

Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU Statement on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE - the first operational paragraph of Ljubljana Ministerial Council Decision No.17/05

The Chair's perception paper on the Ministerial Council decision on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE and its first operational paragraph gives a good picture of the work done and raises pertinent questions. It also indicates the way forward. The participating States have had an ample opportunity to take active part in the discussions and to express their views in fulfilling the tasking by the Ministers.

The active and comprehensive way the Chairmanship has proceeded on its part has added to the transparency and effectiveness, and has given us all a good chance to take a deeper look at the organization and its functioning. Much of the discussion has concentrated on organizational reform.

The tasking given to the Permanent Council was to continue working on the basis of the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons and the outcome of the High-Level Consultations in 2005 and to report to the Ministerial Council 2006 on the various issues listed. The Ljubljana decision reflects many years of discussions and negotiations on the possible changes in the Organization and its functioning.

It should not be expected that we could find a consensus on all the issues. We should nevertheless identify issues where agreement is possible, with a view to adopting the decisions in the course of this year in fulfilment of the Ljubljana tasking. We should avoid creating rigid frameworks which hamper the flexibility and the possibility to quickly react to changing security environment.

The EU has been, and is, largely satisfied with OSCE and with the way the Organization operates. It serves well as a forum for political dialogue, and functions well as a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. That does not mean, however, that nothing can be improved in order to benefit the Organization and all the participating States.

The tasking in the Ljubljana decision to continue working on the enhancement the effectiveness of the OSCE was a general one. It stressed the value of a cross-dimensional approach in the OSCE's future activities.

The EU would like to avoid the strengthening process becoming an exercise in micro management. We see a lot of merit in safeguarding the flexibility of the Organization. We should avoid overregulation.

We have full confidence in the ability of the Secretary General and the Secretariat to serve the common goals and purpose of this organization. We are very positive about the Secretary General's use of the Secretariat and the other tools at his disposal to promote our common goals, stability and security, and to fulfil his mandate.

Regarding the individual ticks in the road map decision the EU will continue the deliberations together with the other participating States and aims for clear results at the Brussels Ministerial. The EU is of the opinion that the performance of OSCE would not benefit from indefinite debates of reform, deflecting from the OSCE's main tasks as a comprehensive security organisation. The EU supports the adoption of the Rules of Procedure.

On the Strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE institutions and field operations, the EU position is to sustain the autonomy of institutions and field operations.

On examining the possibility of providing the OSCE with legal status and granting privileges and immunities, taking into consideration advice of legal experts, the EU supports the efforts to solve this longstanding question and that the organization gets finally the legal status.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia ¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

¹ Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process