

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 611
25 May 2006**

EU Statement on the Referendum in Montenegro

1. The EU would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to a statement made on 23 May by the Austrian Presidency on behalf of the European Union regarding the referendum in Montenegro.

"The European Union welcomes the successful organisation of the referendum on the independence of Montenegro. The EU notes the ODIHR assessment that the referendum was conducted overall in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and other international standards for democratic electoral processes. The conduct of the referendum was a sign of maturity of the political forces and people of Montenegro.

The EU calls on all sides concerned to accept the result. For its part, it will fully respect the decision of the people of Montenegro.

The European Union calls on Belgrade and Podgorica to take up, as rapidly as possible, a direct dialogue on the way ahead. The European Union stands ready to support this dialogue

The European Union reconfirms the European perspective of the Western Balkans on the basis of the Stabilisation and Association Process."

2. In addition, the European Union would like to thank ODIHR for its efforts in observing the conduct of the referendum.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, EFTA countries Island, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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