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**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

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Remarks by Herman VAN ROMPUY, at the OSCE Summit

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, let me first of all thank President Nazarbaev for his leadership in engaging the Heads of State and Government of the 56 participant States of OSCE and of its 12 Partners for Cooperation. It is special to have a first Summit in Central Asia. I should thank him also for his warm and generous hospitality.

The OSCE is a symbol of both continuity and change. In 1975 it was born at the height of the Cold War. Then, during the 90s it played a critical role in overcoming the very legacy of the Cold War and the conflicts of its aftermath.

Our last Summit took place in Istanbul in 1999. Since then, the strategic landscape has changed yet again. Just think of economic and political globalisation, and new threats like terrorism. Still, the OSCE remains one of the pillars of our security - with its comprehensive "3 dimensions" approach to security, as well as its unique geographical extension. We keep referring to Europe, but in reality the OSCE's reach covers three continents!

The European Union has changed too. The number of our Member States has doubled, comprising now half of the OSCE membership. Our integration has deepened, and more than ever before we deliver a single message.

Our commitment to the founding values and principles of this Organization has not changed - it remains as solid as ever. The EU contributes more than two-thirds of the budget. Today I feel the privilege and responsibility of speaking on behalf of the Union's 27 Member States. Particularly so, as we celebrate the first anniversary of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on this very day.

At this Summit, we have an opportunity. An opportunity to go beyond simply underlining the successes of the past, and reconfirming our commitments and values. We have a chance to set the vision for the OSCE's future. The Corfu process - launched following President Medvedev's proposals on European Security in 2008 - played a key role in this. Today should be a point of departure. We will be judged by how we deal with the many challenges ahead of us.

P R E S S

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Our Summit should set out an ambitious Action Plan – with the emphasis on Action! - in guiding the OSCE's future.

For the European Union, the first priority of the OSCE is dealing with regional conflicts, both emerging and old.

The OSCE's capabilities in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, need to be strengthened. Recent experiences in some Central Asian countries, like Kyrgyzstan, have shown the need for the OSCE to adapt further. It should move from early warning to early action, with improved decision making.

We still face unresolved, protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. These conflicts remain a threat to our stability and security. In fact, by the very use of words like "unresolved" or "protracted", we risk putting these conflicts into a special "category", beyond hope as it were. We cannot allow that!

The EU is actively engaged in efforts to ensure long-lasting and peaceful solutions to these conflicts. Three examples stand out.

(1) The EU has made specific proposals for an early resumption of the formal negotiations on the Transnistrian settlement process.

(2) We have re-emphasised the principles of peaceful settlement proposed by the Minsk Group as the best option to reach an agreement on Nagorny–Karabakh.

(3) We have called for restoring a meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia. Renewed efforts are required to deal with both the security situation and humanitarian and human rights issues, consistent with the 2008 cease–fire agreement, and with full respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia. I would also like to use this opportunity to welcome Georgia's commitment to the non-use of force.

Let me briefly address three other topics of particular importance for us:

First, the conventional arms control regime in Europe should be strengthened and modernised. It is one of the pillars of our joint security. We need more transparency and predictability.

Second, we are concerned by the serious and widespread problems of non-compliance with the norms in the so-called 'human dimension'. We have all committed to respect them. The protection of human rights needs to be strengthened, including through a more effective and systematic peer review. We need quicker and more effective adaptation to the rapid changes of our days, particularly in the media field. There is no security without freedom.

Third, we must strengthen our co-operation in the face of the trans-national threats. Terrorism, organized crime and cyber threats; trafficking in narcotics and human beings; illegal migration and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: these are the challenges. The EU has made specific proposals to give the OSCE a stronger role in these fields.

The EU has worked hard to ensure the success of this Summit and we are glad others have engaged as well. For the EU our joint long-term vision is clear: a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community where the use of force has become unthinkable and where common interests prevail. This is an ambitious goal, but the EU itself is a living proof of this possibility. The European Union's 27 member states and institutions stand ready to do their part.

I should like to thank once again the Kazakh Chairmanship-in-Office and President Nazerbajev personally for organising this Summit, and for its efforts throughout 2010. I am confident that the incoming Lithuanian Chairmanship can build on this foundation.

Video coverage of the trips and meetings will be available for download in broadcast quality from the Council TV newsroom <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

Photos covering the event will be available for download in high resolution from the Council Photo Library <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/photo>