

Statement by

**the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**46th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief**

Geneva, 2 March 2021

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement and would like to make additional remarks in its national capacity.

We commend the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief for his report.

Slovenia is and remains strongly committed to the protection and promotion of freedom of religion or belief, which is a universal, fundamental right of every individual regardless of the type of the religion. Where this freedom is endangered and persecuted, a part of society inevitably suffers due to its weaker resilience. We also believe that the education of children in the field of human rights is an efficient way to promote tolerance within groups of different religion or belief.

The problem of religious intolerance goes beyond the notion of religion or belief. It often dangerously enters the political sphere, where religion is taken a hostage in the course of fighting some other unresolved conflict, which derives from intolerance as well as ignorance.

We are deeply concerned with widespread misuse of religion as a pretext to pursue various political goals. We call upon countries to condemn this practice and to foster mutual understanding and dialogue instead.

Thank you.