

Prohlášení Statement Déclaration

Vienna 12 March 2009

Permanent Council No. 754 EU Statement on 1 March commemoration in Armenia

The EU was pleased to note that the commemoration of the violent events of 1 March 2008 in Yerevan passed off peacefully. Nonetheless the EU regrets that the municipal authorities did not give authorisation for the opposition to meet in their chosen location. We hope that formal permission for future gatherings, including the one planned for 1 May, will be granted in good time and that participants, including from outside Yerevan, who wish to attend will be allowed to do so. However, the EU welcomes the fact that, on this occasion, the organisers of the gathering and the police were able to reach an understanding which allowed the gathering to proceed.

The EU highly appreciates the valuable work being done by the OSCE Office in Yerevan. In this regard, the EU believes that the constructive approach on the part of the police during the last week's demonstrations was, at least in part, a direct result of the Office's police assistance programme.

There are however still a number of unresolved issues related to the events a year ago, such as the continued detention and imprisonment of a number of people, while the trials of others continue. We continue to call

for those who have been arrested or prosecuted in connection with their political activities to be freed. The EU would appreciate being informed of the findings of the temporary parliamentary commission once it has completed its investigations into the March 2008 events. The EU encourages all political stakeholders to work towards constructive dialogue as we strongly believe that this would help to resolve these outstanding issues of concern.

The Yerevan mayoral election in May will be an important milestone. The EU strongly believes that a free and fair election would help to reduce tension and the dangers of polarisation in Armenian society. The EU urges the authorities to ensure that ODIHR's recommendations from previous elections monitoring missions are fully implemented.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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