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EU STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL ON ENHANCEMENT OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

Over recent years, the Economic and Environmental Dimension has gained in weight and substance within the OSCE. This is due, among other things, to the Porto Ministerial Council Decision on enhancing the role of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension (MC(10).DEC/5), to the organization of the OSCE Conference on Globalisation in 2004, to the fact that since its creation the EESC has met 44 times already, to the fact that implementation of previous Economic Fora recommendations is concretely under way and finally to the impact of the work of our Economic and Environmental Officers in most of our field missions, as well as to the daily support and coordination provided by the dedicated staff of the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities. The European Union is convinced that this process should continue.

In this regard, the European Union welcomes the circulation of the report of the Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee of the Permanent Council on enhancement of the OSCE economic and environmental dimension, in particular focusing on issues of further improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Economic Forum, circulated under CIO.GAL/87/05. We would like to commend the Chair of the Sub-Committee for her tireless efforts in this dimension and, in particular, with regard to enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness.

The basis for this report has been provided by the report of the Chairman of the Informal Open-ended Group of Friends of the Chair on Enhancement of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension circulated under PC.DEL/437/05. We commend the Chair for all his efforts and his excellent report on discussions and suggestions for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Economic Forum.

We believe that the report is a very fair reflection of the discussions that took place both in numerous formal and informal meetings.

The EU fully supports the continuation of work on enhancing the economic and environmental dimension in all its aspects. We do believe that in the near future, the link between the substance, as agreed in the Maastricht Strategy Document for the EED, and the activities undertaken in this dimension, needs to be further strengthened, especially since further recommendations for enhancing activities in this dimension are to be expected, notably in the context of the report to be presented by the eminent persons.

We fully agree that incoming Chairmanships must be given sufficient flexibility in order to fit the preparatory structure of the Forum to serve in the best way its theme: substance should dictate format of the events ahead. Cost-effectiveness must also continue to be taken into account in organizing future Economic Fora.

The EU is convinced that this report with its many suggestions will provide useful guidance to the upcoming Chairmanship, in co-operation with participating states, and allow for enhanced economic and environmental activities already in 2006.

The Accessing Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

¹Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process