

PC.DEL/160/09  
19 March 2009

ENGLISH only

**Prohlášení**  
Statement  
Déclaration

Vienna 19 March 2009

**Permanent Council No.755**  
**EU Statement in response to the ODIHR Director Ambassador**  
**Lenarčíč**

The EU warmly welcomes Ambassador Lenarčíč to the PC and thanks him for his comprehensive and informative report on the ODIHR's recent and current activities.

Ambassador Lenarčíč,

now that the OSCE Human Dimension Agenda for this year has been adopted, following intensive discussions here in Vienna, we are looking forward to close cooperation with you and your staff on a series of interesting events, starting in May with the first SHDM on the issue of "Hate Crimes" as well as the annual Human Dimension Seminar, this year dedicated to the Rule of Law. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our clear support for a broad and intensive participation of NGOs and Civil Society in all of these events on the basis of our common OSCE commitments, in particular the 1990 Copenhagen Document.

Also, against the background of persisting severe problems regarding the implementation of Human Rights – related commitments and the often dire situation facing Human Rights Defenders in a number of OSCE participating States, we would like to strongly encourage you to continue your important activities in this regard, in particular on the issue of

Human Rights Defenders – on the basis of our unambiguous common commitment from the Budapest Summit in 1994.

Regarding last year's report to the Ministerial Council on human rights in the war affected areas following the conflict in Georgia, we strongly encourage you to continue to monitor the Human Rights situation there, particularly in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and to follow-up the implementation of the recommendations set out in the report. In this regard we welcome the ODIHR/HCNM intention to pay a further visit in the near future. The EU would also welcome further discussion in Vienna of the important issues raised in this report. Problems faced by IDPs are of continuing concern and must be addressed accordingly.

Regarding election observation, as on many occasions before, the EU would like to encourage you to continue to cooperate with the OSCE PA in the spirit of partnership and on the basis of the 1997 Co-operation Agreement as endorsed by MC Decision 19/06. The EU would like to reiterate its conviction that election observation in the OSCE is a common – and by no means competitive – endeavour of two complementary pillars.

In this regard, the EU welcomes the fact that the ODIHR and the OSCE PA had constructive discussions in Athens last week on the invitation of the Greek CiO. We trust that this is a good basis for your future cooperation – not only in view of the three imminent election observation activities in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in Montenegro and in the Republic of Moldova, but also beyond these in a longer-term perspective.

The EU welcomes the ongoing work ODIHR has been doing to help the authorities in Afghanistan implement the recommendations it made in respect of the 2004 and 2005 elections. The EU notes that the government of Afghanistan has invited the OSCE to support the Presidential and Provincial Council elections to be held this August. The EU is ready to consider the idea of an ODIHR contribution to the ongoing international effort to support the electoral process where it could provide an added value.

Also, as stated in the Council Conclusions on Belarus adopted recently on 16 March 2009, the European Union welcomes and further encourages the continuation of the ODIHR's cooperation with Belarus on electoral legislation in this country.

Last but not least, on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, we would like to encourage your broad approach to Tolerance and Non-Discrimination issues and to continue your close coordination which has been established in relation to the previous three CiO's Personal Representatives with their respective successors. In this regard, we would like to congratulate you for organizing in Vienna a successful series of roundtables on issues related to their mandates. We are equally looking forward with keen interest to your two-day Commemoration Event for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which has started this morning here in the Hofburg.

Finally, we would like to thank you, Ambassador Lenarčič, and your dedicated staff for your excellent work and wish you all the best for your future activities.

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 and MONTENEGRO, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, 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.