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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 933
Vienna, 29 November 2012**

**EU statement in response to the address by Secretary General of
the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Professor Ekmeleddin
İhsanoğlu**

The European Union warmly welcomes the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Professor İhsanoğlu to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address.

We wish to reiterate that co-operation between the OSCE and other relevant international organizations must be based on universal norms, values and principles, particularly those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and as stipulated in the Platform for Cooperative Security. Such co-operation must fully respect OSCE values and principles and be aimed at furthering the implementation of our collective OSCE commitments. It is through the implementation of these commitments that we can improve security in the OSCE space and better address threats from within or from areas adjacent to it.

A crucial aspect of the OSCE's work is to advance universal human rights norms and standards. While acknowledging that tolerance and non-discrimination is the primary field of interest for the OIC, we would stress the primary importance we attach to fundamental freedoms, particularly the freedom of expression, including in the media, and freedom of religion or belief.

At the same time, we stress that work in all international fora aimed at countering intolerance and discrimination must incorporate all forms thereof, including against LGBT persons. In this context, we stress the role and potential of education, including human rights education.

In conclusion, we would like to thank once again Professor Ihsanoğlu for his address and wish him well in his future endeavours.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, 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 the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, 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.