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Delegation**

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United Kingdom Presidency of the European Union

13th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Ljubljana

6 December 2005

Closing Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

1. The EU fully endorses the statement made by the Chairman in Office. We warmly thank the Chairmanship for the excellent organisation and hospitality at this Ministerial Council and for their tireless efforts to seek consensus.
2. The EU welcomes the consensus statement on Georgia, in particular, support for the peace plan built upon the initiatives of the President of Georgia.
3. The EU welcomes agreement on the statement on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Group that the parties are now poised to make the transition from negotiation to decision. There are serious benefits within reach for all.
4. The EU welcomes the adoption of the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept which will lead us to more secure and open borders

and also provides us with a framework for enhancing co-operation among participating States in the fight against the scourges of terrorism and organised crime.

5. The EU regrets that, in the absence of agreement on the priority issue of fulfilment of the remaining commitments concerning the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, made at the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in 1999, the Ministerial Council was again not able to conclude a Ministerial declaration.
6. The EU remains concerned about the ongoing conflicts in the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We urge all parties involved to search for ways to bring an end to these conflicts. Fulfilment of the remaining commitments made at the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in 1999 and reflected in the CFE Final Act, remains key. The EU welcomes the important progress achieved by the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia, reflected in their Joint Statement of 30 May 2005, on issues related to the withdrawal of Russian forces in the Republic of Georgia and looks forward to resolution of the remaining issues. We believe that this statement, and the concrete actions taken since, represent encouraging steps towards the fulfilment of one of the remaining Istanbul commitments. We call upon both sides to take all necessary measures to implement the obligations stipulated in this Joint Statement as soon as possible.
7. We note with regret the continued lack of progress on withdrawal of Russian military forces and equipment from the Republic of Moldova and we urge the Russian Federation to resume and complete this process as soon as possible.
8. We confirm our support for the role of the OSCE and other mediators in the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of Moldova, fully respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The EU has joined the process as observers. We are determined to contribute to the successful outcome of negotiations.

9. The EU is pleased that we have been able to reach agreement on a decision on a roadmap to guide our work in 2006 on strengthening the effectiveness of our Organisation. We look forward to working in a constructive spirit with all other delegations to take this important work forward.
10. We welcome all the other important decisions that have been taken at this Ministerial.
11. On elections the EU recalls that commitments freely entered into by participating States remain the basis for dialogue and cooperation in the OSCE. Binding political commitments must not be called into question. Autonomous OSCE institutions - operating within mandates agreed by all participating States - help us to meet our commitments. Free and fair elections, which reflect the will of the people, and in which the electorate has confidence, are vital to the development and maintenance of stable democratic processes in every country in the OSCE region. The EU reaffirms its strong support for ODIHR's work in the field of elections. We have every confidence in ODIHR's professionalism and impartiality in this crucial area of the OSCE's activities.
12. The EU commends the OSCE's continued active involvement in Kosovo. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) is continuing to make an important contribution to UN-led efforts to foster stability in Kosovo. We reconfirm our commitment to United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and support all efforts to develop a multi-ethnic and tolerant society in Kosovo.

Mr Chairman,

13. We have already thanked the Slovenian Chairmanship for their dedicated efforts to this organisation which is of such great importance to the European Union. We now look forward with confidence to the Belgian Chairmanship. The EU will work closely with the Belgian Chairmanship in the year ahead to strengthen the OSCE still further.
14. Mr. Chairman, I ask that the statement be attached to the Journal of the day.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia ¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

¹ Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process