



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 989  
Vienna, 13 March 2014**

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**EU Statement in Response to the Minister of Counter  
Narcotics of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, H.E.  
Mobarez Rashidi**

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The European Union wishes to welcome H.E. Minister Rashidi to the Permanent Council, and to thank him for his presentation. We would like to use this opportunity to convey our condolences to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the recent death of the First Vice-President Mohammad Qasim Fahim.

We would like to commend you, Mr. Minister, as well as your Government, for all your efforts to curb the illicit production, trade, trafficking and consumption of drugs, which undermine economic and human development in Afghanistan, but also threaten international peace and stability in the Central-Asian region and the OSCE area at large. We note with deep concern, therefore, the increase in illicit poppy cultivation in Afghanistan for the third consecutive year, as stated for instance in the UNODC Annual World Drug Report 2013. Taking into consideration the drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force at the end of 2014, we urge the Afghan authorities to combat drugs trafficking with determination. The assistance of the international community in order to reduce the supply and demand of drugs will also continue to be essential.

The European Union's approach to addressing the threat of illicit drugs is reflected in the EU's multi-annual Action Plan under the Drugs Strategy for 2013-2020. We seize this opportunity to restate our strong commitment in the Central Asian region through the EU's Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Border Management in Northern Afghanistan (BOMNAF). Effective narcotics control is important for Afghanistan's political stability, rule of law, and economic integration in the wider region. The European Union strongly believes in a comprehensive and balanced approach towards counter narcotics,

by supporting capacity building for civilian police and the judiciary, border management, health services and rural development. We also see the need for strong cross border cooperation, including joint border operations between Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours. In this context, we welcome the fact that the minister is working on a regional counter narcotics strategy.

The OSCE's role in addressing transnational threats is a useful contribution to concerted international counter-narcotics efforts with regard to Afghanistan. In this context, the European Union welcomes the active participation of Afghan officials in the activities of the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, in the Patrol Programming and Leadership Project run by the OSCE Office in Dushanbe, as well as the courses offered to Afghan staff at the Domodedovo Academy in Moscow. We encourage the OSCE to continue to coordinate with other actors, including by making full use of the Joint Action Plan with the UNODC and to align itself with the initiatives taken in the framework of the Paris Pact.

Finally, Mr. Minister, we want to express our appreciation for the progress made by your government in preparing for the upcoming presidential and provincial elections. As you know, the EU has decided to send an Election Assessment Team for the presidential elections and EU Member States have supported the Permanent Council decision to send an OSCE Election Support Team to Afghanistan. We hope that these and other efforts will contribute to an electoral process that is inclusive, transparent and credible and that will lead to a legitimate outcome.

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 country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

\* 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.