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Delegation**

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United Kingdom Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Special Permanent Council No. 570
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**EU Statement in response to the President of the OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly, US Congressman Alcee L Hastings**

The EU warmly welcomes Congressman Alcee Hastings back to the Permanent Council.

As we noted during Congressman Hastings' last visit to the Permanent Council in November 2004, there is an increasing correspondence between the work of the governmental and parliamentary sides of our organisation. This was demonstrated once again during the 14th Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Washington. The EU has taken careful note of the Washington Declaration and Resolutions adopted at the Session. We welcome in particular the Assembly's strong reaffirmation of the Helsinki principles and the need for the OSCE to ensure implementation by its participating States of their related commitments. The EU continues to support the Assembly's important role in election observation, and welcomes its endorsement in Washington of the 1990 Copenhagen commitments and subsequent commitments undertaken at the Lisbon and Istanbul summits.

The most topical area of overlap in our work is, of course, strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. The European Union has repeatedly stressed the important role of the Parliamentary Assembly in this process. The Parliamentary Assembly is to be congratulated for the valuable contribution that it has already made to this work, including through the declaration and resolutions agreed at the Washington Annual Session and through the report of the June Colloquium on "The Future of the OSCE". Ambassador Nothelle presented the Colloquium's findings at the recent High Level Consultations in Vienna.

The EU has welcomed the report of the Eminent Persons Panel as an opportunity to take stock of the OSCE and to look ahead to the organisation's future. We have accepted the report as the basis for our negotiations and are committed to working constructively together

to take forward its recommendations. The EU will support necessary changes that will increase the effectiveness of the organisation and promote a more cohesive performance.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, the EU remains committed to sustaining the OSCE in its important work in conflict prevention management and resolution, and in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We look forward to working closely with the Parliamentary Assembly in this important endeavour.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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