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## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 846  
Vienna, 13 January 2011**

### **EU statement on the term of office of the President of Kazakhstan**

The EU has noted ongoing initiatives in Kazakhstan, both by Parliament and by a group of citizens, to conduct a referendum with a view to extending the mandate of the current President until 2020, without the need to hold elections in the intervening period. We welcome the decision of President Nazarbayev to reject the parliamentary proposal. At the same time, we understand that his decree could be overturned by an 80 per cent majority in Parliament.

The EU would like to recall the commitments undertaken by all OSCE participating States in the field of democratic institutions, most recently reaffirmed in the Astana Commemorative Declaration. All participating States have agreed that the will of the people, freely and fairly expressed through periodic and genuine elections, is the basis of the authority and legitimacy of all government. We note that the current constitution of Kazakhstan provides for regular and free elections and we hope that pressure to change these important provisions will be resisted.

The EU believes that any decision to extend the Presidential term in office until 2020 would be in contradiction with Kazakhstan's commitment to democracy and good governance. Following Kazakhstan's recent successful OSCE Chairmanship and in view of its position as a Troika member, the EU urges Kazakhstan to continue to strive for regular, free and fair elections in line with its

constitution and OSCE commitments, and notes the special responsibility of the Kazakh Parliament in this regard.

The candidate countries CROATIA\*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, ICELAND and MONTENEGRO, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country ALBANIA, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

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