

**STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE
741st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 November 2008

**In response to the statements by the three Personal Representatives of the
OSCE Chairman-in-Office for tolerance and non-discrimination**

The European Union would like to welcome Ms. Anastasia Crickley, Ambassador Ömür Orhun and Professor Gert Weisskirchen, the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office on tolerance and non-discrimination, and to thank them for their annual report.

The European Union commends the Personal Representatives for their devotion and their efforts to raise the profile of the OSCE in its work to combat all forms of intolerance. Their participation in promoting OSCE commitments and monitoring their implementation by participating States serves as a useful complement to the central role of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The European Union reiterates its expectation that the three Personal Representatives will carry out their mission, in accordance with their mandate, wherever there is evidence of manifestations of hatred, intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE area.

Close co-ordination among the three Personal Representatives and ongoing co-operation with the ODIHR, under the aegis of the Chairman-in-Office, are essential for the effectiveness of this mechanism and the overall coherence of the OSCE's action.

Mr. Chairman,

The combating of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination is a top priority for the European Union within the OSCE. In this connection, let me take this opportunity to recall our desire that greater consideration should be given by the Organization to manifestations of hatred and intolerance based on sexual orientation.

To conclude, the European Union reiterates the assurance of its full support for the efforts of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office and wishes them every success in the continuation of their mission.

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

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