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EU Statement - ASRC 2004 Session 4

The Way Forward

The EU welcomes the opportunity to participate in this strategic discussion on the way forward for the OSCE. The EU recognises the OSCE's impressive track-record and its indisputable strength in conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation. We believe that the OSCE should remain focused in the future on areas where it can add value. In this regard, special attention should be given to implementation of the comprehensive acquis of CSCE/OSCE norms and obligations, to the field competence of the OSCE and to the OSCE's role in regional conflict resolution. It is imperative also that we remain conscious of the possibility of new challenges to peace and stability

The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century correctly identifies terrorism as one of the most important causes of instability in the current security environment. Terrorism remains a challenge to peace and stability; it undermines the values of OSCE States. It requires a co-ordinated, international response.

The European Union's approach to Terrorism is set out in the March European Council Declaration on Combating Terrorism. Just last week the Council also adopted the revised Plan of Action on Combating Terrorism, which outlines the specific time-bound tasks necessary to implement the measures contained in the Declaration.

Both the Declaration and the Plan of Action reaffirm the central importance of the United Nations in sustaining the international consensus in the fight against terrorism. They also underline the need for the universal adherence to and full implementation of all UN Security Council Resolutions, Conventions and protocols related to terrorism. In this context the EU has pledged to work with and within international, regional and sub-regional organisations to strengthen international solidarity in countering terrorism. We noted earlier the important role that the OSCE plays in this regard.

All participating States of the OSCE are strong in their conviction that terrorism has no justification whatsoever. However, the OSCE Strategy is plainly correct to note that in addressing terrorism's manifestations we must also address the social, economic and political context in which it occurs. The EU is fully in agreement with this. To effectively combat terrorism, security measures must be informed by an

understanding of the reasons for support for, and recruitment into terrorism. The EU's Plan of Action makes a commitment to researching the links between extreme religious, political and socio-economic beliefs and recruitment into terrorism both internally and internationally. In this regard the EU intends to develop and implement a strategy to promote cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding.

We had some discussion yesterday about border security as a tool in the fight against terrorism. The EU welcomes this discussion, but at the same time underlines the meaning of that issue for the OSCE's security policy approach as a whole. Therefore, we look forward to deepened OSCE involvement in that matter, as we await the results of this Organisation's working group on border security strategy. We also wish to reiterate that participating States must equip the Secretariat with the means necessary to deal with this challenging task.

The EU's commitment to improve border control under its March Declaration has been strengthened by the Plan of Action's strategic objective to protect the security of international transport and ensure effective systems of border control. The EU recognises the important role border security plays in the overall OSCE security policy, and the fact that border management and security constitute key elements of conflict prevention and crisis resolution.

Turning to the issue of terrorist financing, I would like to note that the EU has prioritised efforts to prevent and disrupt the flow of financial and other economic resources to terrorist groups and related entities and individuals. We have focused on ensuring the effectiveness of asset freezing procedures, implementing the Financial Action Task Force's special recommendations and regulating charitable organisations and alternative remittance systems.

The OSCE Strategy addresses the important challenge of implementing effective measures against terrorism in full accordance with the rule of law and international law, including human rights law. The European Union is firmly of the view that all actions in combating terrorism must be conducted in accordance with due process and the rule of law. There can be no trade-off between effective counter-terrorism and respect for human rights; indeed, it is the view of the European Union that each is a precondition for the other.

The EU welcomes the establishment of a Counter-Terrorism Network, which will facilitate the coordination of counterterrorism measures and information sharing, and supplement the work of the UNCTC in implementing UNSCR 1373.

The new threat posed by non-state actors should not lead us to underestimate the threats to security and stability posed by inter-state conflicts, especially regional ones. Disarmament and the consolidation of co-operative security structures stay high on the agenda in the OSCE region. The CFE Treaty remains an indispensable cornerstone of European security. The Vienna Document 1999 with its wide range of CSBMs remains a viable instrument to prevent new regional conflicts and to defuse existing ones. Other documents such as the OSCE Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security remain as pertinent for comprehensive security in the OSCE region as combating the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons or the security, safety and humanitarian risks posed by the presence of stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive materials and detonating devices.

In conclusion, the EU would like to reiterate that the purpose of the ASRC is not only to look forward, but also to review and discuss, on an annual basis, the fulfilment of

OSCE commitments in security policy and arms control. OSCE participating States should report in writing on the national implementation of these commitments, so as to build a general picture of the state of affairs in the OSCE with regard to security and arms control. This could be done e.g. on the basis of a questionnaire, to be developed by the CPC in consultation with participating States.

At the ASRC we should not only discuss the general picture, outcomes and results, but also shortcomings. Discussions should not be noncommittal, but participating States should show their engagement with the process, by sharing experiences and information in a meaningful way.

The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia align themselves with this statement.