

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Human Dimension Seminar
Upholding the Rule of Law and Due Process in Criminal Justice Systems
Warsaw 10-12 May 2006**

Closing Statement of the European Union

1. At the end of a very fruitful and interesting two and a half days of discussion the European Union would like to reiterate its thanks to the ODIHR and to the Belgian Chair for organising this important event.
2. We have listened with interest to the excellent summaries provided by the Rapporteurs of the four working sessions and look forward to studying the reports of the working sessions more closely. We would like to express our appreciation of the inputs from the keynote speakers, introducers and others who participated in the plenary and working sessions. We greatly appreciate the contributions made by civil society representatives as well as representatives of participating States.
3. The contributions to this Seminar revealed divergent opinions and priorities on the best means to uphold rule of law and due process in criminal justice systems, as was to be expected. We are pleased to note that there appears to be unanimity on the need to fully implement existing OSCE commitments in this field.
4. The intense discussions during the last three days have shown us the importance of the OSCE work. We welcome further close cooperation of all OSCE structures in this field.
5. Thus, the EU urges ODIHR to continue to fully implement its Criminal Justice Reform Programme that promotes and assists reform of the legal institutions involved in criminal justice, including the judiciary, prosecutors' offices, and the defence bar. The Programme facilitates exchange of reform experiences and best practices between the participating States;
6. Furthermore within the Criminal Justice Reform Programme, the ODIHR should emphasize building domestic capacity for reform through support of legal researchers and comparative studies on criminal justice reform in the participating States;

7. We also hope that ODIHR will develop guidance and continue to provide training for OSCE field staff on how best to assist participating States in pursuing criminal justice reform.

8. Let me summarise that the outputs of this Seminar are an important contribution to advancing the Chair's priority of the fight against organised crime. We hope that this Seminar and the November 2005 SHDM in Tbilisi on the *Role of Defence Lawyers in Guaranteeing a Fair Trial* will contribute to the discussion when many of us return to Warsaw for the Human dimension Implementation Meeting in October of this year.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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