



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE  
G E N E V A**

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**4th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**

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**Geneva**

Mr. President,  
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I would like to commend you Mr. President, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your continued efforts regarding the elaboration of all the new mechanisms and procedures of the Human Rights Council.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Louis Arbour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and her Office, for their support and commitments to the entire reform process.

As a candidate country, the Republic of Croatia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Mr. President,

We have established the Human Rights Council as a new and credible UN body for the promotion and the protection of universal human rights in all UN Member states. Its credibility will certainly depend on the quality of mechanism established to execute this mandate.

Today, we welcome the ongoing efforts of 6 facilitators on the different mechanism of the Council and encourage delegations to reach the consensus by June this year.

As a national delegation we would like to pay particular attention to the Universal periodical review (UPR) and the Review of Mandates.

We consider the UPR as one of the most important elements within the Council that must be effective and credible in order to meet the needs of all the people whose rights are violated. With the UPR all Member States should be under review without any distinction in addressing all human rights. We believe that the process should be impartial, objective and inclusive.

We attach particular importance to the system of special procedures. We endorse the transparent process of the nomination of candidates for which a number of criteria such as expertise, experience, independence, impartiality, and equitable geographic representation should be met.

Croatia has issued a standing invitation to all Special Procedure and would like to encourage all other countries to do so with respect to the Council.

Mr. President,

Croatia as a party to all the major human rights treaties supports and actively participates in the elaboration of new standards for the promotion and protection of human rights.

After almost 25 years of active campaigning of the families of the disappeared, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance has finally been adopted as a clear signal that such a practice must come to an end.

Croatia, as a country which experienced war with all its atrocities including enforced disappearances, was among the first countries to sign the Convention in Paris last month. Croatia added its voice to the joint efforts of the international community and the families of the disappeared in order to create this new instrument.

"The right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance" as well as "the right to know" what really happened to the loved ones are the basic principles which deserve our full support.

Croatian Government also welcomes the adoption of the International Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and has decided to sign it at the end of this month. This historical step towards protecting the rights of almost 650 million disabled persons will facilitate their access to every aspect of social life. We would

like to take this opportunity to inform you that the first document in Croatia based on the principles of the Convention – the National Strategy for Equal Possibilities of Disabled Persons 2007/15 - is currently in the process of adoption.

Croatia also supports the elaboration of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that will bridge the protection gap for economic, social and cultural rights.

Mr. President,

I would like to also address some important human rights thematic issues.

Trafficking in human beings is a crucial security and human rights issue and represents a great concern for Croatia as a transit Country. That is why we have developed strong national mechanisms for the suppression of trafficking in human beings.

Croatia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on All Forms of Violence against Women, and its valuable recommendations.

In addition to the new legislation adopted, including the Act on the Protection against Domestic Violence, the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence, and the Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence, Croatia actively participates in the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Domestic Violence against Women. Within the framework of this campaign, Croatia will, in May this year, host a regional seminar on Men's Active Participation in Combating Domestic Violence. Active involvement of men and boys is crucial to bring about changes in attitudes towards violence.

Finally, Mr. President,

I would like to emphasise the responsibility of all the actors of the Council in protecting and promoting human rights as universal rights. It is my hope that we will all achieve our common goal to fulfil the purpose of the Human Rights Council envisaged by the General Assembly.