
Belgian Chairmanship**595th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 2 March 2006

Opened: 10.15 a.m.

Closed: 1.50 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Mr. B. de Crombrughe

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson informed the Permanent Council that the Chairman-in-Office, by a letter issued on 27 February 2006 (see Annex 1 to this journal), had announced the adoption, through a silence procedure, of the Ministerial Council decision on the extension of the mandate of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (see MC.DEC/1/06, the text of which is appended to this journal).

Russian Federation, Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (Annex 2), United States of America (Annex 3), Norway (Annex 4),
Chairperson

3. Subjects discussed — Statements — Decisions:

Agenda item 1: OSCE MISSION TO SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro (PC.FR/3/06/Rev.1 OSCE+), Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/166/06), Russian Federation, United States of America

(PC.DEL/176/06), Norway (PC.DEL/178/06), Canada, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (PC.DEL/184/06 OSCE+), Chairperson

Agenda item 2: ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ARMENIA, H.E. MR. VARTAN OSKANIAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, United States of America (also on behalf of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group) (PC.DEL/173/06), Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro; as well as Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/161/06), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/169/06), Moldova (also on behalf of Georgia and Ukraine) (PC.DEL/185/06 OSCE+), Canada, Turkey (PC.DEL/186/06), Azerbaijan, Chairperson

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

- (a) *Human rights situation in Belarus and preparations for the presidential elections, to be held on 19 March 2006:* Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/162/06), United States of America (PC.DEL/172/06), Belarus, Lithuania

Right of reply: Belarus

- (b) *Deportation of Uzbek refugees from Ukraine:* Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, in alignment), United States of America (PC.DEL/177/06), Switzerland (also on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) (PC.DEL/167/06), Uzbekistan, Ukraine (PC.DEL/182/06 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan
- (c) *The case of Ms. N. Khidoyatova in Uzbekistan:* Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/168/06), Uzbekistan
- (d) *Final report of the ODIHR on the presidential elections in Kazakhstan, held on 4 December 2005:* Austria-European Union (with the acceding countries



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/595
2 March 2006
Annex 1

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595th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 595, Point 2

LETTER OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE

Brussels, 27 February 2006

Dear Colleague,

In my capacity as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I have the honour of informing you that the period of silence on the decision of the Ministerial Council on the extension of the mandate of the Director of the ODIHR (MC.DEC/1/06), expiring on 27 February 2006 at 5 p.m. CET, has not been broken.

The decision is therefore effective as of today and will be attached to the journal of the Fourteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council and to the journal of the next meeting of the Permanent Council on 2 March 2006.

Those participating States that intend to exercise their right to make an interpretative statement or a formal reservation under paragraph 79 (Chapter 6) of the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations (1973) are invited to do so through their OSCE delegations at the above-mentioned meeting of the Permanent Council.

Yours sincerely,

Karel De Gucht

To the Ministers for Foreign Affairs
of the OSCE participating States



595th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 595, Point 2

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. The European Union is pleased that Ambassador Strohal's mandate has been extended. This ensures that the ODIHR will continue to function under highly professional leadership without interruption.
2. The European Union is deeply disappointed, however, that it has not been possible to reach agreement on extending the Director's mandate for the usual three-year term of office, in line with precedent and with the provisions regulating the extensions of the mandates of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. These provisions should also apply to the Director of the ODIHR.
3. We strongly commend the ODIHR Director for his outstanding performance over the past three years and fail to see objective grounds on which his mandate, in deviation from past practice, has now been limited to two years. In order to ensure continuity at the helm of the ODIHR, the EU has agreed to the decision, but we do not look upon the extension by a mere two years as setting a precedent for determining the length of mandates of ODIHR directors in the future.
4. The EU is looking forward with great interest to the ongoing important undertakings of the ODIHR and once again reiterates its strong support for Ambassador Strohal and his staff.
5. The EU requests that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/595
2 March 2006
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

595th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 595, Point 2

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

By the adoption of this decision, the United States wishes to express its appreciation for the excellent job that Ambassador Strohal has done as Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its strong conviction that he will continue to serve the ODIHR, the OSCE and all of the Organization's participating States well by continuing as Director during the coming period.

We have noted with satisfaction the broad support and confidence of participating States in the integrity of the ODIHR and of its leadership.

At the same time, we would also like to express our deep disappointment that it proved impossible to extend Ambassador Strohal's mandate for three years, which would have been in keeping with precedent, both for ODIHR directors and for heads of other OSCE institutions. We do not believe that the current extension for a period of less than three years should be seen as setting a new precedent and sincerely hope that, in the future, heads of OSCE institutions will be considered for extension based on their merit and service to the Organization rather than on any other extenuating circumstances.

I would request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/595
2 March 2006
Annex 4

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595th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 595, Point 2

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF NORWAY

Norway warmly welcomes the reappointment of Ambassador Strohal. Ambassador Strohal has done an excellent job during the three years he has been in office, and not only the ODIHR itself but the whole OSCE benefits from having his mandate extended. At the same time, we would like to put on record that our strong preference was for an extension of Ambassador Strohal's mandate for another three years. We see it as extremely important to have continuity in this position as we are facing important elections in the years to come and also because key issues within the reform agenda of the Organization are being dealt with by the ODIHR. Like the EU, we do not look upon the extension by a mere two years as setting a precedent for determining the length of mandates of ODIHR directors in the future.

We take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Strohal for his dedicated work and wish him all the best in his future endeavours as Director of the ODIHR.