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EU statement in response to the address by the Minister of the Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic, H.E. Moldomusa Kongantiev

The European Union warmly welcomes H.E. Mr. Moldomusa Kongantiev. We wish to express our appreciation of his address to today's Permanent Council of the OSCE. We would like to thank you, Mr. Minister, for the comprehensive overview and pertinent remarks concerning the activities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic.

After ten years of police-related activities in the OSCE, the EU is generally interested in stocktaking and a dialogue on how to move forward. In this context, your input and analysis from a host county's perspective is particularly valuable.

The EU strongly supports the co-operation of the OSCE with the Ministry of the Interior and we applaud the fruitful and constructive relationship that has been established. We follow with particularly great interest the police reform programme with its aim to improve the professionalism and operational capacity of the Kyrgyz police.

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We are aware of the remaining challenges related to law enforcement issues, in particular the need to further engage in a constructive dialogue with civil society and thereby contribute to an increasingly trustful atmosphere. Recent activities in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, such as the seminar on police-community co-operation to enhance public safety and the newly introduced Professional Ethics Code of the Kyrgyz Police seem to be useful measures with the potential to build trust between the people and the police. The Public Forum you mentioned is an interesting initiative in this regard.

The EU would like to encourage the Ministry of the Interior to increase the number of joint initiatives with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and civil society in combating trafficking in human beings.

We have also taken note of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of the Interior with OSCE support, including by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, in order to provide diversity training to the police to enhance its communication with ethnic minorities and to recruit more police officers of minority background. They are of particular importance owing to the multi-ethnic character of your country and we encourage you, Mr. Minister, to continue to support them.

The EU remains concerned about various instances where the implementation of the trainings and frameworks of action mentioned earlier were not embraced and police forces reportedly abused power or engaged in violence that appeared disproportionately harsh, without previous efforts to seek solutions with non-violent

means. We look forward to a constructive dialogue on how such cases can be avoided. Furthermore, the fight against corruption among the police remains a challenge of utmost importance.

The EU also notes with concern that MP Kubanychbek Kadyrov is being prosecuted for allegedly destabilising the socio-political situation in the country and organising public disorder in protesting the outcome of the recent presidential elections and that his immunity from prosecution had been lifted as a consequence, as reported by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek in its Spot Report No 36/09. We encourage the Kyrgyz authorities to ensure that freedom of expression and assembly is guaranteed to all Kyrgyz citizens, including the opposition. The EU would also like to take this opportunity to recall its statements to the Permanent Council of 19 March and 23 July on the worrying number of attacks this year on journalists in Kyrgyzstan and would invite you, Mr Minister, to look into these issues urgently.

We would like to express our support to the Kyrgyz authorities in the implementation, in cooperation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, of the National Programme on Penitentiary System Reform, which should lead to the improvement of the detention conditions and prevention of torture and ill treatment in the detention centres.

With regard to fighting the threat of radicalisation we believe that tackling the root causes is most important. Combating the radicalisation that leads to terrorism as well as organised crime, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings requires cross-border co-operation and co-ordination. We therefore welcome and support the efforts by the SPMU in the OSCE Secretariat to foster

regional co-operation by initiatives like the High Level Regional Meeting on Law Enforcement Co-operation in Central Asia last July.

The EU also welcomes the increased co-operation between your Ministry and the OSCE on border-related issues, which constitute a crucial area in the fight against new threats.

In this context, the EU recalls that a key element of the EU Strategy for Central Asia adopted in 2007 is also the European Rule of Law Initiative. Two regional thematic conferences will take place later this year on legal practice training for judiciary staff and lawyers as well as on rights of the defence in criminal proceedings.

In light of the information set out in Spot Report No 37/09, SEC.FR/694/09, issued today, on discussions regarding the reinstatement of the death penalty in Kyrgyzstan, let me reiterate the EU's longstanding position on the use of the death penalty. We oppose the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances and have consistently called for its universal abolition. We recall in this regard the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution on the moratorium on the death penalty.

In conclusion, Mr. Minister, we wish you well for your future endeavours to further enhance your country's full compliance with OSCE norms and standards and stand ready to closely co-operate to this end.

The candidate countries CROATIA* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, 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 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.