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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE 2010 OSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE

Astana, 28 November 2010

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address you on behalf of the European Union at the closing session of the 2010 OSCE Review Conference here in the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I should like first of all to express the gratitude of the European Union to the Kazakh Chairmanship for its efforts at the head of our Organization. The European Union is also very grateful to the Secretariat and institutions for the excellent preparation and outstanding and expert contributions.

After the meetings in Warsaw, Vienna and Astana, we have practically completed our preparations for the Summit to be held on Wednesday and Thursday.

The European Union firmly believes that the various proposals voiced by the delegations, Secretariat, institutions and representatives of civil society during the Conference will help to flesh out the final document of the Summit, which, we believe, will pave the way to the achievement of a new strategic vision for the OSCE, a security community in which the use of force will be unthinkable and which will be based on a clear reaffirmation of our commitments and the precise mandates for our future work as set forth in the Action Plan.

During the informal Ministerial Council meeting in Almaty in July, the European Union identified the priority areas for action, which continue to guide us in our preparations for the final document. They are:

– Strengthening of OSCE capabilities in all three dimensions to promote early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, including in relation to protracted conflicts;

– Improving implementation and follow-up of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with particular focus on the human dimension commitments;

– Strengthening the conventional arms control framework, including confidence- and security-building measures, and progress on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty);

– Increased attention to transnational threats in all three OSCE dimensions.

The European Union hopes to see tangible progress in the resolution of frozen conflicts, which year after year continue to seriously affect the credibility of our Organization and its ability to deal with one of the main threats to security in the OSCE area.

We need to intensify our collective efforts to resolve the frozen conflicts in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh in a peaceful manner by negotiation with full account taken of the norms and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE commitments. The European Union reiterates its support for the existing negotiation formats and its attachment to the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We repeat that the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh should be resolved in accordance with the Madrid principles.

With regard to the conflict cycle, we note that there is considerable support for strengthening the Organization's capacities in that area, and in the three dimensions, including its handling of protracted conflicts. This involves not only structural and technical improvements in the OSCE but also implementation in practice of the political will of the participating States, in particular regarding a more effective transition from early warning to early action.

The European Union would like to see the Secretariat and institutions playing a more active role in issues connected with the conflict cycle. In particular, it is vital to create an early warning system co-ordinated by the Conflict Prevention Centre and involving the entire Secretariat, institutions, field operations and special or personal representatives of the Chairmanship, while respecting the independence of each of these entities. A lasting solution to conflicts also calls for a better understanding of the deep-seated roots of crises and conflicts. The European Union supports the idea of creating a civilian entity to foster peace and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are also concerned to strengthen the conventional arms control framework, including confidence- and security-building measures, and to see progress in the CFE regime. We hope to obtain a clear mandate to continue modernizing the Vienna Document and to guide us as a first stage towards a Vienna Document 2011.

As far as transnational threats are concerned, we believe that greater use should be made of the OSCE's added value in the three dimensions with a view to achieving a clearer and more visible profile in this regard. The European Union calls on the Secretary General to take suitable measures to improve co-ordination. The appointment of a co-ordinator would mark an important advance in this respect. We also need to review the strategic documents and the OSCE commitment in this area as far as Afghanistan is concerned, adopt a strategy on police activities and explore the need to adopt other strategic documents on areas such as cyber security, organized crime and combating drug trafficking. The European Union would also like to increase co-operation with the Asian and Mediterranean Partners in combating transnational threats.

As far as the European Union is concerned, the second dimension has an important role to play in the conflict cycle and in combating transnational threats. First, the OSCE's activities in the second dimension offer a wide range of confidence-building measures. Second, the OSCE area is faced by economic and environmental threats. The European Union believes that the Secretariat should have the wherewithal required to offer to the participating States an in-depth analysis of these threats.

Our Organization is founded on the conviction that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic principles is essential for peace, justice and well-being. This conviction is the cornerstone of our comprehensive approach to security. The implementation of our commitments in the human dimension is thus vital to our collective security. This assessment led us to declare categorically and irrevocably in Moscow in 1991 that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE were matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and did not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.

Strengthening the implementation and improving follow-up of OSCE norms, principles and commitments have been tirelessly emphasized throughout the meetings and across all platforms. To achieve this the European Union believes in the need to strengthen the office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and to support the essential work performed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, particularly with regard to following up and implementing electoral recommendations, and the activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

In this regard the OSCE peer review and the recommendations made by the institutions are important instruments that all participating States should take advantage of. They are an aid and an invitation to move forward by way of respectful dialogue in the implementation of our commitments in the areas of human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democracy.

This Review Conference has also permitted real dialogue between the representatives of governments and civil society. I am sure you are aware, Mr. Chairperson, of the great value that the European Union attaches to free and open participation by non-governmental organizations in OSCE activities and to the protection of human rights defenders.

Taking advantage of the information obtained during the Review Conference, the European Union will continue to participate actively in the elaboration of the Astana Document. We will spare no effort in the hours and days to come to achieve tangible results and to make the Astana Summit a success for our Organization. Thanks to the improvement in mutual understanding and confidence and to the determination of all participating States to strengthen security in the OSCE area, we should be able to make progress towards the effective creation of a security community.

The candidate countries Croatia[1], the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[1] and Iceland[2], the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate

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

countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, San Marino and Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

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