

PC.DEL/946/10
23 September 2010

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 830th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 23 September 2010

Regarding Nagorno-Karabakh and the recurring violence along the line of contact

In response to the statement by the Azerbaijani delegation at the previous meeting of the Permanent Council, I should like to inform you of the European Union's assessment of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The European Union (EU) is concerned by the reports of recurring armed incidents along the line of contact in recent weeks and, more generally, by the proliferation of these incidents since the beginning of this year. We condemn all use of force and the threat of resort to force and call upon the parties concerned to avoid any action likely to fuel tensions. To this end, we call upon the parties to adhere scrupulously to the ceasefire to which they have committed themselves, to end incursions across the line of contact, and to exercise restraint both on the ground and in their public statements.

The EU welcomes the recent visit to Baku, Yerevan and Nagorno-Karabakh by the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. We fully support the redoubling of their mediation efforts, particularly over the next few months and in the lead-up to the Astana Summit. We also support the forthcoming field assessment mission to the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh that the Co-Chairmen will conduct by mid-October, and we look forward to their report.

The EU takes this opportunity to reiterate its attachment to the Minsk Group and restates its full confidence in the ability of the Co-Chairmen to advance the search for a negotiated political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which it regards as vital to the future of the region. We call on the parties to focus their attention on seeking constructive dialogue and encourage them to make greater use of the efforts undertaken by the Co-Chairmen. The EU also reiterates its support for all the principles, without exception, proposed by the presidents of the French Republic, the United States of America and the Russian Federation in their joint statements at the L'Aquila Summit in 2009 and the Muskoka Summit in 2010, statements that were favourably received by the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities. The EU is ready to assist the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen through confidence-building measures and contact between the populations.

We should also like to thank the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference for the

assistance provided to the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen. The EU attaches great importance to the continuation of its activities with regard to monitoring the ceasefire along the line of contact and monitoring the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, activities which help to reduce tensions in the conflict zone. The EU is gratified that the proposal by the Co-Chairmen to increase the number of monitorings of the line of contact from two to three per month has been accepted by the parties.

Peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is an important element of the European Neighbourhood Policy and figures prominently in the relevant action plans. The EU is ready to support all initiatives that may contribute to this objective.

The candidate countries Croatia¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ and Iceland², the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway align themselves with this statement.

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

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.