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**STATEMENT BY THE  
PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AT THE 687th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 November 2007

**In response to the report by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group and the  
Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the  
conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh**

The European Union welcomes the Russian and French Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, Mr. Carpenter and Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, and thanks them for their reports.

The European Union pays particular tribute to the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group to reach a negotiated solution to the conflict. The European Union takes this opportunity to reiterate its support for the Minsk Group and restates its full confidence in the ability of the Co-Chairmen to advance the search for a political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which it regards as vital to the future of the region. We call on the parties to focus their attention on seeking constructive dialogue and encourage them to make greater use of the efforts undertaken by the Co-Chairmen.

We also wish to express our appreciation for the work of Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The European Union ascribes great importance to the continuation of his activities in monitoring the ceasefire along the line of contact, which are helping to reduce tension in the conflict zone and to prevent any worsening of the situation. In that context, the European Union calls for the resumption without delay of these monitoring missions, which have been interrupted since 10 July, and urges the parties to guarantee the conditions of security necessary for the successful implementation of the mandate entrusted to the Personal Representative. The European Union also expresses its appreciation for the logistic support provided by Ambassador Kasprzyk's office for the purpose of facilitating the mission of the Co-Chairmen on the ground. Lastly, we keenly regret that the recommendations made at the end of the mission carried out in October 2006 by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities with the support of the office of the Personal Representative regarding the fires within the region have not yet been implemented. We believe that these measures might well contribute to strengthening trust between the parties.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union wishes to again express its profound disappointment at the absence of progress during the St. Petersburg meeting between the parties, seeing in this an opportunity lost, and keenly regrets that the parties failed to approve the basic principles proposed by the Co-Chairmen for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The European Union notes that the Co-Chairmen have since then, despite this setback, stepped up their meetings with each of the Ministers and their shuttling within the region for the purpose of maintaining dialogue between the two Presidents. In the light of the presidential elections that will be held in 2008, first in Armenia and then in Azerbaijan, the European Union urges the parties to overcome their latest differences and to secure the progress achieved in the negotiations over the course of the last three years.

Looking ahead to these elections, we call on each of the parties to implement the recommendations put forward by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) at the time of the previous elections and to invite the Office, within a reasonable period of time, to observe these elections. The European Union encourages each of the parties to intensify its co-operation with the ODIHR ahead of these elections and expresses the hope that the elections themselves will take place in each country in a free and democratic manner, in accordance with the international commitments undertaken by each of the parties.

As it has already pointed out on a number of occasions, the European Union recalls that the efforts of the Co-Chairmen can succeed only if the parties assume their responsibilities and agree to the necessary compromises. It urges the parties at this time to demonstrate the vision and courage indispensable to the conclusion of a balanced agreement based on the fundamental principles for the settlement of the conflict and to avoid any action or statement that might prejudice the negotiation efforts currently under way.

The European Union reiterates its determination to work closely with the parties to promote stability and prosperity and to consolidate democracy and the rule of law in the region and to strengthen its co-operative relationship with them within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The candidate countries, Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>\*</sup>; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Iceland and Norway, countries of the European Free Trade Association and members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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