



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**EIGHTH MEETING OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND
THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
Brussels, 18 July 2006**

Press release

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and the Kyrgyz Republic held its eighth meeting on Tuesday 18 July 2006. The meeting was chaired by the Head of the Kyrgyz Delegation, Mr Daniar Toktogulovich Usenov, First Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The delegation of the European Union was led by Mr Pertti Torstila, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, represented the Commission. The incoming German Presidency was represented by Mr Ulrich Brandenburg, Deputy Political Director.

P R E S S

The Cooperation Council underlined its hope for EU - Kyrgyz Republic relations to further strengthen, both politically and economically, in the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the two Parties. It highlighted the possibilities that this Agreement offers, if duly implemented, for further progress.

The Cooperation Council noted with concern the difficult situation the Kyrgyz Republic currently faces, and welcomed the earnest efforts of the Kyrgyz authorities to address pressing problems, such as widespread corruption and organised crime. It welcomed the continuing growth of civil society and the responsible handling of protests and demonstrations by the authorities, an exception in the region. But it emphasised continuing engagement is needed to stabilise the political situation.

In this context, the Cooperation Council discussed the planned constitutional reform, welcoming this initiative in the hope that it will result in a durable settlement that takes into account all interests and preserves unity and democracy. As a necessary precondition, it stressed the urgent necessity to strengthen the government's administration and the judiciary system, subject to deep-seated corruption.

The Cooperation Council underlined the constructive role of the OSCE in the Kyrgyz Republic, and recommended that the authorities continue their collaboration with this organisation, that both Sides are part of, with equal regard for all three 'dimensions' it deals with: security, economic-environmental and the Human Dimension.

The Cooperation Council reiterated its full endorsement of the courageous and constructive role the Kyrgyz authorities played in facilitating the resettlement into third countries of more than 400 Uzbek refugees. However, it expressed its strong concern over the fate of the last four of these, urging the Kyrgyz side to respect its international obligations and release them to UNHCR for resettlement.

The Cooperation Council underlined the importance of regional cooperation in Central Asia as an effective means of conflict prevention and economic development in the region and welcomed the increasingly active role the Kyrgyz Republic is playing in different regional and bilateral initiatives.
