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**SPECIAL CO-ORDINATOR OF THE  
STABILITY PACT  
FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE**

**SC presentation on the Ohrid Border Process  
The EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Meeting of Justice and  
Home Affairs  
Brussels, 2 December 2004**

Mr. Chairman,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me thank The Netherlands/EU Presidency for inviting me to this very important meeting and for giving me the opportunity to inform you about the achievements of the five countries of the Western Balkans region within the Ohrid process on Border Security and Management.

Significant progress has been achieved since the Ohrid Regional Conference in May 2003. We are moving towards reaching our ultimate aim, i.e. to establish open but controlled and secure borders in the entire Western Balkan region. I am particularly happy to report that after 1 year and a half, the borders in SEE are now, with few exceptions, under civilian control.

This is important, as the establishment of border management systems in line with the EU acquis, is one of the prerequisites for the eventual integration of the five SAP countries into the EU.

Which are the concrete achievements so far?

At the Second Review Meeting of the Ohrid Border Process in Tirana on 26 – 27 October 2004 we assessed progress on the implementation of the 'Ohrid commitments' in the following areas:

- the creation of national legal frameworks in line with the EU acquis,
- the training of personnel,
- the identification of the needs of the border police concerning equipment and personnel,
- introduction of IT systems
- increased transborder cooperation with other police and customs services to fight organised crime.

However, I should state that progress with regard to the adoption, and most importantly, the implementation of the necessary legislation did not develop at the same pace throughout the region. Also, cross-border cooperation between border police and customs services is advancing at different speed and intensity levels. To sum up, although the overall assessment of progress reported in the national annual reports is rather positive, there is clearly space for further improvement, both regarding substance and regarding 'accuracy' of measures taken.

Progress achieved so far would not have been possible without the 'concerted efforts' and the very efficient assistance provided by the Four Partner Organizations (EU, NATO, OSCE and the Stability Pact) and in particular the European Commission, which is doing an extremely useful work when assisting the Stability Pact to monitor the implementation of the Way Forward Document and other related commitments.

UNMIK/Kosovo is also regularly reporting on its ongoing cooperation with their neighbours, in the field of border management and security, as well as combating organized crime and illegal migration. I am grateful for their support.

The Second Review Meeting was also the occasion to discuss the future of the whole process. For 2005, the focus will be on the full establishment of strategic and managerial capacity to implement the integrated border management.

We have to take into account the specific priorities applicable for each country. Therefore, whether it be in

the Ohrid process or in a different framework, we should remember the importance of working together on:

- human resources and training,
  - upgrading of information systems,
  - strengthening of complementarity and cooperation between border police services and criminal police
- and finally, and especially, on cross border operational cooperation among relevant services all over the region.

At this point, I need to emphasize the importance of continued international assistance (including funding), particularly in the above-mentioned areas. Assistance provided so far through CARDS and PHARE programs/projects, including twinning projects, could be considered as excellent examples of this.

As far as the role of the Stability Pact is concerned, the Ohrid Border Process together with asylum, migration, refugee return and visa issues are all part of one of our six core objectives for 2005: Managing and Stabilizing of Population Movements.

The achievements obtained so far are important and precious. But in my view, the future of the Ohrid Border Process lies beyond 2005. This “model of cooperation” of the Four Partner Organisations with the Five Governments has set a high standard and it could be applied to other issues as well. Therefore, I suggest holding a brainstorming meeting around May 2005 to discuss such possibilities in greater depth. This would seem the appropriate moment not only to ‘celebrate’ the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Ohrid Regional Conference, but also to enhance the process, while at the same time strengthening the regional ownership aspect.

In conclusion, I would like to distribute to all of you the Stability Pact ‘Ohrid-implementation-matrix’ which offers a more visual impression of where we stand with the implementation of the “Ohrid commitments”.

Salutations/ end.