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**Permanent Mission of Ireland
to the OSCE**

Rotenturmstrasse 16-18,

A-1010 Vienna

Tel: +43 1 71576 9826

Fax: +43 1 715 5755

ireland-osce@chello.at

Irish Presidency of the European Union

EU Statement - ASRC 2004 Session 3

Comprehensive Security: A Strategic Approach

We live in a time of unprecedented global interdependence. Our collective security, prosperity and well-being are dependent on a vast array of factors which link the world community as never before. This brings great opportunities for economic growth and prosperity. However, it also means our democracies and our way of life are vulnerable to a range of new threats to which our foreign and security policy has to provide answers.

Today the OSCE is the largest regional security organisation in the world basing its activities mainly on its comprehensive and co-operative approach to security. As Minister Shamshur expressed in his keynote speech, the international Community is confronted today with increasingly complex and interdependent military security problems. These problems are themselves intertwined with other non-military security related issues. The European Union believes that such complex politico-military challenges require a holistic and co-ordinated response anchored in democratic standards and respect for human rights.

Take one example of a complex security challenge: The flow of illicit drugs poses an increasing danger to young people in all our communities in Europe and Central Asia. 90 per cent of heroin on European streets is from Afghanistan. Drugs cartels operate on an international scale, their tentacles reaching into our communities with devastating effect. Organised crime feeds off the illegal drugs trade, while it traffics people and exploits migration flows.

Drugs, crime and trafficking in persons will never be overcome by nations acting alone. They require strong comprehensive international co-operation politically, legally, economically as well as suitable security and defence capabilities.

Part of the OSCE's success is that it developed and implemented a comprehensive set of instruments to deal with a wide range of security related issues. In the area of arms control, we have the Vienna Document 1999 which has become the cornerstone for confidence and security building measures. We also have the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons to fight the illicit spread of such weapons. We also have the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Alongside these vital instruments stands the CFE Treaty which of course remains a cornerstone of European security.

The EU believes that the implementation of these measures and standards has helped create an atmosphere of openness and mutual trust in the OSCE area during the last decade. We also believe that their ongoing implementation remains indispensable in order to build inter-state trust, confidence and regional stability. We also believe that OSCE field activities remain equally important to prevent or settle conflicts and crisis situations such as the Balkans. At the same time the EU believes that new threats to security require co-ordinated, comprehensive and more effective international action including closer co-operation between EU and OSCE.

The recently adopted Security Strategy of the EU commits the Union to a comprehensive approach to security, going beyond purely military aspects.

This is how it should be - security is everybody's business. We have to be tough on insecurity itself and on the causes of insecurity, if we are to sustain peace, development and our way of life.

The Union's Security Strategy sets the context for a more pro-active EU approach to security threats and for the EU to play a greater role in tackling them.

Over the last six months, good progress has been made in turning this blueprint for a more positive EU role into practical policy realities

We have concentrated for example on four key implementation issues namely:

- effective multilateralism
- the fight against terrorism,
- strengthening relations with the Middle East region and the Arab world,
- and developing a comprehensive strategy for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We have adopted a decisive new report on Conflict prevention only last month.

In Sudan and the DRC we are seeing how our new policies are helping us to frame a new level of engagement to very complex political crises.

In the short time available, I would like to say a few words about our approach to effective multilateralism and to give an update on some key developments in the ESDP area in the last six months.

Effective multilateralism

The EU believes that unilateralism is not the right answer to multifaceted threats to insecurity we face. Rather, we believe that sustainable security requires all the various international organisations to work more effectively together in an international system governed by the international law and human rights standards.

In the Security Strategy, the EU makes it clear that the United Nations is the crucial organisation in this regard.

That is why we envisage key partnerships with the UN.

It is also why we will be working for closer co-operation with other key regional bodies to pursue common security goals. Here in this region we believe that OSCE has a special part to play and we support that role fully.

In November 2003, the EU adopted important conclusions on co-operation with the OSCE. We are committed to enhancing the effectiveness of this co-operation as part of our comprehensive approach to security and the implementation of our European Security and Defence policy (ESDP).

We believe that more effective contacts and co-ordination between our two organisations can be developed so that the commitments we have all made to human rights, peace and democracy in the OSCE region will be honoured more fully.

EU Foreign Ministers have asked the Presidency to prepare a report on the EU's role within the OSCE at their June meeting and that report will be very important in showing how our collective approaches to security can most effectively complement and reinforce one another.

ESDP

In the last six months, progress has been made across a broad range of ESDP issues. This progress was registered at the European Council last week both in the Presidency report on ESDP and important European Council Conclusions. The increasing operational focus of ESDP is particularly noteworthy and welcome.

For example, a number of key steps have been taken over the past six months towards the transition to an EU-led military operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the first EU 'Rule of Law' assistance Mission is due to commence shortly in Georgia. Progress has also been achieved in defining parameters for the future development of EU crisis management capabilities, both military and civilian. As Presidency, we are particularly pleased at the further consolidation of the EU-UN relationship in the area of peace-keeping and crisis management. The European Council's endorsement last week of detailed arrangements for the improvement of the EU's planning capacity is another welcome step. EU Heads of State and Government have last week endorsed a 'Headline Goal 2010' paper, which sets out parameters for the development of EU military crisis management capabilities with a 2010 horizon. They also endorsed an 'Action Plan for the Civilian Aspects of ESDP', which defines measures to develop and operationalise civilian crisis management capabilities over the period ahead.

We believe these steps will provide a sound basis for further progress under the incoming Dutch Presidency and open the door to real improvements in the way we function to advance EU interests and security and prosperity for our peoples.

The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey align themselves with this statement.