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du Conseil de l'Union européenne*

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auprès de l'OSCE

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EU STATEMENT ON KYRGYZSTAN

The European Union welcomes Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiev, Acting President of the Kyrgyz Republic, to the Permanent Council. We highly appreciate this opportunity for an exchange of views on developments in Kyrgyzstan.

The events of March in Kyrgyzstan have seriously affected the country. Mr. Prime Minister, we highly appreciate your personal efforts and the efforts of your government to re-establish stability and rule of law in Kyrgyzstan on the basis of democratic values and the respect for human rights. At a very critical moment for the people in your country you established visible leadership in dealing with a tense situation. In laying ground for a sustainable political and economical situation, your government established a good working relationship with the European Union. Continuity of Kyrgyz Foreign Policy in co-operating with international partners, including the OSCE, will be very important and we are ready to continue our co-operation. We commend your good co-operation with the OSCE Chair in Office, Minister Rupel, which is building on our common values and commitments. We pledge our full support to help Kyrgyzstan to move towards democracy, unity and stability. We are convinced that democratic development in Kyrgyzstan will contribute to stability in the whole region.

Prime Minister,

We thank you for your analysis of the situation in Kyrgyzstan and a detailed outline of priorities in the areas of constitutional reform, the judiciary, freedom of the media, fighting corruption and reforms designed to create a favourable environment for economic growth as well as promoting a new generation of young leaders and politicians. The European Union shares the assessment that sustainable progress in these areas will be key to building a stable state. A democratic society enabling all citizens to participate in economic development and political life will be the best safeguard against conflict and instability. The OSCE with its achievements in all three dimensions is uniquely placed to assist in such a comprehensive reform process and to help monitor progress.

In the short term, presidential elections to be held on 10 July present an excellent opportunity to lay the foundations for democratic development. The credibility of the new President of the Kyrgyz Republic will depend upon the elections being held in a free and fair manner, in line with international standards. The European Union welcomes your decision to draw on the expertise of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and ODIHR in order to improve the electoral process. In an immediate effort to assist Kyrgyz authorities in this regard, ODIHR produced

recommendations which are oriented towards what can realistically be achieved in the limited timeframe available. The European Union stands ready to give any further assistance needed to help the Kyrgyz authorities implement these recommendations. We will support the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission financially as well as through the secondment of election monitors.

On 3 May, the Kyrgyz Government approved the OSCE Workplan for Kyrgyzstan. This workplan draws on the expertise of all OSCE institutions and bodies. It will assist Kyrgyzstan in overcoming problems faced in the current situation. Besides the very substantial assistance provided to Kyrgyzstan over the past decade, the European Union and its Member States are prepared to also contribute to a considerable extent to the implementation of the Workplan.

Prime Minister,

The European Union follows closely the security situation in Kyrgyzstan, including issues of land occupation and lack of qualified police personnel. We hope that – as part of the Workplan – a newly designed OSCE interim police programme will soon become operational.

The events of March and their aftermath have caused concern to persons belonging to national minorities in Kyrgyzstan. We regard the peaceful living together of the different ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan and their full integration in the political and economic process as a prerequisite for stability and prosperity in the country. We support you in your efforts to reassure minorities that they are welcome in a pluralist Kyrgyz society.

The EU acknowledges the general efforts made by your country to meet the challenges brought about by recent events in Uzbekistan, in particular to ensure the safety and welfare of refugees. We underline the need to comply with international commitments on refugees.

In conclusion,

Kyrgyzstan has an opportunity to set a positive example to the Central Asian region by holding free and fair elections and by promoting democratisation, rule of law and human rights. Genuine progress in this regard will demonstrate that pluralism and democracy can be realised and will contribute to long-term security and stability in the region as a whole.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania and the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹ align themselves with this statement.

¹Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process