



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

PC.DEL/443/08
5 June 2008

ENGLISH only

Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 715
5 June 2008**

EU statement in response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, Ambassador Sergey Kapinos

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Kapinos to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his first report.

The EU supports the Office's activities, and we are pleased that the Office continues to enjoy good cooperation with the Armenian authorities, civil society and other international actors in the country.

We greatly appreciated the Office's monitoring and advocacy during and after the state of emergency imposed in March in Armenia. The EU has been following developments closely and remains keen to see political tensions resolved. To this end, the EU invites both the Armenian authorities and the opposition to engage in a constructive dialogue. We believe the Office should be an indispensable tool of assistance to Armenia in overcoming persistent tensions and addressing, as Ambassador Kapinos has reported, the wider social discontent that has contributed to the recent internal polarisation.

To address the latter, the European Union therefore supports the Office's broad engagement across all three dimensions; to promote more inclusive governance and to address socio-economic disparities, corruption issues and challenges to the rule of law. But, we would also encourage Armenia to engage the Office in assisting with some of the specific problems around the events of 1 March, especially concerning:

eu2008.si



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Freedom of Assembly; Free Media; Policing; and Elections. It is welcome that these are already priorities of the Office's programming.

The Office's assistance in this regard could be framed around the recommendations in the ODIHR final election report and the Armenian Ombudsman's report which the EU welcomed at Permanent Council on 8 May. Both reports suggest steps that would make an important contribution, if implemented, to stability in Armenia. We note the conclusion of the ODIHR election observation final report that the Election Code provides a sound basis to conduct democratic elections but deficiencies resulted from a lack of will to implement legal provisions. We hope the Office can assist Armenia in ensuring the independent and professional functioning of the electoral administration at all levels, and in cutting the strong ties between the electoral administration and the state authorities. We recall, in particular, our interest in seeing an independent inquiry into the events of 1 March as also recommended by the Armenian Ombudsman.

The EU took note of the commitments made by President Sargsyan to tackle all outstanding issues related to the events of 1 March and welcomes the declared intention to establish a special commission. We look forward to its recommendations. The EU notes the undertaking by the President to ensure the return of the law on freedom of assembly to international standards and to ask for assistance from the Venice Commission and the ODIHR. We look forward to the prompt implementation of this undertaking .

In light of recent events, we support the Office's intention to prioritise police assistance. We hope to see community based policing successfully introduced, and the capacity of the police strengthened to manage public order and work to the needs of society.

eu2008.si



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

The EU welcomes the Office's efforts to deepen engagement with civil society and extend its activities to the regions, including through the Programme Implementation Presence in Syunik province and support to Aarhus centres. It remains important to keep activities prioritised and firmly tied to the promotion of stability and security. The EU congratulates the Office on its successful assistance to the elimination of rocket fuel component stocks (mélange) last autumn.

Mr. Chair, we hope that, following the period of electoral uncertainty and the state of emergency, the new Armenian leadership will give the Office the green light to press ahead with its assistance activities in close coordination with other international actors, notably the Council of Europe. For example, we hope Armenia will take up the Office's proposal to facilitate a legal review on further anticipated amendments to Armenia's broadcasting legislation, and encourage continued support to the Ombudsman's institution.

In conclusion, we believe the Office is performing well and that its impartial expertise should be of value at this time of heightened tension in Armenia. We wish Ambassador Kapinos and his staff well and thank them for their hard work.

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, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

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

eu2008.si