

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

OSCE Permanent Council No. 800
Vienna, 25th March 2010

EU Statement in response to the ODIHR Director Ambassador Lenarčič

The EU warmly welcomes you, Ambassador Lenarčič, back to the PC and would like to thank you for your - as always - informative report.

Ambassador Lenarčič,

We have carefully listened to your comments on this year's Human Dimension agenda. We can assure you that we will fully support your efforts to make our Human Dimension meetings a success – under the circumstances which you have described. The EU has tried its best to promote a diversified and interesting agenda for this year, reflecting the whole range of relevant topics. We will continue our efforts to provide adequate space for issues such as Freedom of Assembly, Freedom of Association or Human Rights Defenders on the annual OSCE agenda.

We would also like to reiterate our full support for a broad participation of NGOs and Civil Society in all of these events on the basis of our common OSCE commitments. The 1990 Copenhagen Document, of which we are going to mark the 20th Anniversary soon, as well as the Helsinki Document 1992 provide clear guidance on this issue.

With regard to the ODIHR's activities, we appreciate the widely recognized and important role which the ODIHR continues to play in the field of election observation and other election-related issues across the OSCE area. The *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation* and the *Code of Conduct for International Election Observers* offer an excellent basis for a common understanding of meaningful election observation standards. They are shared by the EU and the ODIHR, together with numerous other relevant international organizations.

We are looking forward to the 6th edition of the ODIHR's *Election Observation Handbook*. It has always been a highly useful compendium, reflecting the high and widely acknowledged standards of the ODIHR's election observation methodology.

We welcome the ODIHR's particular focus on follow-up activities to election observation in various OSCE participating States, including in EU Member States. Using the ODIHR's Democratization tools for related topics such as civil registration and political party issues can help to provide valuable synergy effects between the ODIHR's departments.

We also welcome the engagement of the ODIHR in the forthcoming May 2010 municipal elections in Georgia as an appropriate response to the continuing need for OSCE activities on the ground after the closure of the permanent field presence last year.

We welcome the ODIHR's support to National Human Rights Institutions as a good example for its Human-Rights-related activities. More generally, we encourage the ODIHR to continue its important activities on the issue of Human Rights Defenders – on the basis of the unambiguous OSCE commitment from the Budapest Summit in 1994.

On Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, we will have the opportunity to thoroughly examine the implementation of our common commitments during the forthcoming High-Level conference in Astana. As we have made clear at various occasions already, the EU will strongly plead to follow a Comprehensive approach to Tolerance and Non-Discrimination for this important High-Level event. We will fully support the Kazakh Chairmanship-in-Office to make this conference a success.

Roma and Sinti issues continue to be relevant for numerous OSCE participating States including several EU Member States. We fully support the ODIHR's focus on topics such as education and police relations with Roma and Sinti communities.

Ambassador Lenarčič,

The EU is looking forward to your continuing involvement in our discussions on the future of European security in the framework of the ongoing Corfu Process and in particular to your presentation at the forthcoming Corfu meeting on 13 April.

Finally, we would like to thank you, Ambassador Lenarčič, and your dedicated staff for your excellent work and wish you all the best for your future activities.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y LIECHTENSTEIN, al igual que UCRANIA y la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.