



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

FSC-PC.DEL/7/08
28 February 2008

ENGLISH only

Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

31st Joint Permanent Council/FSC Meeting 27 February 2008

EU statement in response to the address by the Prime Minister of Ireland, H.E. Bertie Ahern

The European Union warmly welcomes the visit of Prime Minister Ahern to this Joint Meeting of the Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation. We thank him for his thoughtful and reflective speech. An address by a Head of Government is an important occasion and we have taken careful note of the points made.

Mr. Prime Minister,

You have rightly reminded us of the proud history of the OSCE and its predecessor the CSCE. The EU shares your view that current differences and difficulties should neither be allowed to obscure that history nor to blind us to the potential of this organisation for the future.

We are all conscious that the progress in conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in Northern Ireland might offer some valuable lessons and principles for conflict resolution in other participating states. We are grateful for the information on developments, provided jointly on a timely basis to the Permanent Council by the Irish and UK Delegations. The establishment of a Conflict Resolution Unit by the Irish Government is a significant step and we hope that cooperation with OSCE, and particularly the Conflict Prevention Centre, will be close and fruitful.

With regard to Kosovo, we refer to the Conclusions on Kosovo of the General Affairs and External Relations Council, held last February 18th. We reiterate our strong belief that the OSCE should continue to play an important role in supporting a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo with full respect for the rule of law, the protection of minorities and of Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage, as well as the highest level of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU continues to believe that the OSCE should maintain its current presence, which is in the interest of all people of Kosovo, and the Serb community in particular.

We welcome the emphasis which you place on the work of OSCE in the Human Dimension. Our concept of security is a very broad one and the promotion of democracy and the defence of human rights are at the centre of that concept. The

eu2008.si



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

value of ODIHR's work in the field of elections can not be overstated. The EU fully endorses the election observation methodology developed and successfully used by ODIHR over many years. We remain ready to engage constructively in dialogue about the full range of election-related commitments including possible areas in which they can be expanded.

Mr. Prime Minister,

You have accurately identified the cooperative basis on which discussions and negotiations within the organisation must continue. It goes without saying that commitments entered into on this basis should be implemented in full. We welcome the fact that OSCE Institutions are active throughout the OSCE area to provide assistance to those working to meet their commitments. We urge all participating States to continue to cooperate with the Institutions and to remain open to the advice and assistance available.

Mr. Prime Minister,

I cannot end my reply without referring to the valuable role which your own country, Ireland, plays in the OSCE. We greatly welcome the Irish contribution to the Secretariat, Institutions and Field Presences of the Organisation as well as the generous extra-budgetary support which you provide to the Institutions.

Thank you.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

eu2008.si