PC.DEL/546/08/Rev.1
1 July 2008

Original: ENGLISH

French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Annual Security Review Conference
1 July 2008

EU Opening Statement

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege for the Presidency of the EU to address this 6th Annual Security Review Conference.

The European Union attaches great importance to the Annual Security Review Conference. It provides an essential forum for dialogue and consultation involving all relevant players on an equal footing. The ASRC can also be a forum to discuss new ideas and initiatives on how to improve security in the Euro-Atlantic area. It offers an opportunity to analyse the security environment in the OSCE area, to evaluate the implementation of the OSCE decisions on combating terrorism, and the illicit trafficking of weapons and drugs, to assess the present state of arms control arrangement, CSBMs and the security dialogue in the OSCE area. Recent events have shown that early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation including the use of OSCE tools remain essential.

The EU greatly values the first dimension of the OSCE and is actively committed to its further enhancement. Politico-Military issues and broader questions of security in the Euro-Atlantic area are of utmost importance for the EU, today maybe even more than in the past. Within the framework of the OSCE, we all have collectively created a unique network of treaties, commitments, decisions, norms and measures on conventional disarmament and arms control as well as on confidence and security building measures. This network has promoted security and stability in Europe by

REPRESENTATION PERMANENTE DE LA FRANCE AUPRES DE L'OSCE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE
Schwarzenbergplatz 16, 1010 Vienna, Austria • Tel : +43 1 501 82 0 • Fax : +43 1 501 82 502
e-mail : france-osce@org-france.at

increasing trust and transparency among participating States and constitutes a comprehensive and indispensable *acquis* for European security.

The EU considers full and transparent implementation of all agreed norms and measures, but equally the promotion of best practices as key objectives of the OSCE. We note with appreciation the ongoing work in the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) based on the implementation of the Madrid Ministerial Decision n°3/07 on issues relevant to the FSC to submit progress reports to the Ministerial Council in Helsinki, including on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), conventional ammunition, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, arms control agreements and CSBMs. Implementing and strengthening the impressive *acquis* of CSBMs remains high on the agenda. Combating the scourge of the destabilising accumulation and spread of SALW and ammunition, is an important area of work. The OSCE makes a unique contribution to issues relating to the management and security of stockpiles through its mix of standards, best practice guides and project work. The importance attached to the fight against the illegal trafficking of SALW and ammunition has been highlighted in recent work relating to the air transport of SALW and ammunition.

Since 1990, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) has been successful in achieving its objectives. It has maintained and proven its viability during a period of fundamental political change which marked the beginning of a new era of cooperation and security in Europe. The CFE regime remains a cornerstone of European security. That is why the EU urges the Russian Federation to resume Treaty implementation forthwith, and to work with concerned States to reach an agreement on the basis of the Parallel Action Concept, so we can together to preserve the benefits of the CFE regime in order to promote the security of all OSCE participating States.

Fighting terrorism remains very high in the EU agenda. We support the OSCE in this field, particularly in those areas of work where it can most efficiently provide

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added value and which fit in with the EU counter-terrorism strategy. We underline the positive results reached by the OSCE, especially in the promotion of international legal anti-terrorism instruments, in the dissemination of good practices, in awareness-raising, in connecting experts and stakeholders. The EU also strongly re-affirms the importance of respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law while countering terrorism.

The European Union is committed to supporting the development of modern border management in the OSCE area, including through the introduction of the principles of integrated border management and the promotion of regional cooperation, and is actively engaged with programmes and projects related to border security and management in Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The European Union welcomes the OSCE activities aimed at the implementation of the Border Security and Management Concept adopted by the Ministerial Council in 2005. We are pleased to note that the cooperation between the EU and the OSCE on border management issues has been greatly intensified and has reached a good level. Effective and modern border management is crucial for Central Asia in order to provide long-lasting stability for the whole region. In this regard, we attach great importance to the Ministerial Conference on Border Management and Drug Control in Central Asia to be jointly organised by the EU, the OSCE and UNODC in Dushanbe this year. The European Union considers OSCE engagement in Central Asia central in efforts to further stabilise Afghanistan in line with Ministerial Decision 4/07.

The EU welcomes the efforts carried out by the SG to prepare the implementation of MCD 04/07 on the engagement of the OSCE with Afghanistan, complementing our ongoing efforts and those of other international actors. The EU has a long-standing commitment to Afghanistan and is playing a major role in stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, in the framework of a comprehensive approach that includes extensive engagement in the areas of civilian reconstruction, governance and the rule of law, including policing, through the EU Police Mission

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(EUPOL Afghanistan) and support to the Law and Order Trust Fund, justice reform, as well as border management (BOMBAF) and customs administration.

The EU has committed itself to contribute to the prevention of conflicts, by making use of a large range of tools, as mentioned in the European strategy on security of 2003. The EU takes account of the existing conflict prevention mechanisms at the disposal of the OSCE and would wish that better use be made of them.

Concerning the Transnistrian conflict, the EU fully supports continued efforts to find a lasting political settlement, based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. We are comforted by recent progress in the dialogue between Chisinau and Tiraspol, and call on all parties to show the political will needed for the resumption of the negotiation process in the 5+2 format, which remains the most appropriate framework.

Meanwhile, the EU regrets that little progress has been made towards peaceful settlement of the protracted conflicts in the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia. We call on parties to the conflict in South Ossetia to resume talks, and to use all negotiating formats - including the JCC and Authorised Delegations, or any other agreed format - in a constructive manner to explore ways of increasing the effectiveness of the conflict resolution process. Recent incidents in the zone of conflict have demonstrated once again the need to implement agreed demilitarisation measures, for law enforcement agencies to cooperate, and for confidence building measures in general. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our call to all participating States to show the necessary flexibility so that an agreement on the deployment of the eight additional mission monitors can be reached soon. This would help to ensure the necessary conditions for the realisation of the economic rehabilitation programme in South Ossetia, to which the EU is the largest contributor. We encourage all involved to engage in constructive discussions contributing to the practical implementation of the projects.

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As regards Abkhazia, the EU is seriously concerned by the recent series of events that have raised tensions between Georgia and the Russian Federation. We welcome the use of all existing OSCE mechanisms in support of the UN-led peace process. It is essential now to reduce the risk of a further escalation, tone down public rhetoric and abstain from provocations or any unilateral actions that could lead to a deterioration in the situation. We welcome the peace initiative on Abkhazia put forward by the Georgian President, as well as the direct talks by the parties, hoping that they will contribute to a constructive dialogue on the issue.

On the subject of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the EU welcomes the meeting between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan that took place on 7 June in St. Petersburg, putting an end to the six month interruption in the negotiation process. The EU is pleased by the sides' commitment to continue negotiations on the basis of the document that was formally handed over during the Madrid Ministerial Council by the political level representatives of the three co-Chairs to the ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan for consideration by their Presidents.

The EU reiterates its full support to the efforts of the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group towards a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and commends their continuing endeavours to bridge the remaining differences between the sides. The EU calls once again upon Armenia and Azerbaijan to take the necessary decisions to achieve a breakthrough with the endorsement of the proposed Basic Principles and agree on a mutually acceptable solution of the conflict, elaborated along these principles.

Norway, Island, the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia[1], the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania as well as the Republique of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

[1] Croatia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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