



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council Nr 941 Vienna, 14 February 2013**

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#### **EU statement in response to H.E. Ambassador Victor Tvircun, Secretary General, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation**

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The EU warmly welcomes Ambassador Victor Tvircun, Secretary General in the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and thanks him for his comprehensive presentation on the activities of this organisation.

The EU welcomes the Ukrainian Chairmanship's decision to continue the tradition of inviting representatives of relevant regional organisations to the Permanent Council. This enables us to learn more about our mutual activities, to share experiences and to explore possible ways of cooperation on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Cooperative Security. The European Union values highly examples of regional cooperation which offer opportunities to enrich dialogue among participating States with regional perspectives.

The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation has been a catalyst for economic cooperation and trust-building in the region. The European Union commends especially the objectives of the BSEC as a regional economic organisation that correspond with the EU's priorities aimed at strengthening regional cooperation among countries surrounding the Black Sea. These include fostering dialogue, promoting stability and the peaceful and prosperous development of the area and maximising the potential of social and economic opportunities.

The EU appreciates the promotion of practical cooperation within the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation on a number of issues which are also being addressed by the OSCE, including trade facilitation, transport, energy, migration management, combating trafficking in human beings, organized crime, the fight against corruption and environmental protection. The EU sees therefore further potential for enhancing cooperation between the BSEC and the OSCE in these areas. We are pleased to hear that the BSEC maintains a close relationship with the OSCE, especially with the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities and the OSCE's Action against Terrorism Unit. This is clearly demonstrated by the active participation of BSEC representatives in meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum. We believe that this year's topic of environmental impact of energy-related activities offers another occasion for active engagement by the BSEC. The Forum will be a good opportunity to enhance cooperation with international and regional stakeholders with a view to developing regional projects of mutual interest while achieving synergies and avoiding duplication of activities.

We welcome the recognition by the BSEC of the EU as a strategic partner at its last Summit Declaration in June 2012, marking a step forward in the development of relations between the EU and the BSEC. From our perspective, our focus is on re-energising the Black Sea Synergy initiated in 2008 by using a bottom-up approach built on concrete fields of cooperation. This include the launch of the Environment Partnership under the Black Sea Synergy in March 2010.

The EU continues to bring together all its policies and instruments in order to maximise our strengths and enhance the opportunities for cooperation with our partners in the Black Sea region. Together, the Black Sea Synergy initiative, with its cross border cooperation programme, the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy and the EU's Danube Strategy can build a coherent EU approach towards the Black Sea. The EU has well established relations with all Black Sea stakeholders, as strategic partners candidate countries for accession to the EU or Eastern European partners. We are also able to address issues of relevance to the Black Sea in our bilateral relations.

We believe that the experience of the Black Sea region can serve as an example for other areas of how to mobilise joint efforts to address common challenges.

In conclusion, we would like once again to thank H.E. Ambassador Tvircun for his address and wish him every success in his future work.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

\* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.