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**Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union Européenne**

**Conseil Permanent No. 734  
25 septembre 2008**

**EU Response to the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek,  
Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere**

The European Union warmly welcomes Amb. Tesoriere to the Permanent Council and wishes to thank him for his comprehensive report. The EU appreciates the strong and productive relationship between the OSCE and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic, and we congratulate the Centre for 10 years of successful cooperation.

The EU welcomes the positive trends in the host country as outlined by Amb. Tesoriere, but repeats its concern about the assessment of the Venice Commission regarding the new Constitution as well as on recent legislation, such as the media law and the law on freedom of assembly, both of which contain elements that can be considered a setback from earlier versions of the law. We request the Centre to follow up on these issues, as well as on pending legislation, especially the law on religious affairs, with the Authorities in the hope that the recommendations of international expert bodies like ODIHR and the Venice Commission be incorporated to improve the situation concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country in line with its international commitments. In this regard, the EU is pleased that the administrative court case against the Norwegian Helsinki Committee has been closed in early September.

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In view of the increasingly difficult economic situation, we urge the Kyrgyz Government to demonstrate strong practical commitment to reform, which the EU stands ready to support and encourage the Centre to do its utmost to assist the efforts of the Kyrgyz Authorities in this regard.

We welcome the government's efforts to settle outstanding border issues and develop a comprehensive border management system, also including the fight against terrorism, against human trafficking and trafficking of narcotics.

We support the continuation of the Centre's valuable work in all three dimensions and your efforts to achieve clarity in its strategic direction by establishing six thematic hubs. We welcome the increased emphasis on border management, on gender and youth mainstreaming as well as on environmental risks. Especially with regard to the latter we encourage working closely with other international stakeholders to optimize utilisation of resources.

We also support the Centre's activities in providing training and institution building in a wide range of issues and would like to stress the urgent need to strengthen administrative capacities and the judiciary system. The EU looks with particular interest on the OSCE Academy and applauds its continued success.

We also deem the activities relating to the strengthening of civil society and to confidence building at community level very important, notably the establishment of free legal aid centres, of media resource centres in the provinces and of public prevention centres. In this context we note with approval the ongoing success of the Police Reform Programme.

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The EU also appreciates the Penitentiary System Reform and notes with satisfaction the positive steps the Kyrgyz authorities have achieved in this regard.

We take note of Ambassador Tesoriere's concerns regarding recruitment and retention of staff issues and intend to address these in the appropriate fora.

In conclusion we would like to assure Amb. Tesoriere and his dedicated staff of our continued support and wish him well in his endeavours to assist the Kyrgyz partners in tackling current challenges.

La Turquie, la Croatie\* et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine\*, pays candidats ; l'Albanie, la Bosnie - Herzégovine, le Monténégro et la Serbie, pays du processus de stabilisation et d'association et candidats potentiels ; l'Islande, pays de l'Association Européenne de libre-échange et membre de l'Espace économique européen ; ainsi que l'Ukraine, la République de Moldavie, l'Arménie et la Géorgie se rallient à cette déclaration.

\*La Croatie et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine continuent à participer au processus de stabilisation et d'association.

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