



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 869
Vienna, 22 June 2011**

EU statement in response to the address by the Tánaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, H.E. Eamon Gilmore T.D.

The European Union welcomes H.E. Eamon Gilmore, Tánaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address. The EU highly appreciates this opportunity to hear about the general approach, objectives and priority areas of the incoming Irish Chairmanship-in-Office and having an early exchange of views on them.

The EU shares the view that the OSCE is a unique organisation and that its institutions and field missions have played a valuable role in promoting democratic development, stability and security throughout the region. While we can be proud of our common achievements, many challenges remain to be addressed if we are to turn the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community into reality. We hope that this year in Vilnius we can make measurable progress towards this objective, and the decisions adopted at the Ministerial can also provide a steppingstone for the Irish Chairmanship in 2012.

We agree on the need to focus on the core competences and strengths of our Organisation, especially in the light of the resource constraints participating States are facing. In this context, we welcome the priorities of the incoming

Chairmanship-in-Office, which provide a good basis for a balanced and coherent workplan for the Organisation across all three dimensions for the next year. These priority areas are also in line with the four priorities that have been guiding the EU's work in the run-up to the Astana Summit and beyond.

The EU particularly welcomes the emphasis Ireland intends to put on the human dimension and welcomes your focus on freedom of the media and the intention to take forward the important work that is being undertaken under the Lithuanian Chairmanship in this field. At the OSCE Summit in Astana, participating States underlined the important role played by free media in helping to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Updating media freedom commitments to bring them in line with the requirements of the digital age, and ensuring that the internet remains an open and public forum is of particular importance. We are pleased that Ireland remains open to addressing other areas within the human dimension and welcome the attention to another longstanding EU priority, freedom of assembly, as we see a serious deficit in the implementation of our commitments in this important field.

We agree that the participating States have developed wide ranging commitments in the politico-military dimension. However we need to preserve their viability and effectiveness by adapting them to the changing circumstances. We hope that this year we would be in a position to substantially update the Vienna Document, following on the achievements reached under the subsequent FSC Chairmanships the previous year and this year, including that of Ireland, and look forward to building on this momentum next year. The EU also looks forward to finding a solution to overcome the impasse surrounding the CFE Treaty. We welcome Ireland's intention to carry forward the work on transnational threats, a priority area for the EU.

For the EU it is particularly important that we reach concrete progress towards the peaceful and negotiated resolution of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE

region, something that will undoubtedly remain one of the main challenges facing the Organisation. We hope that the Irish chairmanship will give new impetus to work of the Organisation in this field, especially in light of its unique national experience.

As regards the economic and environmental dimension, we welcome the Irish intention to focus on the issue of good governance. The OSCE can assist participating States in establishing and strengthening the legal framework that is necessary for the sustainable development, prosperity and stability. This theme with its links to work in other dimensions would also enable us to further exploit the advantages of the comprehensive approach of the OSCE.

In conclusion, let us once again thank H.E. Minister Gilmore for his address. We look forward to working with him and his team next year.

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

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

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.