



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

666th Meeting of the Permanent Council

17 May 2007

EU Statement on General Affairs and External Relations Council conclusions on Uzbekistan

With reference to the intervention made during the 664th meeting of the Permanent Council on 3 May by the distinguished Uzbek Ambassador, the EU would like to draw the attention of participating States to the General Affairs and External Relations Council conclusions on Uzbekistan adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union on 14 May, which I should like to quote here in full:

- (quote) “1. The Council remains seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan.
2. The Council learnt with great concern of the sentences of imprisonment passed on the human rights defenders Ms. Umida Niazova and Ms. Gulbahor Turaeva. It took note of the revised verdict against Ms. Niazova of 8 May and her release. The Council calls upon the Uzbek authorities to release Ms. Turaeva and other detained human rights defenders and to lift restrictions of movement against Ms. Niazova. The Council calls upon Uzbekistan to respect fully its commitments to international human rights standards.
3. The Council welcomes the Uzbek confirmation that full cooperation with the ICRC will be resumed soon and expects swift implementation.
4. The EU reiterates its readiness to pursue a comprehensive and regular dialogue with Uzbekistan on human rights. In this context, the Council

furthermore welcomes the fact that a first round of a human rights dialogue between the EU and Uzbekistan took place in Tashkent on 8-9 May 2007. It appreciates the readiness of the Uzbek side to engage in this dialogue. The EU looks forward to its continuation in an open and constructive manner with a view to achieving concrete and sustained results.

5. The Council also welcomes the holding of a second round of expert talks on the Andijan events in Tashkent on 2 and 3 April 2007. The Council, nonetheless, recalls its position set out in previous Council Conclusions.
6. The Council recalls its Common Position of 13 November 2006, lifting restrictions on technical meetings, and extending the arms embargo for another 12 months and the visa restrictions for another 6 months. The Council decided to renew the visa restrictions for individuals listed in the annex of the relevant Common Position for another 6 months.
7. The Council decided to keep these measures under review on the basis of the criteria set out in previous Council conclusions, taking into account the actions of the Uzbek Government in the area of human rights, including the results of the human rights dialogue. The Council urges Uzbekistan to implement fully its international obligations relating to human rights, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, and stands ready to consider the lifting of restrictions if the Uzbek government engages constructively in this respect." (end of quote)