

*Permanent Mission of Romania  
to the Office of the United Nations  
and the International Organizations in  
Switzerland*



*Mission Permanente de la Roumanie  
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies  
et les Organisations Internationales  
en Suisse*

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**STATEMENT**

**by Mr. Adrian VIERIȚA,  
State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania,  
at  
The Fourth Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
High-level Segment  
- Geneva, 13 March 2007 -**

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Mister President,  
Madam High Commissioner  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honored to address the Human Rights Council almost nine months after its foundation and to commend the performance and guidance of President de Alba in the implementation of the Resolution 60/215 of the General Assembly. Let me, Mr. President, reiterate Romania's support for your efforts to accomplish the institution building process in time.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Yesterday, the distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany delivered a statement on behalf of the European Union and of the candidate countries, in his capacity as President of the European Union. Allow me to highlight several points in my national capacity.

Romania has taken part actively in the negotiations of various aspects of the institution building of the Human Rights Council. I would like to thank the six facilitators of the working groups for their efforts and extensive work carried out so far.

The Secretary General of the United Nations urged us to make the Human Rights Council "a spring-board of action". Indeed, our task is to ensure that the outcome of this institution-building process is a more responsive human rights body. In our view, this means a Council that is instrumental in protecting the rights of those most in need and in further promoting the full range of human rights for all, throughout the world. We should bear in mind, at all times, a simple and undeniable

truth: there are real women, children and men that want to live in dignity and freedom, to enjoy full respect from their fellow human beings and to plan their future in peace and security. It is our responsibility to meet their expectations.

We shall voice our opinions concerning various components of the Council at the appropriate time. Let me focus, here and now, on two of them only:

- The *Universal Periodic Review* is, in our view, a key element in the strengthened UN human rights architecture. It should develop into an effective mechanism that is able of assisting all states in their efforts to implement their human rights obligations and to protect their citizens' rights. As its name suggests, this mechanism should be universal in terms of its inclusion of the whole range of human rights, without exception, as well as in what concerns the criteria of its review, which should be equal to all States subject to the reviewing process.

Drawing on Romania's experience of working with the civil society in advancing the process of democratic transition and protection and promotion of human rights, I would like to underline the merits of *cooperation with all stakeholders in the human rights field*, NGOs and other civil institutions, including human rights defenders and victims' associations.

- We strongly support a consolidated *system of Special Procedures*, including country mandate-holders, as we believe it is one of the most dynamic mechanisms of defending human rights and promoting the respect for human dignity worldwide. Indeed, the most relevant area for the promotion and protection of the human rights is the State's territory; while it is true that there are particular circumstances and specific features that define the national identity, it is also true that there are fundamental values whose implementation is the existential precondition of the human being. In this respect, we call for an improved mechanism of cooperation of States with the Special Procedures, as well as for an efficient *follow up* process to their work.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have carefully examined the report of the distinguished UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. We thank and congratulate her and her staff for the consistent and creative efforts dedicated to turning the Office into a more effective element of the UN human rights machinery. We welcome the opportunity of an interactive dialogue on the report. At this moment, I take the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the Romanian Government to the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner and to its endeavors aimed at reforming and

improving the professionalism and efficiency of its activity. We also advocate the need for a closer and more active relationship between the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner in terms that should add value to the substantive work of the former, while preserving the full autonomy of the latter.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Reality reminds us that the institution-building process does not occur – verily, it must not occur – in a vacuum. The substantive issues that are relevant to the human rights do not fade away, nor do they find solutions by themselves while we are negotiating the architecture of the Council. The inventory of the human rights problems is, unfortunately, long and if I am going to focus on some of them only, it does not mean that others are of lesser importance.

I would like to refer to the question of death penalty. As a State who eliminated the death penalty from its legal system and as a Member State of the EU – for which the abolition of the capital punishment is a core principle of its Common Foreign and Security Policy - Romania firmly believes that the *right to life* is a quintessential right of the human being, as it rests at the very center of the debate on universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. We join the efforts of other States to promote the question of the abolition of death penalty, either through its elimination from the legal systems or by the establishment of moratoria on executions. We call the Human Rights Council to place this topic high on its program of work.

Violence against women and children is another issue of deep concern for us. We believe that an important task of this Council is to look into the relevant international, regional and national mechanisms in order to ensure a more efficient response to this phenomenon towards its eradication. In this regard, we encourage the Human Rights Council to insert the women's and children's right to dignity and physical and psychological integrity on its agenda.

Likewise, in dealing with cases of serious and gross violations of human rights we have the responsibility of acting effectively – and the more so when the consensus of all the members of the Council proves its readiness to fully assume its role, as in the case of the High-Level Mission that was *"to assess the human rights situation in Darfur and the needs of the Sudan in this regard"*. By acting on the recommendations of the Mission's report we shall also prove that we are able to provide that "spring-board of action" the Secretary General referred to yesterday.