

**COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2003/496/CFSP
of 7 July 2003**

concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

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

Whereas:

- (1) The Council has stated its willingness to play a more active political role in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia).
- (2) There is a need to ensure clear lines of responsibility, as well as the coordination and consistency of external actions of the European Union in the South Caucasus.
- (3) On 30 March 2000 the Council adopted guidelines on the appointing procedure and administrative arrangements for European Union Special Representatives (EUSRs),

HAS ADOPTED THIS JOINT ACTION:

Article 1

Mr Heikki TALVITIE is hereby appointed as the EUSR for the South Caucasus.

Article 2

1. The objective of the EUSR shall be to contribute to the implementation of the policy objectives of the European Union in the South Caucasus, as defined and updated by the Council. These policy 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 (IDPs);
- (c) to engage constructively with key national actors neighbouring 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 EU effectiveness and visibility in the region.

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

Article 3

In order to further the policy objectives referred to in Article 2, 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 EU 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 OSCE Minsk Group, and the conflict resolution mechanism for South Ossetia under the aegis of the OSCE;
- (e) intensify EU dialogue with the main interested actors, concerning the region;
- (f) assist the Council in further developing a comprehensive policy towards the South Caucasus.

Article 4

The EUSR, acting under the authority and operational direction of the High Representative, shall be responsible for implementation of the mandate referred to in Article 3.

The EUSR shall maintain a privileged link with the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which 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.

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.

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. In the field, close liaison shall be maintained with the Presidency, the Commission and Heads of Mission of EU Member States. The EUSR shall also liaise with other international actors in the field, in particular the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Article 5

The administrative expenditure of the EUSR shall be covered exceptionally by Finland.

The EUSR shall be accountable to the High Representative for administrative expenditure and to the Commission for any operational expenditure incurred in respect of activities.

Article 6

The Presidency, the Commission and/or Member States, as appropriate, will assist the EUSR in the implementation of the mandate, including through provision of logistical support when the EUSR is travelling. The Council Secretariat will provide additional support as necessary.

The privileges, immunities and further guarantees necessary for the completion and smooth functioning of the mission of the EUSR shall be worked out as appropriate. Member States and the Commission shall grant all necessary support to this effect.

Article 7

The implementation of this Joint Action, and its consistency with other EU contributions to the region, shall be kept under regular review.

Before this Joint Action expires, the EUSR shall present a comprehensive written report to the High Representative, Council and Commission making recommendations on how further to enhance EU policy on the South Caucasus. This report shall form a basis for evaluation of the Joint Action in the relevant Working Groups and by the PSC.

In the context of decisions by the Council on the further development of EU policy towards the South Caucasus, the High Representative shall make recommendations to the PSC concerning the Council's decision on renewal, amendment or termination of the mandate of the EUSR.

Article 8

This Joint Action shall enter into force on 1 July 2003.

It shall apply until 31 December 2003.

Article 9

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

Done at Brussels, 7 July 2003.

For the Council
The President
F. FRATTINI