

ENGLISH only

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 603
30 March 2006**

**EU Statement on the conduct of some OSCE/ODIHR
election observers**

1. Mr. Chairman, the EU regrets that it must raise another issue arising from the elections in Belarus, which is of serious concern to us as a matter of principle. The EU was disturbed by a media statement issued on behalf of a quote "national group" unquote within the IEOM. In our view, the statement appeared to be designed to call into question the findings of the IEOM. This is especially disturbing as it is not the first such occurrence in recent times.
2. The EU sees this statement as a clear breach of the Code of Conduct for election observers, which states that "Observers will not make any comments to the media on the electoral process or on the substance of their observations, and any comment to the media will be limited to general information about the observation mission and the role of the observers". Breaches of the Code by any observer are unacceptable.
3. The EU for its part has full confidence in the objectivity and professionalism of the observation of the elections carried out by the IEOM and would ask the respective Government to take extra measures to ensure that observers from their country – like all other observers – refrain from wilfully breaching the Code of Conduct.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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