



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

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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU statement in response to the report of the Secretary General on the outcome of the first meeting of the UN Alliance of Civilisations Forum and on a possible OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilisations

The EU would like to thank the Secretary General for his report on the outcome of the first meeting of the UN Alliance of Civilisations Forum, held in Madrid on 15 and 16 January, and on an appropriate OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilisations. The EU believes that the Forum was a success.

The EU shares the ideals of the Alliance of Civilisations. EU Member States are engaged in various activities that contribute to the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Most EU Member States are members of the Alliance's Group of Friends and some have contributed funds to the Alliance of Civilisations Voluntary Trust Fund.

The EU is pleased that the awareness of the significance of intercultural dialogue has been raised globally and that it enjoys growing political support at the national, regional and international level, in particular because the EU has chosen to make 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. This initiative was launched at an international conference held in Ljubljana last January with the purpose of presenting intercultural dialogue as a precondition for establishing diversified yet tolerant societies, where cooperation between different cultures and national identities, minorities and majorities is enhanced.

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The Alliance of Civilisations shares many common aims with the OSCE and the issues it seeks to address are dear to all OSCE participating states. The promotion of human rights, democratic governance and cultural diversity, of an inclusive and participative democratic citizenship, of intercultural dialogue, and of intercultural exchanges are all areas in which the Alliance and the OSCE each have a contribution to make.

Since the foundation of the Alliance of Civilisations, both the EU and the OSCE have contributed to this initiative to promote tolerance and have proposed concrete follow-up measures.

The EU is ready to examine possibilities for interaction between the Alliance of Civilisations and the OSCE, notably on practical projects where cooperation would be of mutual benefit. The Secretary General's report provides a good basis for further discussion on this topic. We consider the Human Dimension Committee the appropriate forum within the OSCE to examine this issue further, where we would also appreciate hearing comments from the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

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 Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia 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

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