EU – Armenia Cooperation Council
Twelfth meeting, Brussels, 25 November 2011

The Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia held its twelfth meeting on Friday 25 November 2011. The EU was represented by Mr Mikolaj Dowgielewicz, State Secretary for European Affairs of Poland, acting on behalf of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, and Mr Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. The Armenian delegation was led by Mr Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, acting as chair of the Cooperation Council meeting.

This meeting took place following the recent visit of HRVP Ashton to Yerevan on 16-17 November which confirmed the EU’s commitment to reinforcing links with the region. The Cooperation Council reviewed progress on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The EU reaffirmed that the status quo is unacceptable and that the solution of this conflict remains a top priority. Both sides reiterated their support to the efforts deployed by the OSCE Minsk Group. The EU confirmed its determination to strengthen its support to and co-operation with the Minsk Group, notably through further confidence building measures. The EU expressed concern at the increasing number of incidents at the line of contact and called on all sides to reduce tension and abstain from strong rhetoric.

The Cooperation Council underlined the need to remain focussed on and speed up the implementation of the European neighbourhood policy action plan. The Cooperation Council provided a good opportunity to take stock of latest developments in the South Caucasus, as well as to review recent political and economic reforms in Armenia. In this context the Cooperation Council took note of the new and ambitious reform efforts of Armenia, bringing together important priorities of EU-Armenia relations, including preparations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, cooperation in the domain of justice, liberty and security as well as democratic reforms. The EU confirmed its readiness to engage with Armenia in an EU-Armenia partnership for reform.
The EU recalled the importance of continuing progress on the matters of democracy, rule of law and human rights. In view of the deepening bilateral relations between the EU and Armenia in the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the EU encouraged Armenia to step up reforms in these fields. The EU noted progress in the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Armenia and underlined that these elements are essential components in the bilateral relationship and in the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The EU reaffirmed its readiness to continue its support for the further development of democratic institutions in Armenia.

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the on-going negotiations on the Association Agreement. The EU confirmed that negotiations on a deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA) would start as soon as Armenia meets the necessary conditions, as set out in the Commission's “Key recommendations”. The EU also confirmed that negotiations on agreements on visa facilitation and readmission are expected to start at the beginning of next year. The EU also welcomed the signing by Armenia, on 27 October, of a mobility partnership with the EU, as an important step towards the strengthening of people-to-people contacts.