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EU statement in response to the address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, H.E. Thorbjørn Jagland

The European Union warmly welcomes H.E. Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland to the Permanent Council. Since this is his first appearance in this forum since his appointment as Secretary General of the Council of Europe, we would also like to congratulate him and wish him every success in the tenure of his job.

We recently had the opportunity to listen to the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, H.E. Mr. Antonio Milošoski, who presented the priority areas of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for its six month Chairmanship, and we welcome the continuous dialogue between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE share, promote and defend the same values. They may differ as regards their instruments, organisational structures and membership, but the three of them are equally engaged in promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We believe that these are conditions sine qua non to creating lasting peace and stability.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe have successfully tried to avoid unnecessary duplications and are convinced that working together will generate further synergies. Regular contacts take place, both at political level in the context of the 2+2 meetings and at staff level, as well as between the OSCE field presences and Council of Europe offices in a number of countries.

The Coordination Group created five years ago has proved to be a good framework for cooperation in the four key areas of:

- fight against terrorism,
- combating trafficking in human beings,
- protection of persons belonging to national minorities and,
- promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

In the field of TND the Council of Europe has recently shown again its international leadership as a legal standards setter, when the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. We fully subscribe to it and to the Council of Europe's commitment to the equality for all and respect for the dignity of all.

Election observation is an area of high visibility for both organisations. The EU attaches great importance to fruitful cooperation between ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on election observation missions and

strongly encourages all of them to pursue and further develop this cooperation.

Finally, since 1993, the EU and the Council of Europe have developed a vibrant co-operation instrument known as joint programmes. In 2007 we signed a Memorandum of Understanding which ensures smooth coordination. The EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty will bring us even closer.

Mr. Chairman,

The specific added value of each organisation is greatest when it is put to use meaningfully. Both the OSCE and the Council of Europe are undergoing a process of reform. The EU, which actively participates in both, will do its utmost in order to enable them to better respond to the challenges of the 21st century. We fully support the ongoing Council of Europe reform that will bring the institution to focus on its core issues: democracy, human rights and rule of law.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we would like to thank H.E. the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for his address, and wish him success with the continuation of his important and challenging work.

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, as well as the ANDORRA and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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