COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2003/872/CFSP

of 8 December 2003

extending and amending the mandate of the Special Representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union and, in particular, Articles 14, 18(5) and 23(2) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Council Joint Action 2003/496/CFSP of 7 July 2003 concerning the appointment of the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus [1] is due to expire on 31 December 2003.

(2) On the basis of a review of that Joint Action, the mandate of the Special Representative should be extended.

(3) On 17 November 2003 the Council adopted Guidelines on the appointment, mandate and financing for European Union Special Representatives,

HAS ADOPTED THIS JOINT ACTION:

Article 1

The mandate of Mr Heikki TALVITIE as the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Caucasus is hereby extended.

Article 2

1. The mandate of the EUSR will be based on the policy objectives of the European Union in the South Caucasus. These objectives include:

(a) to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in carrying out political and economic reforms, notably in the fields of rule of law, democratisation, human rights, good governance, development and poverty reduction;

(b) in accordance with existing mechanisms, to prevent conflicts in the region, to assist in the resolution of conflicts, and to prepare the return of peace, including through promoting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons;

(c) to engage constructively with main interested actors concerning the region;

(d) to encourage and to support further cooperation between States of the region, in particular between the States of the South Caucasus, including on economic, energy and transport issues;

(e) to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the European Union in the region.

2. The EUSR shall support the work of the High Representative in the region.

Article 3

In order to achieve the policy objectives, the mandate of the EUSR shall be to:

(a) develop contacts with governments, parliaments, judiciary and civil society in the region;

(b) encourage Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to cooperate on regional themes of common interest, such as common security threats, the fight against terrorism, trafficking and organised crime;

(c) contribute to the prevention of conflicts, and to prepare the return of peace to the region, including through recommendations for action related to civil society and rehabilitation of territories without prejudice to the Commission's responsibilities under the EC Treaty;

(d) assist in conflict resolution, in particular to enable the European Union better to support the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Georgia, the Group of Friends of the United Nations Secretary-General for Georgia, the Minsk Group of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the conflict resolution mechanism for South Ossetia;

(e) intensify the European Union's dialogue with the main interested actors concerning the region;

(f) assist the Council in further developing a comprehensive policy towards the South Caucasus.

[1] OJ L 169, 8.7.2003, p. 74.

Article 4

1. The EUSR shall be responsible for the implementation of the mandate acting under the authority and operational direction of the High Representative. The EUSR shall be accountable to the Commission for all expenditure.

2. The Political and Security Committee (PSC) shall maintain a privileged link with the EUSR and shall be the primary point of contact with the Council. The PSC shall provide strategic guidance and political input to the EUSR within the framework of the mandate.

Article 5

1. The financial reference amount intended to cover the expenditure related to the mandate of the EUSR shall be EUR 299 000.

2. The expenditure financed by the amount stipulated in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the general budget of the European Community with the exception that any pre-financing shall not remain the property of the Community.

3. The management of the expenditure shall be subject to a contract between the EUSR and the Commission.

4. The Presidency, Commission, and/or Member States, as appropriate, will provide logistical support in the region.

Article 6

The privileges, immunities and further guarantees necessary for the completion and smooth functioning of the mission of the EUSR and the members of his staff shall be defined with the parties. Member States and the Commission shall grant all necessary support to such effect.

Article 7

As a rule, the EUSR will report in person to the High Representative and to the PSC and may report also to the relevant working group. Regular written reports will be circulated to the High Representative, Council and Commission. The EUSR may report to the General Affairs and External Relations Council on the recommendation of the High Representative and the PSC.

Article 8

To ensure the consistency of the external action of the European Union, the activities of the EUSR shall be coordinated with those of the High Representative, the Presidency and the Commission. EUSRs will provide regular briefings to Member States' missions and Commission delegations. In the field, close liaison shall be maintained with the Presidency, the Commission and Heads of Mission who shall make best efforts to assist the EUSR in the implementation of the mandate. The EUSR shall also liaise with other international and regional actors in the field.

Article 9

The implementation of this Joint Action and its consistency with other contributions from the European Union to the region shall be kept under regular review. The EUSR shall present a comprehensive written report on the implementation of the mandate to the High Representative, the Council and the Commission two months before the mandate expires, which shall form a basis for evaluation of the Joint Action in the relevant working groups and by the PSC. In the context of overall priorities for deployment, the High Representative shall make recommendations to the PSC concerning the Council's decision on renewal, amendment or termination of the mandate.

Article 10

This Joint Action shall enter into force on 1 January 2004.

It shall apply until 30 June 2004.

Article 11

This Joint Action shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 8 December 2003.

For the Council

The President

F. FRATTINI