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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 857th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 7 April 2011

### **Response by the European Union to Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

The European Union thanks Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, for her very interesting report.

The European Union spares no effort to prevent and combat trafficking in all its forms. The six themes mentioned by the Special Representative today give us an idea of the complexity of the phenomenon. Of these themes, combating trafficking in children is a priority for the European Union that it has emphasized many a time within the OSCE. The situation described by the Special Representative in five other areas highlights the relevance and need for our comprehensive approach to combating trafficking.

At the meeting of the Human Dimension Committee on 8 February this year we welcomed the fact that the priorities of the Office of the Special Representative reflect the four pillars – prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership – on which this comprehensive approach is based. Especially in view of budget constraints, however, the OSCE should concentrate on those areas in which it can provide genuine added value and enable progress to be made.

The complete and specific implementation of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings will continue for a long time to demand considerable efforts by national authorities and the international community. At the Permanent Council meeting of 9 December 2010 we stressed the excellent work carried out by the OSCE in 2009 and 2010 on trafficking for labour exploitation and we strongly encouraged the Special Representative to continue these activities, which have considerable practical impact. We thank the Special Representative for the draft work programme distributed yesterday evening, which we shall study carefully.

The Special Representative concluded by pointing out two comparative advantages of the OSCE in combating trafficking: its human rights-based and its holistic approach. These assets enable the Organization to play a significant and distinctive role. In this regard, we welcome its participation in the steering committee of the United Nations Global Initiative to

Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). The OSCE and other key players in the fight against trafficking in our region should consolidate their efforts there to make them more effective.

Another major asset enjoyed by the OSCE that is worth exploring is its presence in the field, which both the Special Representative and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights can and should make use of to conduct specific projects in line with the local situation and in co-ordination with other players.

In conclusion, the European Union would like to thank the Special Representative for the quality of her report and express its gratitude for the work carried out by her team. We reaffirm our willingness to support her in accomplishing her task.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro<sup>1</sup>; the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway; as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

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1 Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.