



Statement by the Delegation of Slovenia  
at the Special Permanent Council meeting on 12 September 2006

### **Caspian Outlook 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

First, I would like to thank the Secretary General of the International Energy Forum, Ambassador Walther, for his presentation.

I would also like to say that Slovenia of course aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador of Finland on behalf of the EU.

We would however like to use the opportunity of discussing issues of energy to brief the Permanent Council about the conference Caspian Outlook 2008 that took place in Bled, Slovenia, on 27 and 28 August 2006, since its main topic was energy sources and energy security.

The Conference was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia in cooperation with the Institute for Strategic Studies. It was organized in light of preparations of Slovenia for the EU presidency in 2008, and is therefore focused more on the European Union, even though the issue of energy is a forefront topic in wider international community.

Discussions in the Conference showed that within the overall aim of diversification of energy resources, the Caspian basin represents an increasingly important energy partner for Europe. Within this context, political stability and democratic governance in the countries in the region, including the South Caucasus is prerequisite for enhancing economic cooperation between Europe and the region.

In light of today's discussion, let me focus more on the Panel on Europe's geostrategy and energy security with special emphasis on the relevance of the Caspian basin for Europe. The panellists - that included acting OPEC Secretary General Mohammed S. Barkindo, President

of OAO LUKOIL Vagit Alekperov, Chairman of the Board of Petrol Marko Kryžanowski, Deputy Chief Economist of British Petroleum Christoph Rühl, President of the Project on Transitional Democracies Bruce Jackson, Chairman of the Kreab Group and former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt, and Under-Secretary of State of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland as EU Presidency Markus Lyra - noted that the European Union is one of the largest integrated energy markets in the world. As one of the main energy consumers it is facing a multitude of challenges, such as the fact that 80% of energy use in Europe is based on fossil fuels and that the import dependency of European market is increasing.

Europe thus needs to think innovatively in terms of building new delivery capacities and define additional reliable energy partners.

The Caspian Basin is hosting one of the world's most important reserves of oil and natural gas. There are number of new gas projects in the Caspian region either already implemented or in the planning stage. South Caucasus is the main transit connection between Caspian region, Central Asia and Europe – therefore the political stability and democratic governance, as well as the stable investment environment in the countries of the region is of the paramount importance.

The assessment of Slovenian Government is that the Conference was successful in collecting ideas and proposals on how to improve cooperation between the Caspian region and the European Union.

Any additional information on the conference can be found on the website: [www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org).

Thank you.