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**STATEMENT BY THE
PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE
689th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 November 2007

**In response to the annual report by the OSCE Special Representative and
Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

The European Union welcomes the Special Representative to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We should like to thank Ms. Biaudet for the careful way in which she informs the delegations of the work of her office and we would encourage her to continue along that path.

The European Union shares the concerns of the Special Representative regarding all forms of trafficking, especially when it involves children. Trafficking not only denies human beings their most basic rights but also represents an attack on democratic principles. Driven by specific interests sometimes linked to organized crime, trafficking also has adverse effects on the economy.

This alarming realization strengthens us in our determination to combat this scourge. In this connection, we reiterate that the European Union is totally committed and that, in accordance with the provisions of its action plan, its member States are enacting legal measures and putting into place appropriate structures.

The European Union endorses the Special Representative's approach calling for the fight against trafficking to be waged on three fronts: prevention, protection for the victims and prosecution of the offenders. We recommend that these three pillars be put into place simultaneously and in a balanced manner throughout the OSCE area.

In this context, we call particular attention to the usefulness of regional seminars like the one held in Vilnius on 25 and 26 October of this year.

We support Ms. Biaudet's intention to continue these efforts in 2008. We particularly commend her selection of a pragmatic and forward-looking approach as a follow-up to events held in 2007. We recognize that there needs to be a greater awareness of the economic and social causes of trafficking if we are to be able to implement appropriate and effective strategies to prevent and combat this phenomenon.

The European Union intends to continue to co-operate in full measure with the Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. It reiterates its support and wishes her every success in carrying out her various projects.

The candidate countries, Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*; 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; along with Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan, align themselves with this statement.

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