



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council 886
Vienna, 03 November 2011**

EU statement in response to address by H.E. Mr Petros Efthymiou, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, H.E. Petros Efthymiou, to the Permanent Council and thank him for his presentation on the Parliamentary Assembly's (PA) main activities.

We fully acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the parliamentarians from all 56 OSCE participating States to our Organisation. We strongly support the OSCE PA's longstanding commitment to a strong engagement of civil society in all fields of OSCE activities. We appreciate the OSCE PA's engagement in promoting our common OSCE commitments, notably in the area of democratic elections, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of Human Rights Defenders and the rule of law.

We would like to highlight the quality of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's intensive and constructive discussions, in particular those at its 20th Annual Session in Belgrade, where we have seen the adoption of resolutions as well as of the Belgrade Declaration touching upon a number of topics concerning all three dimensions and which we consider highly relevant. These include, in particular, the strengthening of the OSCE's capacity and effectiveness regarding the conflict cycle, also in view to promoting peaceful resolution of protracted

conflicts; the enhanced focus on issues of energy and environmental security; the call for restoration of OSCE presence in Georgia and Belarus; as well as the follow-up on the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension field.

Mr Chairperson,

One of the most visible contributions of the OSCE PA to the overall work of the OSCE relates to election observation. We have on several occasions reiterated our position on the complementary roles of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR in this common endeavour. We continue to believe strongly that the OSCE's elections observation is never as strong as when both institutions co-operate with each other as genuine partners, bringing their respective strengths to the table and speaking with one single voice. We would like to encourage the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR to continue co-operating in the spirit of partnership and on the basis of the 1997 Co-operation Agreement as well as MC Decision 19/06. In this regard, we would like to commend the OSCE PA and the ODIHR for their excellent co-operation in a series of crucial election observation missions throughout this year, including the recent presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan. We are looking forward to a similarly successful co-operation in forthcoming elections, such as the Duma elections in the Russian Federation.

In this context, we would also like to highlight the importance of recent election observation missions in Tunisia, conducted by the EU and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We support the political and practical assistance extended by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to the OSCE Partners for Co-operation on this and other occasions.

Mr Chairperson,

In concluding, we would like to wish H.E. President Efthymiou, his colleagues in the Bureau of the OSCE PA, as well as his staff every success for their future work. We are looking forward to continuing our close co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The forthcoming OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Vilnius will provide us with another excellent opportunity for a fruitful interaction.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.