



## German Presidency of the European Union

### **647<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council**

**25 January 2007**

### Statement by the European Union on the 2006 Mediterranean Seminar

The EU thanks the Egyptian ambassador for his comprehensive report on the 2006 Mediterranean Seminar and wishes to express its gratitude to Egypt for hosting the Seminar in Sharm El-Sheikh.

The EU attaches special importance to the OSCE's relations with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, who are also active participants to the Barcelona Process, in order to address common security concerns through cooperation and dialogue.

The EU welcomes the interest shown in Sharm el Sheikh by all Seminar participants in finding concrete ways to address common security challenges and to improve adherence to OSCE norms and values and voluntary implementation by Partners of OSCE commitments. In this respect, the EU wishes to encourage all the Partners for Cooperation to take advantage of the full range of OSCE tools developed for participating States which are also available to them.

The EU underlines the importance of a multidimensional and comprehensive approach to the themes of tolerance and non-discrimination, migration and integration which were main topics during the Mediterranean Seminar. We emphasize the two-way nature of the dialogue on integration and tolerance. The EU looks forward to the active participation of Partners in OSCE events on these topics during 2007.

We welcome the thorough discussion during the last session of the Mediterranean Seminar on how to decide on the venue of the annual event. In this respect we recall the support which was noted during the closing session of the Seminar for the principle of rotation in hosting the Mediterranean Seminar among the Partners for Co-operation.

The EU believes that NGO participation in such meetings strengthens OSCE events. It was regrettable that the planned NGO side event did not take place. We hope that the initiative will not be lost, and that this year's Seminar includes an NGO event.

The EU is looking forward to follow-up in the field of preventing and combating terrorism, building on discussions during the 2006 Mediterranean Seminar.

The EU supports initiatives to deepen the involvement of the Partners for Co-operation in the work of the OSCE, and reiterates its readiness to assist the Co-operation Partners in their efforts to a substantial approach to the standards embodied in the OSCE-commitments.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, EFTA country Norway, a member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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