

PC.DEL/408/09

4 June 2009

ENGLISH only

Prohlášení

Statement

Déclaration

Vienna 4 June 2009

Permanent Council no. 763

EU Statement in response to the address by the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, H.E. Samuel Žbogar

The European Union warmly welcomes His Excellency Samuel Žbogar on the occasion of his appearance at the Permanent Council. The presence of the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in the Permanent Council of the OSCE is a powerful sign of the importance of the cooperation between these two organisations and it gives us a good opportunity to recall and review some of the major issues upon which both OSCE and the Council of Europe are working together.

The European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE are all based on the same set of values and are equally engaged in promoting democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Their cooperation is therefore essential to creating lasting peace and stability and to strengthening European security. In order to be effective, this cooperation must avoid duplication of efforts, and look for synergies.

From the OSCE perspective we highly value the work of the Coordination Group, established in 2005, dealing with the four key areas of the fight against terrorism, protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, combating of trafficking in human beings and promotion of

tolerance and non-discrimination. The Coordination Group ensures that the key principles are both preserved and promoted.

The EU welcomes the fact that the ODIHR, the OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities are playing their respective roles in this cooperation. Cooperation must, however, not be limited to these institutions and it is for this reason that we are pleased at the positive relations between OSCE field presences and Council of Europe offices in a number of countries.

Your Excellency, the priorities of your chairmanship in the Council of Europe with regard to the protection of persons belonging to national minorities and Roma and Sinti, and with regard to active promotion of Human Rights education and the rights of the child combine well with the EU priorities in the OSCE and we will therefore try to find ways to make these efforts complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The election observation is another area of highest importance for both organisations. The EU fully endorses the established principles of election observation methodology, and we encourage the OSCE and CoE institutions (namely ODIHR, the OSCE PA and the PA of CoE) to continue their valuable cooperation that we have seen on numerous election observation missions.

As for the regional focus of the Slovenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe we cannot but agree that South-Eastern Europe, despite all the progress achieved in recent years, deserves our continuing attention, and we are confident that the proposed

steps ahead could only increase the eligibility of all countries of this region for their future EU membership.

We fully support the Slovenian Chairmanship's efforts to promote the continuation of the reform process of the European Court of Human Rights, a guarantor of democracy and the rule of law, especially as the Court is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

We appreciate also your dedication to enhance co-operation between Belarus and the Council of Europe that may, if conditions are met, some day end up in Belarus joining this important organization.

At the end we should not forget to mention the efforts made by our organisations, to find a solution to the situation resulting from the conflict in Georgia last August. Bearing in mind that the security and human rights situation in South Ossetia, Georgia, and around the administrative boundary lines gives reason for concern, we remain convinced that if there is genuine political will on all sides, a workable solution can be found. The EU commends the CoE and especially its Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, for its part of the work, and will strive for continuing cooperation of OSCE and CoE in this issue.

Your Excellency, the European Union values your approach in the pursuit of our common goals. We take this opportunity to express our commitment to the valuable efforts of both the OSCE and the Council of Europe and to express our gratitude to you for your country's engagement in all organisations concerned, be it as the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005, as EU presidency last year or at present as the country chairing the

Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. We thank you for your address and wish you all the best for your efforts.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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