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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 824th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 22 July 2010

In response to the statement by Mr. Sergey Lebedev, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States

The European Union (EU) welcomes Mr. Lebedev, the Chairman of the Executive Committee and Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The countries of the CIS and the European Union share a common responsibility for peace and security on our continent. At this time of major change on a global scale, they should act jointly to build a genuine community of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The dialogue on European security being pursued in the OSCE within the framework of the Corfu Process on the comprehensive concept of security, at the heart of which lies the protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic governance, should lead to the definition of this common vision. Within this framework, the OSCE and the CIS could be encouraged to develop co-operation on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security.

Settlement of frozen conflicts represents one of our primary challenges. The European Union intends to resolutely pursue its commitment to a resolution of the Transdniestrian conflict on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. It pins its hopes on the resumption of the formal negotiations in the "5+2" format as quickly as possible and without conditions. Furthermore, the EU continues to fully support the eminently important Geneva discussions, despite the persistent difficulties and differences of opinion among the participants. These discussions constitute the only forum in which all the parties are represented and where the three major international actors work in close co-operation to ensure the security and stability of the region with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Lastly, the EU reiterates its full support for the mediation efforts being made by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group as well as the activities by Ambassador Kasprzyk. We call on the parties to finalize the basic principles for a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict so that the drafting of a peace agreement can commence. The EU urges the parties to redouble their efforts to actively bring their people round to this point of view.

The fight to ensure respect for fundamental freedoms and rights also calls for decisive commitment. The European Union notes with concern that in certain parts of the OSCE area attacks on human rights and democratic principles persist or are even growing worse,

contravening the international obligations and commitments undertaken by the States concerned. In particular, the situation with respect to defenders of human rights must be given our careful attention.

As regards election observation, for the European Union, the two elements that represent the OSCE's strength in this area must be preserved:

- The autonomy that the participating States have conferred on the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), because the institution entrusted with the task of monitoring elections should not be both judge and an involved party;
- The methods developed by the ODIHR, which because of their rigour and professionalism guarantee objectivity and credibility.

The OSCE also represents a place where the Member States of the European Union and those of the CIS must pool their efforts to deal with the new transnational threats such as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings or environmental threats. In this regard, we are pleased to note that over the last two years there has been an intensification of the joint participation of the OSCE and the CIS in their respective activities to deal with terrorism and trafficking in human beings.

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 and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

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