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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 968
Vienna, 24 October 2013**

**EU statement in response to the address by the Secretary
General of the Council of Europe, H.E. Thorbjørn Jagland**

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Thorbjørn Jagland back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his forward-looking address.

The OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union share common values and principles. These values and principles form the bedrock of their well-established and long-standing relationship. We wholeheartedly support the Council of Europe's core mission of promoting and protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. With this in mind, we appreciate the continuous dialogue and practical co-operation that takes place between the OSCE and the Council of Europe and underline the mutually reinforcing nature of our two Organisations. We also welcome the fact that OSCE Secretary General Zannier addressed the Committee of Ministers' Deputies just recently.

The existing contacts between the representatives of both Organisations, and the presence of the Council of Europe's Office in Vienna already provide a good basis for a substantive interaction between the two Organisations. However, greater synergy at the political and strategic level could improve coherence and add more value to our joint efforts. A more pro-active involvement of participating and member States, systematic exchange of views and more regular contacts could help us to improve future co-operation.

We value the joint work within the key areas identified in 2005 as focal co-operation areas. Besides these focal areas, co-operation could be further pursued also in other areas where joint work has already proven productive, such as, *inter alia*, Freedom of Media, human rights education, improving the situation of Roma and Sinti, combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Co-operation could also extend more to the area of cyber security. The Council of Europe also continues to set international standards and we look forward to possible synergies with the newly created Council of Europe Programme Office on Cybercrime in Bucharest.

Election observation and assistance in ensuring that electoral systems meet international standards are extremely important areas for both Organisations. International election observation activities and assistance in matters related to elections are enhanced when the OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission work in partnership. We encourage continued co-operation and coordination.

Finally, the EU supports efforts to further develop informal networking and interactions on both programmatic activities and information-sharing between the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and field operations and their Council of Europe's counterparts, in accordance with their respective mandates. Active co-operation between OSCE field missions and the Council of Europe offices is also important in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of activities in the field. We believe that the ongoing Helsinki+40 debate, including on how to improve implementation of commitments in the areas of protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, could be useful in addressing these aims. We would therefore be interested to learn more about how we could better utilise, in your opinion, each other's comparative advantages in promoting our mutually desired outcomes, whilst fully respecting mandates and avoiding duplication.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, the European Union looks forward to tomorrow's meeting of the OSCE-Council of Europe Co-ordination Group as well as to greater co-operation between the two Organisations. Lastly, we wish H.E. Jagland every success in the exercise of his functions.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO, align themselves with this statement.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
