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EU Statement in reply to the Chairmanship's report on the future orientation of the Second Dimension

The European Union warmly welcomes Mr. Alexander Verbeek to the PC and thanks him for his report.

Madame Chair, the European Union is and has always been supportive of a strong Economic and Environmental Dimension.

We have constantly advocated that this dimension can make an important contribution to security, stability, democracy and prosperity in the OSCE region. We have always expressed support to the important confidence building potential of the second dimension.

Since the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum under the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship, the EU has called for a debate about the future direction and programmes of this dimension, with a strong focus on their added value to security.

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In this respect especially, we welcome with satisfaction the report of the Chairman of the “Informal Group of Friends on the Future Orientation of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE”.

The report that has been presented today is a first important step in this direction. We are grateful to the Finnish and Greek Chairmanships for the attention they have devoted to the need to strengthen this dimension, and to the Dutch delegation and to Mr. Verbeek for their efforts in coordinating this exercise.

The report contains a number of recommendations. They address both the strategic vision of the second dimension, and its mechanics.

We welcome the recent initiatives of the Greek Chairmanship on specific topics in dedicated Economic and Environmental Committees and Conferences, coinciding with some of the recommendations contained in the report. We call on the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship to follow this practice in 2010.

Many other recommendations, for instance the ones related to better and enhanced coordination of activities have been supported by the EU on several occasions and deserve to be implemented rapidly. We therefore encourage the Coordinator and his office to work closely both with the field operations and with other OSCE structures.

The EU looks forward to efforts by the Greek and incoming Kazakh Chairmanships to take forward the recommendations contained in this report and we are ready to participate in discussions.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Mr. Verbeek for his valuable contribution to strengthening the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension and wish him success in his future activities.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and 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 country and member of the European Economic Area ICELAND, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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