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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
UZBEKISTAN AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 January 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to associate myself with the words of welcome addressed to the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Mr. Jean Asselborn, and to thank him for today's statement, in which the priorities for Luxembourg's presidency of the European Union (EU) were outlined.

The Republic of Uzbekistan regards the development of multilateral and mutually beneficial relations with the European Union as one of the priority areas of its foreign policy.

In that connection, we should like to note with satisfaction the dynamic and progressive development of co-operation between Uzbekistan and the EU. The entry into force in July 1999 of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) between Uzbekistan and the EU became an important institutional framework for the promotion of political dialogue and the expansion of bilateral co-operation.

In accordance with the PCA, to date the following instruments for co-operation between Uzbekistan and the European Union have been established and are successfully in operation:

- (1) The Uzbekistan-EU Co-operation Council;
- (2) The Uzbekistan-EU Co-operation Committee, which includes the Subcommittee for Trade and Investment and the Subcommittee for Justice, Internal Affairs, Customs Co-operation and Other Related Issues;
- (3) Co-operation between the parliaments of the two parties, which takes place within the Parliamentary Co-operation Committee.

In addition, the Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme is being actively implemented and constitutes one of the principal instruments with which the EU can assist Uzbekistan.

The Uzbekistan-EU Co-operation Council is the main agency responsible for monitoring the fulfilment of the PCA's provisions. To date, there have been five meetings of

the Council, during which the parties identified further measures for expanding bilateral relations, *inter alia*, in enhancing political dialogue, expanding trade and investment, improving regional co-operation in Central Asia, implementing programmes for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, assisting the process of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan and stepping up co-operation to combat international terrorism, the spread of narcotic drugs and other transnational threats.

As a result of the implementation of the PCA in the five years since its entry into force and with due regard for the current priorities for the development of our country, the comprehensive programme for the implementation of the PCA has been elaborated and adopted in Uzbekistan, which covers all areas of co-operation and will last until the end of the second five-year stage of the Agreement. We hope that the EU and its Member States will help and support us in the implementation of this programme.

Our delegation would like to take this opportunity to inform the Permanent Council that on 1 February 2005 the sixth meeting of the Uzbekistan-EU Co-operation Council will take place in Brussels and will be jointly chaired by Mr. Asselborn and Mr. Sadik Safaev, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan.

At the meeting, a wide range of issues of mutual interest will be discussed — regional problems, including Afghanistan, political questions, including efforts to combat new threats and challenges, co-operation as regards justice and internal affairs, democratization processes, economic issues, more effective technical co-operation as well as co-operation in the areas of education, culture, science and technology.

We hope that the forthcoming meeting of the Uzbekistan-EU Co-operation Council will make a substantial contribution to the further development of mutually beneficial co-operation between Uzbekistan and the European Union on the basis of equal rights.

In conclusion, we should like to express our support for the aspirations of the EU to strengthen co-operation with the OSCE and hope that constructive interaction with the European Union and its Member States will also continue within our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.