

## Spanish Presidency of the European Union

OSCE Permanent Council No. 809  
Vienna, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010

### EU statement in response to Ambassador Venczel, Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

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The EU warmly welcomes Ambassador Venczel back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

We encourage the Project co-ordinator to continue his close dialogue with both the Uzbek government and civil society on his project activities.

We also commend the Project co-ordinator for enhancing cooperation between the Uzbek authorities and OSCE institutions.

Regarding the implementation of projects by the Project co-ordinator, we regret to see no progress towards simpler or shorter approval procedures. We therefore reiterate our appeal to the Uzbek government to improve approval procedures for project proposals, which would allow for a better use of budget resources and more effective planning of activities. Furthermore, we would

welcome more general support from the Uzbek authorities to projects that have a regional perspective.

Also, we are disappointed that in 2009 Uzbekistan has again failed to meet its obligation to contribute to the OSCE's Unified Budget.

Mr Chairman,

The EU supports the Project co-ordinator's activities across the three dimensions, thus assisting Uzbekistan in meeting its OSCE commitments and pursuing its reform and democratization efforts.

While we acknowledge the timely invitation sent by Uzbekistan to the ODIHR for observing the Parliamentary elections that took place last December, we regret that conditions were not met to deploy a full-fledged observation mission. The elections were considered by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment mission as generally falling short of OSCE commitments. Against the background of these parliamentary elections we welcome the Project co-ordinator's activities aimed at strengthening the role of political parties, improving voter education and ensuring compliance with election legislation as well as increasing the political participation of citizens and the transparency of elections.

In the politico-military dimension, the EU fully supports the Project co-ordinator's assistance to the Uzbek government, including in the fight against terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and other transnational threats and challenges. In this regard, we welcome

the Project co-ordinator's intensified cooperation with the Uzbek Police Academy.

In the Economic and Environmental dimension, we particularly welcome the Project co-ordinator's activities in promoting good governance, fighting money-laundering and countering financing of terrorism. In this regard, we also commend the Project co-ordinator's close cooperation with other relevant international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The EU also supports the Project co-ordinator's environmental activities, especially those addressing water management.

In spite of some encouraging signs, the EU remains concerned about the general human rights situation in Uzbekistan and encourages the Uzbek authorities to implement fully their international obligations in this area. Against this background the EU welcomes the Project co-ordinator's projects aiming in the Human Dimension at assisting the Uzbek National Association of NGOs as well as the Human Rights Protection Department of the Ministry of Interior and the national Ombudsman Institution. The EU considers activities related to human rights and democracy as well as combatting human trafficking particularly relevant in Uzbekistan.

The EU stands ready to continue its close cooperation with the government of Uzbekistan in all areas of common interest. We reiterate the importance we attach to the EU-Uzbek dialogue in the various existing fora.

Mr Chairman,

The EU would like to take this opportunity to briefly return to the railway shipment dispute between Uzbekistan and neighbouring Tajikistan, an issue which we addressed here in the PC last week. We welcome the positive information we have received that in the bilateral relations some first commendable steps were undertaken in this regard and we hope that this positive development will lead to a mutually acceptable solution of this issue.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Ambassador Venczel and his team for their patient and dedicated work and wish them success in their future activities.

Los países candidatos 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, y los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y NORUEGA, se suman a esta declaración.

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