



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**669<sup>th</sup> (Special) Meeting of the Permanent Council**

**31 May 2007**

EU Statement in response to the Secretary of State of the  
United States of America, H.E. Condoleezza Rice

The European Union very warmly welcomes the Secretary of State of the United States, H.E. Condoleezza Rice, to this special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, and thanks her for her inspiring address.

Mr. Chairman, in a world of global threats and challenges, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. Here in the OSCE, as in other multilateral organisations, the strategic partnership between the European Union and the U.S. is essential to our work. It goes without saying that the organisation has to be provided with the necessary resources to fulfil its important tasks.

Our positions are based on common approaches, shared values and shared responsibility. We are jointly committed to promote human rights, democracy, the rule of law and tolerance and non-discrimination. We lend our strong support to the ODIHR and its valuable work particularly in the field of election observation.

The OSCE area is certainly a model of excellence for work on conventional disarmament and arms control as well as confidence and security building measures. The European Union firmly believes that the network of treaties, commitments, decisions, norms and measures underpinning this outstanding achievement needs to be preserved, fully implemented and further strengthened. The European Union is committed to further developing and broadening the security dialogue in the OSCE and its Forum for Security Co-operation.

The CFE Treaty remains a cornerstone of European Security. Current problems in this regard should be overcome by bringing the Adapted CFE Treaty into force as soon as possible after the fulfilment of Russia's remaining Istanbul Commitments on the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

The OSCE has created the preconditions also to tackle effectively new threats to our common security. The fight against terrorism, while respecting human rights, constitutes an important part of the activities of our Organisation. We welcome the active engagement of the U.S. in this regard and look forward to the results of the 2007 OSCE Political Conference on Public Private Partnership in Countering Terrorism, which started this morning. Like the U.S., the European Union contributes substantially to OSCE's activities in response to old and new security challenges.

Close co-ordination with the United States on regional issues is also essential for us. Within this context, the EU like the US, highly values the ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the OSCE and the Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. We appreciate the valuable work of the OSCE field operations in the Western Balkans. We support the European and the Euro-Atlantic perspective for all Western Balkans countries and will continue to assist them on their way.

Through its Neighbourhood Policy and the related Action Plans, the European Union is actively engaged in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and, like the U.S., continues support for these countries to promote democracy, the rule of law and economic development. EU and U.S. work hand in hand as observers to the 5+2-negotiation process to solve the Transnistrian issue and welcome the efforts of the Spanish Chairmanship in this respect. We are strongly committed to a resolution of the protracted conflicts in Georgia and the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh that is the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Group.

Like the U.S., the European Union has a vested interest in development and stability in Central Asia. We need the region as a partner in combating drug trafficking, organised crime, illegal migration, terrorism and violent extremism. The EU is developing a comprehensive, action-orientated long-term Strategy for Central Asia to be adopted next month at the European Council. We support ongoing OSCE

activities related to Central Asia and look forward to discussing new ones such as projects that aim at improving border security and management at the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, which is an active Asian Co-operation partner.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me stress that the European Union considers the OSCE an outstanding example of excellent transatlantic co-operation on the basis of shared values, and an important forum for dialogue in the region from Vancouver to Vladivostok. We should like to thank the Secretary of State once more for her visit, and we are looking forward to further close and fruitful co-operation with the distinguished U.S. Ambassador and her team here in Vienna.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, as well as EFTA country Iceland, a member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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