

## Spanish Presidency of the European Union

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 808  
Vienna, 6 May 2010**

### **EU statement in response to the address by the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu**

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The European Union welcomes the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address. We appreciate this opportunity to continue the OSCE's dialogue with the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The OSCE and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have established contacts at the level of the Secretariats and identified a number of areas for improved cooperation. Tolerance and non-discrimination is the main one –but not the only one. In this regard, we are encouraged to learn that Ambassador Lenarčič and Professor Ihsanoglu recently expressed their willingness to initiate practical cooperation between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and ODIHR in areas of common interest such as democratization, human rights and election observation. We also welcome the announcement of the establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Independent Permanent

Commission on Human Rights, which we hope will reinforce the work of international human rights treaty bodies, as well as ODIHR's readiness to share its expertise with this new independent commission.

Promoting tolerance and fighting various forms of discrimination constitutes already a relevant area for dialogue between the OSCE and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. However, more could be done for example on the field of education, including human rights education, targeting in particular the younger generation in order to build up their understanding of the need for tolerance. The EU looks forward to discussing this and other issues during the high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination to be held in Astana at the end of June.

The EU would like to reiterate its strong belief in tolerance and non-discrimination. At the same time, the EU recalls and firmly stands behind the necessity to ensure full respect for freedom of expression, freedom of the media, freedom of thought and freedom of religion or belief. We are very open and transparent about the challenges that we encounter in this field. We invite others to show a similar openness and determination to combat all forms of intolerance, including but not limited to those based on religious grounds.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU is deeply committed to protecting diversity and respect for different religions, cultures and beliefs within the framework of universal human rights norms and standards. In this regard, we will continue to support initiatives, such as the Alliance of Civilizations, that can contribute to a meaningful and comprehensive dialogue, grounded on international law and based on the full respect of human rights.

Los países candidatos CROACIA\* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA\*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA, LIECHTENSTEIN y NORUEGA, al igual que UCRANIA, la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA y GEORGIA se suman a esta declaración.

\*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.