



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

48th session

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

27 September 2021

EU statement

The EU thanks Mr. Calí Tzay for his report.

We are concerned that COVID-19 recovery efforts in many countries fail to reach indigenous peoples and even negatively affect them. For many, security of land tenure is more of a concern than the virus itself, in the face of rising illegal deforestation, incursions, land grabbing and violence.

As pointed out by the High Commissioner, the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss directly impacts many human rights. Environmental and indigenous human rights defenders are threatened, criminalized, harassed and killed, often with complete impunity.

At the greatest risk of abuse and violence are indigenous peoples – whose rights, as set out in UNDRIP and international human rights law, traditional knowledge and practices are critical to global efforts to address environmental degradation and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must end marginalization of indigenous peoples and ensure respect for their rights, as set out in UNDRIP and international human rights law, and their full participation in the planning and application of recovery efforts. The examples in the report of indigenous peoples taking action to cope with COVID19 are encouraging. We should move faster to better enable indigenous peoples to increase their autonomy, including by enhancing their participation in the UN on issues affecting them, including in the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Special Rapporteur, how can this Council strengthen its role in protecting and empowering indigenous peoples as rights-holders?

Thank you.