



PC.DEL/300/13
2 May 2013

EUROPEAN UNION

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 950
Vienna, 2 May 2013**

**EU statement on the 3rd Ministerial Conference of the
Istanbul Process in Almaty**

The European Union welcomes the outcomes of the 3rd “Heart of Asia” Ministerial Conference held in Almaty on 26 April and wishes to reiterate its ongoing support to the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan. The EU supports the measures that have emerged from this Process aimed at increasing cooperation and inclusive sustainable development in Afghanistan and the Central Asia region.

The EU values the Istanbul Process as an initiative originating in the region itself, which recognises Afghanistan’s crucial role in promoting connectivity and cooperation across the “Heart of Asia” region, and welcomes Afghanistan’s willingness and determination to use its regional and historical position to promote security and peaceful economic cooperation in the region. Furthermore, the EU is committed to fostering political consultations, confidence building measures, and to promoting result-orientated regional cooperation.

The EU confirms its long-term commitment to Afghanistan beyond 2014 after the drawdown of ISAF forces, bearing in mind that security and stability cannot be sustained without poverty reduction and economic development. As part of this commitment, the EU supports enhanced efforts towards economic cooperation in the region.

The European Union has pledged its support to the implementation of three out of six CBMs which form part of the Istanbul Process, these cover the areas of disaster management, trade, commerce and investment opportunities and counter-narcotics. These CBMs, together with those on counter-terrorism, regional infrastructure and education, were politically endorsed during the Conference in Almaty and are backed up with detailed implementation plans. The EU believes that implementation of these CBMs will help to maintain the political

momentum of the Istanbul Process. Finally, the EU thanks Kazakhstan for hosting the Almaty Conference and welcomes that China offered to host the next Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process in 2014.

In closing, the EU underlines its strong support for a broad regional approach and its commitment to working with Central Asian and Afghan partners to ensure peace and enhance stability and prosperity.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

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

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