



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Brussels 2006**

MC(14).JOUR/2
5 December 2006
Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Fourteenth Meeting
MC(14) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mr. Minister,

The European Union is pleased to endorse the statement made by you, Minister Karel De Gucht, as the Chairman-in-Office. We warmly thank the Belgian Chairmanship for their efforts to achieve consensus on a political declaration which would have been acceptable to all.

The EU welcomes the consensus statement on Nagorno-Karabakh and urges the leadership of Armenia and Azerbaijan to peacefully settle this long-standing conflict.

The EU is pleased that a consensus was reached on a statement on the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. We would welcome the OSCE's continued active involvement in Kosovo, also after the replacement of UNMIK by the International Civilian Office. The EU reiterates its strong support for the work of President Ahtisaari on the future status of Kosovo.

We regret that a consensus was not found on statements concerning the conflicts in the Republic of Georgia and in the Republic of Moldova. The EU reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova within their internationally recognized borders. Complete fulfilment of the remaining commitments made at the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in 1999 and reflected in the CFE Final Act, remains key. We welcome the important agreement signed by the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia on 31 March 2006 on the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Georgia and call upon the Russian Federation to complete its withdrawal as soon as possible. We note with regret the continuing lack of progress on the withdrawal of Russian military forces and equipment from the Republic of Moldova and again call upon the Russian Federation to resume and complete its withdrawal as soon as possible. The EU supports continued efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflicts involving the Republics of Moldova and Georgia.

Mr. Minister,

One of our priorities in the human dimension is the protection of human rights defenders. The EU was disappointed that a decision on strengthening the OSCE's engagement with human rights defenders and independent national human rights institutions was not

reached this year. We will continue to support the inclusion of this important issue on the OSCE agenda.

The EU is pleased that we have been able to reach agreement on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. We also welcome the tasking on the international legal status of the OSCE, and all the other important decisions that have been taken at this Ministerial.

The EU regrets that it was not possible to agree on the upcoming Chairmanships for the Organization. We hope that an agreement can be reached as soon as possible.

Finally, we would like to express our warm thanks to the Belgian Chairmanship for their excellent hospitality and splendid organization of the Ministerial Council meeting. We look forward with high expectations to the Spanish Chairmanship and will give Spain our full support in their efforts.

I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you Mr. Minister.