



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 858 Vienna, 13 April 2011

EU statement in response to the address by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė

The European Union warmly welcomes H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė to the Permanent Council and thanks her for her address.

The EU reiterates its endorsement of the work program of the Lithuanian Chairmanship. Lithuania, as in the first three months of its Chairmanship, can count on our full support in its endeavours.

The EU fully shares the view on the need to follow-up our commitments reconfirmed at the Astana Summit and to achieve tangible progress towards the peaceful and negotiated resolution, in accordance with international law and OSCE commitments, of protracted conflicts of Nagorno-Karabakh, in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. This is a common responsibility of all participating States. We welcome the personal engagement of Madam President in this issue and support the concrete steps outlined concerning the specific conflicts.

We agree on the need to enhance our common efforts to address those threats that transcend national borders. The OSCE in co-operation with other international organisations can play a useful role in combating transnational threats, a priority area for the EU. We would particularly like to see progress in

reviewing and consolidating the existing mandates, in the establishment of a co-ordinating function for TNTs and in the adoption of an OSCE strategic framework for policing. We look forward to further exploring the potential contribution of the OSCE to strengthening cyber security and look forward to the conference on this topic to be organised under the Lithuanian Chairmanship in May. We are also in favour of strengthening the OSCE engagement in the field of border management in Central Asia, including concerning threats stemming from Afghanistan. In this regard, we welcome Lithuania's intention to assist the OSCE in expanding its border training efforts.

Mr Chairperson,

Our security community is the safest when human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and the rule of law are upheld. We fully support the efforts of the Lithuanian Chairmanship to make human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in particular media freedom, key priorities of this year's work and we look forward to the conference on the safety of journalists to be organised in Vilnius. The EU has consistently advocated the need to focus on the implementation of commitments, in particular in the human dimension, and ensuring more systematic follow-up to recommendations of OSCE institutions.

In this respect, the EU continues to follow with serious concern the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus after the elections with regard to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The EU has also requested that all those detained on political grounds be immediately released. The EU thanks the Chairmanship for its efforts to assist Belarus in meeting its OSCE commitments. Lithuania can continue to count on our full support in its endeavors to furthering co-operation with Belarus in the OSCE. We also recall our statement of 7 April on the Moscow Mechanism.

Mr Chairperson,

The EU is of the view that the OSCE could, if asked, play a significant role in the framework of efforts by the international community to assist the Partner countries in North Africa going through transition and reform processes. OSCE could provide assistance particularly in the areas of electoral assistance, democratisation, freedom of the media, rule of law and institution building, but also possibly in the areas of CSBMs, police reform and migration management. We continue to encourage our Mediterranean Partners to seize this opportunity and provide the OSCE with their views, priorities and requests. In this regard, we look forward to the visit of the Chairperson-in-Office to Tunisia. It will provide an opportunity to identify the specific elements from the OSCE toolbox that are useful and areas for further co-operation.

In Astana, OSCE Heads of State and Government have reinforced our commitments, given strategic guidance and agreed to undertake a number of specific actions tasking the Lithuanian and subsequent chairmanships with the follow-up of the Summit. The time has come to act. We look forward to taking significant steps and adopting key decisions in all three dimensions towards these goals at the Vilnius Ministerial Council meeting in December.

In conclusion, let me once again thank H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė for her address and wish her every success in her future work.

The candidate countries CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.