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## **Irish Presidency of the European Union**

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### **EU Statement on Border Security and Management**

#### **ASRC 2004 Session 2**

Mr Coordinator,

The European Union welcomes the importance which the OSCE is attaching to border issues by putting border security and management high on the Organization's agenda this year. We believe that this is timely and justified.

Good border management is conducive to stability and security in the OSCE region. On the other hand, weak border management provides loopholes for terrorism and organized crime and can result in crises and conflicts. There is a direct link therefore, between border security and management and the important role of the OSCE in conflict prevention. This applies in particular to our work to combat threats emanating from terrorism, organized crime and trafficking.

In this context, we welcome the contribution of the OSCE to the implementation of the decisions of last year's Ohrid Regional Conference on Border Security and Management. We thank Mr Krsteski for underlining in his speech the importance of the OSCE South Eastern Europe Cross-Border Co-operation Programme (OSCCP) for security and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in South Eastern Europe as a whole. The European Union would like to see the continuation of this programme. With its focus on regional co-operation, this programme might also be a model which could be of relevance for other parts of the OSCE area.

Mr Coordinator,

The European Union supports the task of developing an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept as laid out in the “Strategy to Address Security and Stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” to which we all have agreed at the Ministerial Council in Maastricht. We appreciate the work which has already been accomplished in the informal working group on borders and look forward to the completion of this task by the Ministerial Council Meeting in Sofia.

The OSCE Border Security and Management Concept must take into account the cross-dimensional character of border issues and should, therefore, be an integrated approach. The European Union strongly believes that this Concept should be guided by the aim of promoting the principle of open and secure borders:

On the one hand, the Concept should be instrumental in the fight against terrorism and organised crime and contribute to the prevention of conflicts and post-conflict rehabilitation.

On the other, it should help to promote cross-border contacts, facilitate the free flow of goods and ideas, enhance contacts between peoples and contribute to regional co-operation.

The Concept should recall OSCE border-related commitments. It should integrate present OSCE activities in the field of border security and management into a coherent framework. Bearing in mind the key role of the OSCE, the Concept should explore the potential of activities where the Organization can provide comparative advantage and added value.

The European Union believes that the following specific types of activities should be called for in the Concept:

- As has been pointed out by both keynote speakers, the OSCE should make a contribution to the promotion of cross-border, inter-state, sub-regional and OSCE-wide co-operation.
- As has been emphasized by Dr. Kass, the development and dissemination of standards and best practices, training as well as advice and assistance to

institution building, in particular in the transfer of border control from military to civilian border police, is a potential field for OSCE activities.

- Assistance in the drafting of border statutes and standards governing border security and management
- Exploration of possibilities to facilitate the cross-border movement of persons, goods and ideas while controlling illegal movements.
- Consider responding to requests to provide OSCE good offices, including through the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, for the resolution of border-related disputes.

Mr Coordinator,

We hope that the Concept will be the basis for further OSCE activities regarding border security and management. In this context, Tajikistan may be a case in point. The EU recalls in this regard its statement to Permanent Council on 18 June 2004.

Thank you, Mr Coordinator.

The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey align themselves with this statement.