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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 810th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 20 May 2010

In response to Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

The European Union (EU) warmly welcomes the Special Representative on the occasion of her first statement to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the quality of her presentation.

The assessment that you make is alarming. The scope, growth, diversity and evolution of the phenomenon of trafficking require great vigilance on our part: without a good diagnosis, there is no effective remedy. The EU concurs with your observation that various criminal networks control this very lucrative trade, using methods characteristic of organized crime, including corruption. This human tragedy is a real threat to the security of our countries. The implementation of the penal provisions adopted in these last few years is a priority, for the impunity that the traffickers enjoy encourages them to pursue their evil trade.

The EU, which is firmly committed to countering this plague, has long held that a battle must be waged simultaneously on three fronts: prevention, assistance to victims, and prosecution of the perpetrators. In this respect, we are fully satisfied with your approach, for, without neglecting prevention and the humane treatment of victims, you also emphasize the need to devote more police and judicial resources to combating the criminal trafficking networks.

The draft directive recently proposed by the European Commission on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims will, of course, be examined with interest by the Council of the EU.

We encourage you to strengthen internal co-ordination within the OSCE Secretariat and with the OSCE institutions, as you intend to do, and to endeavour to establish co-operation with other actors, particularly within the Alliance. These efforts are fully compatible with the spirit of the Corfu Process, in particular in the area of transnational threats. As regards the activities of your Office, the series of workshops begun last year on trafficking for labour exploitation seems to us tangible and useful. Trafficking for sexual exploitation and trafficking of children are also concerns that we share with you.

In conclusion, the EU assures you of its full support and wishes you every success in your endeavours.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Iceland, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

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