COMMON POSITION

of 2 June 1997

defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, on Albania

(97/357/CFSP)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union and, in particular, Article J.2 thereof,

Whereas Albania is included in the regional approach defined by the Council in its conclusions of 26 February 1996;

Recalling the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Albania, on trade and commercial and economic cooperation [1];

Whereas the Council on 24 March 1997 reaffirmed the determination of the Union to play an important role in helping Albania to return to political and economic stability;

Whereas the Council decided that the Union would cooperate within the coordinating framework of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); whereas the OSCE Permanent Council in Europe decided on 27 March 1997 to establish an OSCE presence in Albania;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council in its Resolution 1101 of 28 March 1997 welcomed the offer made by certain Member States of the UN to establish a temporary and limited multinational protection force in Albania; whereas the Multinational Protection Force (MNPF) has become operational;

Whereas the Council on 29 April 1997 expressed its support for the efforts undertaken by the Western European Union (WEU) and the Council of Europe to contribute to the re-establishment of a viable police force in Albania,

HAS DEFINED THIS COMMON POSITION:

Article 1

The European Union shall help Albania, within the coordinating framework of the OSCE, through its own action and presence on the ground, to promote the democratic process, the return to political stability and internal security as well as the holding of free and fair elections. It shall continue to provide humanitarian aid and support economic reforms.

In this context, the Union is coordinating with other international organizations, including the WEU and the Council of Europe.

The Union is coordinating with the Multinational Protection Force, in order to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania.

Article 2

The Council takes note that the Commission, on behalf of the European Community:

— is responding to the immediate needs of the Albanian people, supplying food and medicines through the European Community Humanitarian Office,

— is considering focusing Phare assistance on areas directly related to the consolidation of democracy, the relaunching of economic activity and the strengthening of public administration in Albania,

— is coordinating the provision of financial assistance with international financial institutions,

— is ready to contribute to the initiative of the WEU and the Council of Europe, within the framework of the Mandate for a Multinational Advisory Police Element, aimed at the re-establishment of a viable Albanian police force,

— is ready to support the election assistance and monitoring activities of the OSCE.

Article 3

The Union is ready to assist in the holding of early free and fair parliamentary elections, in particular through monitoring.

[1] OJ No L 343, 25. 11. 1992, p. 2.

It attaches special importance to the role of free Albanian media in the pre-election information effort.

In this context, the Union shall decide as soon as possible on the arrangements for its contribution.

Article 4

The Union is ready to consider the convening, at an appropriate time and under appropriate circumstances, of an international conference on Albania at which international financial institutions, the OSCE, the United Nations as well as third countries will be invited to participate.

Article 5

This common position shall take effect on the day of its adoption.

Article 6

This common position shall be published in the Official Journal.

Done at Luxembourg, 2 June 1997.

For the Council

The President

H. VAN MIERLO