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## **EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 832  
Vienna, 28 October 2010**

### **EU Statement in response to the ODIHR director, H.E. Ambassador Janez Lenarčič**

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The EU warmly welcomes Ambassador Lenarčič back to the PC and would like to thank him for his informative report.

Mr Chairman,

We have carefully listened to Ambassador Lenarčič's report, as well as to his valuable contributions at the Review Conference last month in Warsaw, as the ODIHR is at the core of the OSCE's institutional architecture in supporting participating States in meeting their Human Dimension commitments. We share Ambassador Lenarčič's view that OSCE participating States need to make more efforts to strengthen the implementation and follow-up of OSCE commitments. We recall that this constitutes one of the four EU priorities for the upcoming Summit in Astana and we trust that this will be properly reflected in the Summit document, as suggested by the EU in its closing statement of the Vienna and Warsaw parts of the Review Conference.

In this context, we would like to reiterate our full support for the open and free participation of NGOs and civil society in all relevant OSCE events. The 1990 Copenhagen Document and the Helsinki Document 1992 provide clear guidance on this issue. We reiterate our appreciation for the added value of the NGOs input to our meetings and look forward to their contribution at the Astana Summit.

Let me now move to the ODIHR's activities over the past six months. We appreciate the widely recognized and important role that the ODIHR continues to play in the field of election observation and other election-related issues across the OSCE area. We reiterate our full support for the ODIHR's observation methodology, which has been followed by numerous international actors for their own election observation activities, including by the EU. The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the ODIHR's Election Observation Handbook is another important step towards the further strengthening of this methodology, as tasked by the MC Decision 19/06.

We would also like to recall the need for a close co-operation and partnership between the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as stressed in the same MC decision and on the basis of the 1997 Cooperation Agreement.

The EU welcomes the ODIHR's increasing focus on follow-up activities to election observation in various OSCE participating States, including in EU Member States. We agree that election observation recommendations can constitute an important input for the work of other departments, such as the Democratisation department, which plays a key role in promoting democratic governance and the rule of law.

Concerning the work on human rights, we encourage the ODIHR to continue its important activities on the issue of Human Rights Defenders on the basis of the unambiguous OSCE commitment from the Budapest Summit in 1994. We also welcome the ODIHR's intensified support to National Human Rights Institutions. With regards to the work on anti-trafficking and anti-terrorism, we encourage close co-operation with the relevant structures of the OSCE in Vienna.

We commend the ODIHR's activities regarding hate crimes, especially the valuable reporting activities.

With regard to Roma and Sinti issues, we recognise that improving the situation of Roma and Sinti continues to present challenges, also within the EU. We welcome the co-operation between the ODIHR and the Council of Europe in this regard. We fully support the ODIHR's focus on topics such as education and police-Roma relations.

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

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA\*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\* and ICELAND, 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 LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

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