

Brussels, 14 SEP. 2018
A(2018)3473602-3908544

To all MEP signatories of the Joint call for the establishment of a European Special Representative for International Humanitarian Law and International Justice

Dear colleagues,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated on 29 June 2018 calling for the urgent establishment of a European Union Special Representative for International Humanitarian Law and International Justice.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and international justice are key elements in the EU's engagement in the field of human rights, and an important objective of the EU Action Plan on human rights and democracy.

As you know, since July 2012 we have a Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, whose mandate already encompasses IHL. The EUSR for Human Rights promotes full adherence to international humanitarian law, international accountability, and the need for engagement with the international Criminal Court (ICC).

Recent examples where these issues were specifically addressed include the African Union-EU human rights dialogue in November 2017, his high level engagement in the Philippines in November 2017, and the EU-South Africa human rights dialogue in early 2018. He also prominently addressed IHL during his high level visit to Myanmar in line with the Council Conclusions agreed by Member States on 26 February 2018.

Moreover, in countries where IHL or international criminal justice is an issue, several high level actors are engaged, on closely related matters (this can be for example, the EU Head of Delegation, the EUSR for the specific region and the EUSR for Human Rights).

At a time when humanitarian values are under threat, we are aware of the need to strengthen EU action in this field. A first step to this end has already been taken with the publication in 2018 of the first report on the implementation of the 2009 European Union Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with International Humanitarian Law.

Furthermore, we are considering strengthening the mandate of the EUSR for Human Rights in order to enhance his role in the field of IHL. The suggestions contained in your letter will also inform our ongoing reflection on how to step up, under the authority of the EUSR for Human Rights, our efforts in the most consistent and efficient manner.

Finally, let me reassure you that IHL and international criminal justice will remain key elements of EU's engagement in the field of human rights.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini