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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 832nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

28 October 2010

In response to the statement by His Excellency Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States

The European Union welcomes His Excellency Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and thanks him for his presentation.

We consider, indeed, that it is very useful to learn more about the experience and good practices of other regional organizations around the world which have the task of pursuing the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations under Chapter VIII. The European Union follows the activities of the Organization of American States with attention, since a number of its member States have the status of permanent observers with that organization.

The European Union wishes to emphasize the wealth of experience of the Organization of American States in the areas of conflict prevention, transnational threats and democratization and human rights. These subjects represent three of the four priority topics that the European Union would like to see taken up by the OSCE Summit in Astana on 1 and 2 December 2010.

On 10 February 2010, in the context of the Corfu Process and the OSCE dialogue regarding the future of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, we already benefited from the views of a member of Mr. Insulza's team, Mr. Miguel Angel Trinidad, concerning the settlement of the border dispute between Belize and Guatemala. The European Union greatly appreciated this contribution, and Mr. Insulza's statement today has further enriched our exchange by giving other examples of the prevention and settlement of conflicts through the Organization of American States.

We have also listened with attention to the references to inter-American experience in the co-ordination of activities to counter transnational threats. Here there are ideas to be taken up, because the European Union wishes to see the OSCE develop a more integrated approach to countering the various transnational threats: police activities against organized crime, border management and security, counter-terrorism, cyber security and the combating of drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings. In this connection, we naturally encourage the continuation of the fruitful exchanges that have been taking place since the year 2006

between the Action against Terrorism Unit of the OSCE and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States.

Mr. Chairperson,

A third priority of the European Union for the Astana Summit consists in working together to improve the implementation of our commitments, particularly in the human dimension, with an emphasis on crucial questions for the health of democracies such as, firstly, the proper conduct of elections and, secondly, freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Here too, the Organization of American States and the OSCE possess valuable expertise, and the European Union fully supports co-operation in this field. On the question of election observation, the comparison and mutual enrichment of methodologies is a good form of co-operation, which we encourage in the spirit of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation signed by the OSCE and the Organization of American States in 2005. Regarding freedom of expression and freedom of the media, the European Union takes a favourable view of the annual joint declarations which have been issued by the OSCE and the Organization of American States over a period of ten years, and which have aroused considerable interest at the international level.

In the area of conventional arms control, a fourth priority of the European Union for the Astana Summit, we note with satisfaction that the Organization of American States takes as its reference the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Lastly, the combating of trafficking in human beings – a problem that we shall also be discussing today in our review of current issues – represents another field of action which the OSCE and the Organization of American States have in common and in which they can assist each other. In this area, the European Union attaches great value to the OSCE approach, treating this transnational scourge in a cross-dimensional manner.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, we thank Mr. Insulza very warmly for his statement today, which represents an excellent contribution to international efforts to counter transnational threats and promote conflict prevention and resolution, democracy and human rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ and Iceland², the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

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

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.