

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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EU statement in response to the address by the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio

The EU warmly welcomes the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio, on his first appearance before the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his thought-provoking address. We appreciate this opportunity to discuss in the OSCE about the Alliance of Civilizations and in this regard welcome the initiative of the Chairmanship to invite Dr. Sampaio.

This is indeed a timely discussion, which takes place less than 3 weeks after the third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Rio de Janeiro. Among its many outcomes, the EU would like to highlight:

- the active participation of the Anna Lindh Foundation, including new joint activities in the field of media;
- the creation of a UNESCO Alliance of Civilizations Chair on Media and Information Literacy for Intercultural Dialogue;

- the decision to hold a Regional Conference on a Mediterranean Strategy in Malta at the beginning of November; and
- the new MoUs and Action Plans that were presented or signed.

The EU continues to support the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations and its delivery of substantive projects with a cross-cultural brand. The Alliance of Civilizations is an essential political platform for intercultural dialogue and an instrument of preventive diplomacy, aiming at countering the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. There is a great extent of correspondence between the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE values and commitments.

The Rio Forum further confirmed the global scope of the Alliance of Civilizations. We welcome the increasing number of members of the Group of Friends of the Alliance, including the United States. So far more than 120 States and international organizations have joined the initiative and a relevant United Nations General Assembly resolution was adopted last November by consensus.

We welcome the Regional Conference for South-Eastern Europe, held in Sarajevo last December and take note of its Action Plan, which was presented in Rio.

The EU is also of the opinion that the Alliance provides a useful framework to disseminate relevant OSCE values, commitments and activities on human rights, democratization, gender equality, freedom of the media, tolerance and non-discrimination, including the comprehensive approach to

combat all forms of discrimination and the efforts to counter radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism.

Intercultural dialogue can only take place in an environment of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, safety and dignity, equal opportunities and participation and where different views can be voiced openly without fear. Intercultural dialogue depends upon the full implementation of human rights. The Alliance could therefore contribute to the implementation of OSCE commitments.

The Partners for Cooperation could make an important contribution to the future of the relations between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations.

In conclusion, the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations share many aims and objectives and we thank Dr. Sampaio for drawing our attention to the scope for synergies.

Thank you.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, 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 y NORUEGA; al igual que UCRANIA, la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA, ARMENIA y GEORGIA se suman a esta declaración.

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