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Stavros Lambrinidis appointed first EU Special Representative for Human Rights

On a proposal by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission, the Council today appointed Stavros Lambrinidis as EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights. Mr Lambrinidis will take office on 1 September, with an initial mandate running until 30 June, 2014. His role will be to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of EU human rights policy. He will have a broad, flexible mandate, giving him the ability to adapt to circumstances, and will work closely with the European External Action Service, which will provide him with full support.

EU High Representative Catherine Ashton said: *"I am delighted to appoint Stavros Lambrinidis as the first EU Special Representative for Human Rights. Human rights are one of my top priorities and a silver thread that runs through everything that we do in external relations. This is therefore a key portfolio for the European Union and for me personally. With his talent and huge experience, Mr Lambrinidis will be a tremendous asset to us. I look forward to working with him in putting the protection and promotion of human rights and democracy at the heart of EU external action, and enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of our work in this field."*

Born in Athens, Mr Lambrinidis is an attorney, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece and a former Vice-President of the European Parliament. Between 2004 and 2009 he served as Vice-President of the Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee. Earlier in his career he was Chairman of the Committee for Human Rights in the Bar Association of Washington, D.C..

P R E S S

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Mr Lambrinidis will be the EU's first thematic Special Representative. His appointment follows the adoption on 25 June 2012 of the EU's Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

The Framework sets out principles, objectives and priorities, which are all designed to improve the effectiveness and consistency of EU policy as a whole in the next ten years. They provide an agreed basis for a truly collective effort, involving EU Member States as well as the EU Institutions. The Strategic Framework also includes a commitment to a genuine partnership with civil society.

One of the commitments of the Action Plan is that the EU should give an account of its performance in its annual report on human rights and democracy in the world. This should present an opportunity to all stakeholders in EU policy, including civil society, to assess the impact of EU action and contribute to defining future priorities. The Action Plan covers the period until 31 December 2014.
