

**Statement by Riia Salsa, Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the UN in Geneva at the first formal session on Human rights of all migrants, social inclusion, cohesion, and all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, and intolerance for the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Geneva 8-9 May 2017)**

**Panel 3: Confronting all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance against migrants**

Thank you, Mr. Moderator and all panelists.

Estonia welcomes that the first session is devoted to the protection of human rights of all migrants and appreciates the focus of this morning's session on combatting all forms of discrimination.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and would like to add the following.

It is the duty of States to fulfil their commitments under international law and human rights treaties in order to protect human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status or distinction of any kind, including based on race, sex, skin colour, religion, language and sexual orientation. While looking at the reports on discrimination, including on the grounds of race, it is clear that there is much room for improvement in the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including with reference to migrants. The Convention sets a strong framework for preventing and combating racial discrimination what to integrate into national laws.

In Estonia, we have a solid legislative framework in place to combat discrimination and to protect victims. The constitution sets out a general prohibition of discrimination and the Equal Treatment Act that entered into force in 2009 forbids discrimination including on the grounds of race and origin. Moreover, the mandate of Gender Equality Commissioner was broadened to encompass also all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race. Thus, any person who suspects that they have been discriminated against – due to their sex, nationality (ethnic origin), race or skin colour, religion or other views, age, disability or sexual orientation – can consult the Equality Commissioner and get assistance in compiling a submission or a claim to a court. Moreover, in the case of suspected discrimination, the Commissioner may initiate an investigation that results in a legal assessment.

I would underline the importance of complementarity and coherence of different policies, instruments and tools in order to make a difference and to achieve tangible results. The discrimination combating measures have to be complemented with the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, fundamental freedoms and with raising the public awareness.

Finally, Estonia is committed to ensuring that the protection of human rights of all migrants, without discrimination on any grounds, is mainstreamed throughout the Global Compact.

Thank you!