



## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 916  
Vienna, 14 June 2012**

### **EU statement in response to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania H.E. Edmond Haxhinasto**

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The EU warmly welcomes H.E. Mr Edmond Haxhinasto, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, back in the Permanent Council and congratulates him and his country for the assumption of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and thanks him for his statement in this capacity.

We take this opportunity to express our congratulations on the election, on 11 June, of the new President of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Mr Bujar Nishani.

We look forward to a constructive role of the new President in helping the country unite its efforts, develop a more constructive political climate and to successfully address the challenges it faces on its path towards the European Union.

The EU encourages further progress of the country, as member of the Stabilization and Association Process, in implementing the key priorities identified in the 2010 Opinion. Agreeing between the government and the opposition, in collaboration with civil society, on a comprehensive electoral

reform, addressing all recommendations by the OSCE/ODIHR, remains crucial.

We note the role played by Albania in promoting regional stability and enhancing regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans. The EU re-confirms its strong commitment to the stability, security and the European perspective of the region.

Mr Chairperson,

The presence today of the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers marks the third appearance by a high level representative from the Council of Europe addressing the Permanent Council this year. This signifies the importance of the cooperation between the two organizations, and we welcome the continuous dialogue between them. Both the OSCE and the Council of Europe share, along with the EU, the same values and commitment to Democracy, Human Rights, Fundamental Freedoms and the Rule of Law.

The EU will continue to intensify the political dialogue and cooperation with the Council of Europe. We take note of the priorities of Albania for its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. Albania's top priority of promoting tolerance and non-discrimination is at the same time part of the key focal cooperation areas between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, together with the fight against terrorism, combating trafficking in human beings and the protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The EU continues to support further coordination and joint work between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, both in the field, between different organizational structures and by regular contacts at the political level, including through intensified 2+2 dialogue. The establishment of the Council of Europe Office in Vienna provides a good basis for strengthened cooperation

between the two organizations, including through Council of Europe representative attending OSCE meetings.

Besides the four mentioned focal areas, cooperation should be further pursued also in other areas where joint work has already proven productive, such as Freedom of the Media and improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. Cooperation could also focus on combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, where the Council of Europe continues to be an international standards setter.

Election observation is another area of highest importance for both organizations, and we encourage the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to continue their valuable cooperation in this field.

We look forward to a continuation of the discussion regarding future cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and note in this connection the study by Professor Geir Ulfstein of the University of Oslo.

Mr Chairperson,

In conclusion, we would like to once again thank H.E. Haxhinasto, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, for his address and wish him all the best in his efforts.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Iceland+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, 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 of the European Economic Area.